

A PUBLICATION OF WARD MEDIA | ESTABLISHED IN 1987

# New owners breathe fresh air into historic Alpine Lakes High Camp

Alpine Lakes High Camp has found new stewards in long-time friends Tom Shelstad and Travis Cowan, who are embracing the challenges and rewards of owning and maintaining a remote wilderness retreat that has fostered connection with nature for nearly half a century.

By **TAYLOR CALDWELL** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

“I really want it to be a place that feels like community. I want it to be a place that feels like, when people arrive and get there, that they’re able to drop the digital world and be more present,” said Shelstad.

Cowan and Shelstad come from Ashland, Oregon, each with individual ties to the North Cascade Mountains. Cowan spent his teenage years volunteering in the kitchen at Holden Village, a remote wilderness community near Lake Chelan.

When former owners Justin and Austin Donohue put Alpine Lakes High Camp up for sale, Cowan immediately booked a visit.

“[I] fell in love with the central North Cascades, and ended up leaving there and landing in Ashland after school for 18 years, but constantly through that time, [I was] searching for a calling back,” said Cowan.

During the trip, Cowan thought of Shelstad, the co-founder of Inner Guide Expeditions, which provides youth



COURTESY OF KW CAPTURE / ALPINE LAKES HIGH CAMP

Alpine Lakes High Camp is a collection of nine backcountry huts and a communal lodge, as well as a cold plunge and sauna.

mentorship, family mediation, and parent and life coaching for adults.

One of its specialties is youth wilderness expeditions, which includes a trip through North

Cascades National Park.

“My daughter had gone on one of his trips up in Washington and British Columbia, and

See **HIGH CAMP** Page 13

# Loop Trail Café serves up nostalgia as trail’s only riverside eatery



ANDREW SIMPSON/WARD MEDIA

Jack, a regular customer who works nearby, orders a Pie-ookie and assures us it’s never too early for pies or cookies, and certainly never both at once. **SEE STORY PAGE 15**

# Cascade Mountain Cryo partners with AppleSox as new treatment turns out to be a hit

In the heart of downtown Wenatchee, in the Morris Building, there’s a new business that provides a service you may never have heard of: Cryotherapy.

By **ANDREW SIMPSON** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

As the name implies, it’s a process that uses extreme cold – compressed CO<sub>2</sub> that cools an area of the body down to 39 degrees – for a variety of purposes. It can be used for pain management, injury treatment, and even for aesthetics, sculpting fat away and doing facials that don’t require chemicals.

Cascade Mountain Cryo founders Ericka Hughes and

Shawn Farber were the perfect pair to bring this new form of medical treatment to the Wenatchee Valley.

Hughes’ background in medicine spans veterinary, occupational therapy, women’s health and more.

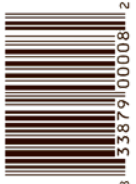
Farber is a sports officiant, refereeing baseball, basketball and football games, but knows

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## May 2025 Association Newsletter

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© WardMedia, LLC  
2025

The Wenatchee Business Journal is published on the first Monday of each month. Subscriptions are \$25 per year.

CIRCULATION

For circulation information or to sign up for a subscription, call 509-293-6780

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The Wenatchee Business Journal is published monthly  
29 S. Wenatchee Ave., Suite A  
Wenatchee, WA 98801



# Rooted in place, growing with purpose

By **Terry Ward** | CEO and Publisher Ward Media

This month, the Wenatchee Business Journal turns its focus to enterprises that are deeply rooted in place – businesses that reflect the land, culture, and values of North Central Washington while also shaping its future through innovation, resilience, and stewardship.

At the heart of this issue is a growing movement: businesses leading with intention when it comes to sustainability and land use. In Leavenworth, companies like Derby Canyon Natives, Alpenglö Living, and Shelter and Seeds are helping landowners reimagine what it means to care for their surroundings.

Whether it's designing native gardens that restore pollinator populations or building edible landscapes that conserve water and regenerate soil, these businesses aren't just offering services – they're inviting people into a new relationship with the land.

As Derby Canyon Natives' Mel Asher told us, "There's a tremendous amount of growth in the

industry right now... there's just an increasing awareness in our area about water use and water efficiency, as well as habitat."

That awareness is more than a market trend – it's a shift in mindset. These are companies that view economic viability and environmental responsibility not as competing interests, but as mutually reinforcing goals.

We also spotlight Cascade Mountain Cryo, where co-founders Ericka Hughes and Shawn Farber are introducing cryotherapy to Wenatchee – a cutting-edge treatment more often seen in large cities. But their story is really about connection.

They aren't just offering a service; they're creating partnerships, like their recent one with the Wenatchee AppleSox, to bring wellness and recovery options to athletes and residents alike. It's a model of how rural businesses can blend medical innovation with local roots to serve real needs in their communities.

Then there's Loop Trail

Café, where owner Dianne Hall has found a home for her dreams just steps from the Columbia River.

The café, the only one directly on the Loop Trail, isn't just a place to grab a coffee or a "Zombie" breakfast pastry – it's a reflection of Hall's journey through the food industry and her belief that hospitality can build community.

"When people walk through the door here, they become family," she says. It's a simple truth with deep impact.

Meanwhile, up in the Chiwaukum Mountains, Alpine Lakes High Camp enters a new era under the stewardship of Tom Shelstad and Travis Cowan. Their goal is to preserve the soul of a wilderness haven while expanding its access and community reach. Their vision is not just about cabins and trails, but about creating a space where digital noise falls away and people rediscover presence – with the land and with each other.

Finally, in one of the most remote corners of Okanogan County, Split

# From the Publisher



Heritage Apparel is proof that art, culture, and entrepreneurship know no geographic limits. Sarah and Jacob Lowe are building a streetwear brand from scratch, infused with their personal heritage and values.

Every design is hand-crafted, every story original. It's not fast fashion; it's meaningful fashion – and it's finding an audience far beyond the borders of Wauconda.

Together, these stories reveal a defining characteristic of our region's business community: we don't just do business in North Central Washington – we

do business with it.

Whether through regenerative land use, personalized wellness, cultural storytelling, or community gathering spaces, our entrepreneurs are proving that success in this region grows best when it's planted with purpose.

*Terry Ward is the CEO of Ward Media and the publisher of NCW News, Cashmere Valley Record, Lake Chelan Mirror, The Leavenworth Echo, Quad City Herald, and the Wenatchee Business Journal. He can be reached at terry@ward.media.*

## Flywheel Investment Conference returns to Wenatchee, spotlighting startups and sparking rural innovation

**Wenatchee will once again take center stage in Washington's innovation economy this month as the 8th annual Flywheel Investment Conference brings investors, entrepreneurs, students, and educators together for three days of learning, connection, and bold new ideas.**

By **Dr. Sue Kane, CEO** | NCW Tech Alliance  
**Sponsored by Microsoft**

Organized by NCW Tech Alliance in partnership with the Flywheel Angel Network, the conference runs May 21–23 and culminates in a live investment competition on the Numerica Performing Arts Center stage.

Out of the 67 eligible companies that applied this spring, only six were selected to compete – placing them in the top 10% of the applicant pool and earning them the opportunity to pitch their ventures in front of a live audience and a panel of angel investors.

This year's finalists include founders developing solutions in marine technology, clean energy, food

innovation, and healthcare.

From sea urchin ranching that restores kelp forests to affordable underwater monitoring tools, sustainable food wraps, FDA-approved arthritis supports and a medical device to expand access to contact lens technology, the ventures are tackling real-world problems with creativity and drive.

There will be over \$200,000 on the line as these top six companies compete with "Shark Tank" style pitches in front of a live audience at the Numerica PAC.

What makes the Flywheel unique is more than just the size of the invest-

ment pool, it's the fact that local investors are the ones making the decisions.

Each year, the Flywheel Angel Network forms a new investment fund, and members commit their own capital to the conference's top companies.

This year's Flywheel Fund is led by Leonard Backus, a seasoned startup executive with deep roots in Central Washington and decades of experience scaling tech firms to IPO and acquisition.

More than just a competition, the Flywheel serves as a catalyst for long-term economic growth for the region by fostering local entrepreneurship and

strengthening the connection to investment networks across Washington State.

By connecting promising founders with capital, mentorship, and community, the conference is helping to ensure that innovation and opportunity remain grounded in, and accessible to, local communities and businesses across Central Washington.

The conference has grown significantly since its founding, drawing hundreds of visitors from across the state to Wenatchee each year.

This year's format introduces new sector-specific sessions, an expanded exhibitor hall, and enhanced networking built around industries driving the local economy – like agriculture, energy, healthcare, and aerospace.

Importantly, Flywheel is designed to include and inspire emerging innovators. Students and educators can attend the Thursday and Friday daytime sessions for just \$79.

Full-access conference tickets are \$299 and include two premier networking events and the full lineup of keynotes, panels, and receptions.

New this year, there's also a locals ticket for \$99 to attend the evening networking opportunities including the Thursday evening, Toast Around Town.

For the six finalists preparing to pitch this May, Flywheel is more than a stage. It's a launchpad – and for the region, it's a reminder that innovation doesn't just live in big cities or tech corridors. It's growing right here, nurtured by community, driven by local investment, and guided by the belief that entrepreneurship is key to a vibrant rural future.

The 2025 Flywheel Investment Conference is supported by Microsoft, Clark Nuber, and AEM Movement. More details, including tickets and the full conference agenda can be found at [www.flywheel-conference.com](http://www.flywheel-conference.com).



# Finance

## Business sale steps

**Beau Ruff**

Contributor for Ward Media



**S**elling anything more than a hot dog stand is a significant business undertaking that typically requires months of preparation and execution.

While there's no single, prescribed path, the following steps offer a valuable framework for sellers aiming to maximize their final payout while simultaneously reducing the potential for problems down the road. Professional advisors (attorneys and CPAs) should be engaged at step one.

### Update books and records with an eye towards sale.

Preparing financial and legal records for a sale requires a shift in perspective. While a business owner may have operated with less scrutiny in the past, potential buyers will conduct thorough due diligence.

Therefore, sellers should meticulously review all documentation, anticipating detailed inquiries. This includes scrutinizing legal agreements, financial statements, and ownership structures.

If multiple entities or personal assets are intertwined with the business, ownership should be clarified and assets transferred as needed to streamline the sale. A thorough review of financials is crucial.

Unusual or questionable entries, such as an owner's artificially low salary or personal expenses disguised as business costs, should be addressed.

These common practices, while perhaps justifiable during ownership, can raise red flags for buyers and detract from

the perceived value of the business.

The clearer and more transparent the financial picture, the smoother the sale process and the stronger the seller's negotiating position.

### Valuation

Business owners should engage a professional valuation expert to obtain an objective assessment of their company's worth.

While this valuation may not represent the final sale price, it provides valuable insight into how sophisticated buyers perceive and value the business.

Furthermore, the valuation process itself can be beneficial, as experts often offer guidance on adjustments to financial records and operational practices that can enhance the business's attractiveness to potential buyers.

### Solicit Bids or Entertain Offers.

The first two steps might take several months to complete, evidencing the need for patience. But, at this step, with clean books and records and professional valuation in hand, it is now appropriate for the seller to solicit bids or entertain potential offers.

The business owner might also consider working with a business broker.

### Letter of Intent (LOI)

The first written agreement between the parties is the LOI. It is far short of the detailed Purchase and Sale Agreement (below) but offers the opportunity to negotiate the finer points of the deal.

The LOI is typically non-binding on the issue

of whether the buyer must purchase the business at a stated price, but instead is binding on other matters. It generally requires that, in exchange for investigating the company and learning seller secrets and both parties spending time and money, they each agree to certain conditions that are binding.

They will generally be bound to things like: (1) keeping all information confidential (non-disclosure); (2) not competing against the seller... ever (non-competition); (3) not soliciting customers or employees from the seller (non-solicitation); (4) a period of exclusivity where they can only discuss the purchase and sale with each other.

### Due Diligence

After signing the LOI, the seller grants the potential buyer access to the business for due diligence.

This process allows the buyer to thoroughly investigate the business to confirm its suitability for purchase.

During this phase, buyers and their representatives will likely be present on-site, interacting with employees and reviewing various aspects of the business.

Sellers should not only prepare for this in-depth scrutiny but also carefully consider how and when to communicate the reason for the buyer's presence to their employees.

### Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA)

Both parties then work to establish a PSA that encompasses all the terms of the proposed deal and is the defining document capturing each party's



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rights and obligations.

The parties should assume that the PSA will be traded back and forth several times between the parties and their attorneys as the details of the transaction get ironed out.

The PSA is signed with a closing date usually set for a future date that is weeks or months out.

### Closing

At the prescribed date and time defined in the PSA, the formal business transition takes place.

This can be asset transfers or stock transfers or both. It is the formal time that the seller ceases to

own the business.

### Post-Closing Obligations and Contingencies.

In many business sales, the parties maintain obligations to each other for months or even years after closing.

The deal might structure in holdbacks or earn outs or contingency payments or employment agreements.

Each of these potential post-closing obligations must be complete before the deal is (finally, truly) done.

The opinions voiced in

this material are for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual or entity. This information is not intended to be a substitute for specific individualized tax or legal advice. We suggest that you discuss your specific situation with a qualified tax or legal advisor.

Beau Ruff, a licensed attorney and certified financial planner, is the director of planning at Cornerstone Wealth Strategies in Kennewick, WA.



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# Finance

**Tyler Kert**

Contributor for Ward Media



## Who has to pay the Washington state capital gains tax?

**T**ax season might be behind us, but it doesn't mean it's a good idea to stop tax-planning.

Most people have heard about the Washington state capital gains tax but don't actually know how it works. If you've heard bits and pieces and aren't quite sure whether it affects you, here's what you need to know.

### Background

The Washington State capital gains tax went into effect on January 1, 2022, and applied for the first time to tax returns filed in 2023. It's a 7% tax on the sale of long-term capital assets, such as stocks, bonds, and business interests.

The tax is designed to target the state's wealthiest residents and use the revenue to fund education and child services. But it isn't just a tax on the ultra-rich.

If you aren't aware of how the tax works, you could be hit by an unexpected, and avoidable, additional tax on your capital

gains.

Let's take a closer look at who can be impacted.

This 7% tax applies to long-term capital gains above the exclusion amount (\$270,000 in 2024, adjusted annually for inflation).

That means if you sell stock and realize \$300,000 in gains, you'll pay tax on \$30,000 of that amount.

Thankfully, this threshold is not based on your total income, just your net capital gains. If your salary is \$250,000 and you have \$50,000 in capital gains, you're still under the exemption amount and won't have to pay the tax.

Now, individuals with significant real estate gains might be holding their breath, but thankfully Washington doesn't tax every kind of gain. There are several exceptions.

### What's Exempt?

Among the gains that don't count towards the Washington state capital gains tax are sales of real estate, retirement account

distributions, depreciable property used in a business, and the sale of some family-owned small businesses.

This is good news for real estate investors and retirees. So, for example, if you sell a rental property, you will have to pay federal capital gains tax, but you won't be subject to this additional capital gains tax in Washington State.

Another question is whether investments in REITs (real estate investment trusts) or DSTs (Delaware Statutory Trusts) are exempt.

These types of investments can be difficult to classify because they are ownership interests in real property, and yet at times can be traded like shares.

The answer can be complicated. While the sale of real property is exempt, gains on REIT shares or DST interests may still be taxable depending on how they are structured and reported.

If you find yourself in this situation, it's worth

digging into the details with your CPA or advisor.

### Planning Ideas

No one likes to pay more tax than they need to, and there are legal ways to minimize exposure to this tax.

The first way that you can minimize your tax liability is to be strategic in the timing of your sales.

For example, if you have \$500,000 of long-term capital gains built up in an account, don't sell and recognize the entire gain in one year.

Instead, take advantage of the annual exclusion amount and sell over multiple years to eliminate your tax liability.

Tax-loss harvesting is another method that can allow you to avoid paying the capital gains tax.

By offsetting long-term capital gains with long-term capital losses, you can reduce your tax liability or eliminate it altogether.

It's important to note, however, that you can't offset long-term capital gains with short-term capital



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losses for the purposes of this tax.

Furthermore, using tax-advantaged accounts, or donating appreciated assets to charity are additional ways to mitigate your tax liability.

If you donate appreciated assets to charity, you can donate the full amount and won't be subject to the 7% tax.

In conclusion, the Washington state capital gains tax won't have an effect on most people.

But, if you are selling appreciated stocks or business interests and are going to realize a significant gain, it's worth reviewing your situation. Think you might be subject to the tax?

Talk with your CPA or financial advisor before

you sell appreciated assets. That one conversation could give you an idea to save you thousands and give you peace of mind.

*This material is for informational purposes only and does not constitute financial, investment, or tax advice. Please consult your tax advisor or financial planner to discuss your specific circumstances before making any decisions.*

*Tyler Kert, a licensed financial advisor and CPA, provides financial planning and tax consulting services at Tamarack Wealth Management in Cashmere, WA.*

## SPONSORED CONTENT

## Ready for 2026? A Simple Guide to Meeting Organics Mandates in NCW

### How businesses in Chelan and Douglas Counties can prepare now – without the panic

From Winton Manufacturing Compost Works

A quiet shift is happening in the way businesses handle waste in North Central Washington, and by 2026, it will be the new normal.

Under new state and local mandates, all businesses generating organic waste – including food scraps, yard debris, and compostable packaging – will be required to have a waste management plan in place.

If that sounds overwhelming, don't worry. With smart planning and local support, businesses can make the transition smooth, affordable, and even beneficial to their bottom line.

Winton Manufacturing Compost Works is here to help.

### What's Changing – and Why?

In response to increasing landfill costs and rising greenhouse gas emissions, Washington State has passed legislation (HB 1799) that phases in mandatory organic waste separation. Here in Chelan and Douglas counties, some businesses are already required to comply. By 2026, every business, regardless of size or industry, will need to have a plan for diverting organic waste.

Businesses most likely to be affected include:

- Grocery stores and food co-ops
- Restaurants, coffee shops, and food trucks
- Schools and colleges
- Hospitals, assisted living, and care homes
- Shopping centers and multi-tenant spaces (e.g., Pybus Market, Wenatchee Valley Mall)

### What Does Compliance Look Like?

Compliance doesn't necessarily mean overhauling your entire waste system. In most cases, it involves:

- Identifying your organic waste streams (food scraps, soiled paper, yard debris, compostable packaging)

- Implementing a sorting process with compost bins and signage
- Training staff on how to separate waste correctly
- Partnering with a licensed compost hauler (like Winton Manufacturing Compost Works)

### 5 Steps to Get Ahead of the 2026 Deadline

#### 1. Conduct a Waste Audit

Start by understanding how much organic waste your business generates. Winton Manufacturing offers free audits to help you get a clear picture.

#### 2. Set Up a Sorting System

Install clearly labeled compost bins in kitchens, breakrooms, and food service areas. Make sure recycling and landfill bins are nearby to avoid cross-contamination. Winton provides free signage in multiple languages catered to your organic waste types.

#### 3. Train Your Team

Successful composting depends on staff buy-in. Provide simple, visual training and post signage in multiple languages to support diverse teams. Winton's team includes members ready to help you

train your employees at no cost to your business.

#### 4. Switch to Compostable Packaging

If you use disposable takeout containers, cups, or utensils, consider switching to certified compostable alternatives. Weinstein Beverage Company has partnered with Winton to offer only compostable packaging that can be composted at our local composting facility.

#### 5. Partner with a Local Compost Provider

Winton Manufacturing offers tailored compost pickup plans, staff training, and implementation support to ensure long-term success.

### Why Act Now?

#### Avoid Fines and Penalties

Starting in 2026, failure to comply with organics regulations may result in civil penalties. (This passed with HB1497, but has not yet been signed into law; penalties are \$250-\$1,000 for non-compliance)

#### Save on Waste Disposal Costs

Composting can lower your landfill volume – and your garbage bill.

#### Support Local

### Agriculture

Winton's nutrient-rich compost goes directly to area farms, orchards, and vineyards, improving soil health and reducing reliance on chemical fertilizers.

### Boost Your Reputation

Customers and clients are increasingly drawn to sustainable businesses. Demonstrating environmental leadership sets you apart.

### Winton Manufacturing Is Here to Help

Whether you're a large hospital or a small café, Winton Manufacturing Compost Works can guide you through the process, step by step. Our team offers:

- Free waste evaluations
- Staff training in English and Spanish
- Compost bin placement and signage
- Compost pickup service tailored to your schedule

The 2026 deadline is coming – but with the right support, you'll be ready. Let Winton Manufacturing Compost Works help you build a waste management plan that's smart, simple, and sustainable. Call (509) 763-0000 or visit [winton-mfg.com](http://winton-mfg.com) to schedule your consultation today.



## Q &amp; A



# Meet Bliss Littler, Wenatchee Wild General Manager

By **Quinn Propst** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

**W**ith nearly four decades of experience in hockey, Bliss Littler brings a unique blend of passion, leadership, and community focus to his role as General Manager of the Wenatchee Wild.

A lifelong student of the game, Littler has dedicated his career to developing young talent and building successful teams both on and off the ice.

Now in his 13th year with the Wild – and his 36th in the hockey business – he’s overseen the team’s transition into the Western Hockey League and continues to play a pivotal role in shaping its future.

Recently, we caught up with Littler to learn more about his path through the sport, his philosophy on leadership and player development, and what it means to run a junior hockey organization with deep roots in its community.

## Please tell our readers a little bit about yourself.

I am 58 years old and have been married to my wife, Gretchen, for 22 years.

We have one son, Cade, who is 20 years old and is at the University of North Dakota playing hockey. He is a Calgary Flames draft pick.

We have one daughter, Grace, who is a senior in high school at the Okanagan Hockey Academy in Penticton, BC. Grace will go to college next fall at Saint Anselm, where she will also play college hockey.

I have worked in hockey my entire adult life. I met my wife, Gretchen, while coaching in Billings,

Montana. We have moved around as coaches will do from Billings, MT, to Topeka, KS, to Kearney, NE, to Omaha, NE, and then here to Wenatchee.

I started working as an Assistant Coach and Marketing Director in Minot, ND, in the Saskatchewan Hockey League. I will be starting my 36th year in the hockey business.

## How long have you been in your current role?

This will be my 13th year as the GM of the Wenatchee Wild. My first 8 years here in Wenatchee, I was also the Head Coach.

Before coming to Wenatchee, I spent 12 years in the United States Hockey League (USHL) as a GM/Head coach in Omaha, NE, Tri City, NE, and Topeka, KS. I started in this business in Billings, MT, with the Billings Bulls as GM/Head coach for 7 years. (WHL)

## Please tell our readers about the Wenatchee Wild.

The Wenatchee Wild is a hockey team in the Western Hockey League (WHL). The WHL is the top development junior hockey league in the world for developing players for the NHL.

The Wild employs approximately 20 full-time employees. We take a lot of pride in the fact that we help raise over \$100,000 a year for local charities, youth teams, and service clubs through Chuck a Puck, jersey actions and tickets.

Being an active member of the community is very important to our organization.

## What led you to this position?

I went to college for Business and have always had a passion for hockey and being an organizer. I know I have been extremely lucky to do something I absolutely love to do for a living.

## How has your leadership style evolved over the years?

I think early on I was more rigid and structured in how I went about my business. I have for sure lightened up and try to let people work and realize that there is more than one way to get a job done.

I will give expectations and offer help and suggestions, but I try to let people work and not micromanage.

## What’s been the most pivotal decision of your career so far?

For sure, it was taking the phone call from David White about staying in Wenatchee as the GM/Head coach and bringing my wife on the staff to help with running the business.

## What’s your philosophy on team culture, and how do you instill it across such a dynamic group of young athletes?

We are a players-first organization. We want to make sure that our decisions always start with the player being taken care of.

From there, we want all of our players and coaches to be held accountable to work ethic, discipline, and on and off ice behavior.

With our coaching staff

leading by example, it makes creating this culture a ‘lead by example’ case, where the players not only hear it, but also see it from our coaches.

## What are some of the biggest challenges of running the hockey operations for a WHL team?

Having patience with player development is always hard. When you try to balance winning hockey games for instant gratification for your fans and the development of the young players that usually come with youthful mistakes, it is always hard but you know you have to develop the young players for future success. Trading a player is also tough.

## What is your favorite part of your job and why?

I would say that when the players succeed, it would be at the top of the list. It could be when they earn a college scholarship, get drafted by an NHL team, play their first NHL game or have success in life and reach out to share their success.

## How do you balance short-term team performance with long-term organizational development?

On the player development side, trying to balance the young player getting his ice time to develop and the Head coach and the rest of the team trying to win games. The coaches and players all know that for development, younger

players need to be put in good situations to grow.

Also, a player in his draft year expects more attention from the coach, so it’s always a balancing act that the Head coach and GM have to deal with.

## As General Manager, you’re responsible for the entire hockey side of the business. What does a typical day look like for you?

Well, as GM here in Wenatchee, I oversee both the Business side and the hockey side of the organization.

First of all, you need to hire and have good people around you that you can trust. Then you have to let them do their jobs and not micro-manage them.

On the business side, I usually meet with the sales and marketing team once a week and stay updated on season tickets and corporate sales with Gretchen Littler and David Rayfield.

I will also meet with the business manager/accountant, Jesi Janes, to go over cash flow every week.

The Hockey side is definitely more fun and exciting for me. I will have a set meeting with Chris Clark, Assistant GM/Director of Hockey Operations, one time a week, as well as a set meeting with Head Coach Don Nachbaur, one time a week. I will also have several meetings and discussions with our Director of Scouting, Leigh Mendelson, during the week.

I try to watch practice as much as possible to see how our players are developing.

As a hockey staff, we talk every day about the players and who is having success and who might be struggling and how to help that player.

## What are some of your future goals for the Wenatchee Wild?

The goal is to win the Memorial Cup.

## Who or what inspires you?

The challenge of being a very small market team in the US division certainly has its financial challenges. Building a championship team will definitely keep you up at night.

When David White (owner of the Wild) bought the Winnipeg Ice franchise and moved it to Wenatchee in June of 2023 we inherited a team without many draft picks in the cupboard and missing many desired high end prospects on our list we knew it would be a tough couple of years before we would be able to start moving in the direction of chasing the Memorial Cup.

As far as who or what inspires me. I would say wanting my wife, kids, parents and family to be proud of what we can accomplish. David and Lisa White are also two people I don’t want to let down.

The trust they have put into Gretchen and me is humbling. Watching how they operate as business leaders, but more importantly as high end caring people is motivating.

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# Keeping Up with people

## Split Heritage Apparel – streetwear designed by a diverse cultural collective

By **MIKE MALTAIS** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

In this era of online connectedness and social media there appear to be few places left that are too remote and removed to be off the grid and out of the loop for a successful business. Wauconda, Washington, (population 476), 20-plus miles east of Tonasket, is apparently not one of them. That is where you find the geographic location of Split Heritage Apparel and owner/artists/designers Sarah and Jacob Lowe.

California transplants Sarah and Jacob Lowe recently regrew roots at the 4,300-foot elevation near Bonaparte Lake on the edge of Wauconda to be closer to Sarah's parents.

The next step: integrating their business dreams with their choice of place.

### Design takes flight

"We're both heavily into



COURTESY OF SPLIT HERITAGE APPAREL  
Jacob & Sarah Lowe stand in front of an interesting mural they found in an Okanogan alley.

the visual arts," said Lowe. "Jacob has come from a street art culture, and I went to art school with a focus on 3D modeling and illustration. We have a desire to share our creations in a practical and useful way, and graphic t-shirts, and eventually hats, stickers, and canvas bags seems like a good avenue."

The couple's clever business name and logo reflect economy and teamwork. "Our name 'Split Heritage Apparel' is our story summed up in just a few words," said Lowe. "And our logo is our combined handprint."

The business tag line: Human - Made Art.

Lowe said her husband's Central American heritage and culture has influenced her art to a great extent.

"By combining his ideas and mine, we come up with stories and ideas for designs that I never would have thought of alone," Lowe said.

"While I produce most of the designs in their final form, he has a great influence on them from beginning to end."

One look at the unique results of the brain trust

See **SPLIT HERITAGE** Page 10

## Wenatchee Spa promotes long-time employee to management position

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Tranquility Day Spa has promoted Elizabeth Vazquez to the position of Spa Manager.

Vazquez, who has served as the business receptionist since January 2020, brings considerable industry experience to her new role. She obtained her cosmetology license in 2014 and has worked extensively in the beauty sector, developing expertise in hair and facial products, cosmetics, and hair design.

"I have a deep drive and commitment to succeed. It consistently forces me to work hard, stay disciplined and push myself to be a



Elizabeth Vazquez

better version of me every day," Vazquez said.

In addition to her management responsibilities, Vazquez will continue to support the nail technician apprentice program at the facility.

Janice Florea, owner and instructor at Tran-

quility Day Spa, expressed confidence in the appointment.

"She is a great support. She knows our product and provides outstanding customer service to all our clients and our clinicians," Florea said.

Tranquility Day Spa & Salon, located at 735 N. Wenatchee Avenue, has been recognized as Wenatchee World's Best Day Spa for 13 consecutive years, from 2011 through 2024. The business offers comprehensive services including skin care, spa pedicures and manicures, body treatments, massage therapy, and full hair salon services.

## Tranquility Day Spa Esthetician earns Washington state license

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Monica Pascacio, an esthetician at Tranquility Day Spa & Salon, has obtained her Washington state license after completing a 2,000-hour apprenticeship program.

Pascacio completed her training under the supervision of Janice Florea, owner and instructor at Tranquility Day Spa.

The apprenticeship program prepared Pascacio for state board examinations, which she



Monica Pascacio

successfully passed.

"Monica was an excellent student, and we are

proud to say she is one of our own clinicians and part of the team at Tranquility Day Spa," Florea said.

As a licensed esthetician, Pascacio offers a range of skin care services including anti-aging facials, microdermabrasion, facial peels, acne treatments, LED light therapy, and microcurrent procedures.

She also provides brow laminations, waxing, eye-

See **PASCACIO** Page 10

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### Cryotherapy

Continued from page 1

his way around injuries as well, as a 23-year veteran of the Air Force.

But beyond the technical intricacies involved in cryotherapy, like “microcirculation” and what it can do to permanently remove fat cells or provide therapeutic management of chronic conditions like arthritis, the idea of bringing cryo to Wenatchee was first and foremost an act of community for these two.

“We want to connect with our community and help people. It’s really important to us to be a part of the community and always has been,” says Hughes, dog barking in the background as she speaks to us by phone from her home in Malaga. She knows that people are looking for ways to improve themselves, and

she’s ready to do that in a fundamental way. “I want them to leave feeling happier and feeling confident,” she says.

And one way they’ve been able to connect with the community as a new business in Wenatchee was becoming a member of the Wenatchee Chamber of Commerce. At a recent “Business After Hours” event put on by the Chamber, Ericka and Shawn ran into Nikolas Sheehan, the Director of Sales and Ballpark Operations for the Wenatchee AppleSox. As each talked about what they did at the networking event, they began what seems like a promising partnership.

After finding out that Shawn was not just a sports fan and a local official, but a contracting referee for both the University of Washington Huskies and the Seattle Seahawks



ERICKA HUGHES/CASCADE MOUNTAIN CRYO  
Shawn Farber and Ericka Hughes of Cascade Mountain Cryo in their downtown office in the Morris Building.

football team, Sheehan excitedly brought up his own baseball team.

Sheehan told Ward Media, “I took the chance to tell Shawn about the AppleSox, where owner Jose Oglesby and Head Coach Mitch Darlington are always on the lookout for ways to gain a competitive edge – whether through advanced analytics for scouting or by providing better recovery options for players during our demanding 57-game season. Shawn and I both agreed that Cascade Mountain Cryo’s services could play

a vital role in enhancing player recovery and performance. At the same time, this partnership could be a great way to help promote their business and offerings to the local community.”

Allie Schank, the General Manager of the team, told us “Our goal is to send AppleSox players back to their colleges and universities in even better shape than when they arrived. By incorporating cryotherapy, we’re giving them every opportunity to stay fresh, recover faster, and perform at their peak. This investment in player wellness will only

enhance their experience in Wenatchee and set them up for success beyond the summer.”

Ericka and Shawn have a long history in this area. Hughes was born in Wenatchee and grew up in Cashmere. Farber was born in Ephrata and grew up in Quincy, then came back to Ephrata for high school before joining the military.

In truth, Hughes says, cryotherapy came along as a kind of “rabbit-hole” fascination for her, with her medical background and her position as Office Manager of Wenatchee Midwife Service and Childbirth Center. One thing led to another, and after extensive training and a trip to Dallas to make it official, both Hughes and Farber became certified cryotherapists.

Let’s just say you think it’s all about sports medicine, the list of things that cryotherapy can treat is pretty impressive. With just a few notable conditions that make one ineligible for cryo, such as cancer, it can be used to trim up to two inches off your waist or thighs without surgery or any downtime. It can address scars, cellulite, skin discoloration, wrinkles, acne and a host of other

minor irritations. And the uses in sports medicine translate into the everyday life of people who are simply very active – runners, gym enthusiasts or just people who love to enjoy the outdoors and scenic beauty of our area.

But having just opened their doors in January, Cascade Mountain Cryo is already poised to accomplish their primary objective of helping the community. There’s nothing much more community-minded you can do as a service that offers sports medicine than partnering up with the local baseball team at the beginning of the season to give them an edge in the West Coast League.

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SCREEN CAPTURE/WENATCHEE APPLESOX  
The Wenatchee AppleSox in action at home at Paul Thomas Sr. Stadium near Wenatchee Valley College.



ERICKA HUGHES/CASCADE MOUNTAIN CRYO  
Ericka Hughes demonstrates the equipment used in cryotherapy.



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# MEMBER MESSENGER

"Driven to Promote and Protect Small Business"

MAY 2025 ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PAGE 1

## Solving Soil Mysteries for Safer Construction: A Sit-down Conversation with Nelson Geotechnical Associates, Inc.

One of the lesser-known yet essential steps in construction and the building permit process is understanding the soil. What lies beneath the surface isn't just dirt; it's a hidden world of layers, rocks, roots, and surprises that determine whether your building will stand strong or start to wobble.

Geotechnical engineering is the science that studies the mechanics and behavior of earth materials such as soil and rock. It involves assessing soil stability and groundwater conditions, identifying potential risks, and ensuring that construction projects are both safe and efficient.

Nelson Geotechnical Associates, Inc. (NGA) began 25 years ago in the bustling town of Woodinville as a



one-person operation. Since then, it has grown to encompass two locations – Woodinville and Wenatchee – with a team of approximately 16 employees. With 25 years of experience across various soil types in Washington, NGA has successfully addressed a wide range of geotechnical challenges.

Once you understand what geotechnical engineering is, the next question is:

Who needs these services? The answer is straightforward: **anyone with dirt.** More specifically, anyone who owns property or wants to build a structure on land.

From homeowners and municipalities to contractors, architects, and engineers, geotechnical insight is a critical step in the building process. Homeowners often approach NGA with concerns such as cracked ceilings, foundation issues, or landscaping erosion. NGA's team investigates these issues and offers practical solutions.

"There is no problem or project too great or too small for us – we're here to help," said Alex Rinaldi, Project Manager, P.E. at NGA.

Rinaldi wasted no time after college, diving into



Grading work associated with the Holden Mine remediation, Chelan County.

hands-on learning at NGA with the support of experienced staff engineers and Principal Engineer, Khaled Shawish.

Many team members have been with the company since the beginning of their

careers and share a deep passion for earth sciences. More importantly, they take pride in helping clients understand what's happening beneath their feet – and how to address it! NGA's staff collaborates and shares

knowledge, resulting in a vast database of Washington's soil conditions.

At NGA, building trust with clients is at the core of everything. The team focuses on explaining problems clearly, suggesting smart and



Employees from left to right - Chris Ward-Guthrie, Project Geologist, Riley Blanchard, Staff Geologist II, Alex Rinaldi, Project Manager, P.E., Andrew Yokel-Deliduka, Staff Geologist I, Sofia Garibay, Bookkeeper, Anna Schluneger, Office Manager.

\*Woodinville office not pictured



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# MEMBER MESSENGER

“Driven to Promote and Protect Small Business”

MAY 2025 ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PAGE 2



affordable solutions, and ensuring clients understand the bigger picture of their decisions. NGA is not just about checking a box on a permit application; “we’re a consulting firm committed to providing real, tailored options for each project.”

NGA has proudly been a member of Building NCW for 10 years and is looking forward to networking opportunities with BNCW in 2025. Building NCW has several upcoming events for its members and the community. For more information, check out Building North Central Washington’s Facebook page or website. For more information about NGA, please contact 425-486-1669, [info@nelsongeotech.com](mailto:info@nelsongeotech.com), or visit their website at [nelsongeotech.com](http://nelsongeotech.com).



Foundation stablization associated with a residential landslide mitigation project, Chelan County.



Subsurface exploration of an active deep-seated landslide, Snohomish County.

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Marketing Matters

Staying Seen

Why Brand Consistency and Visibility Matter More in Uncertain Times

When the economy starts to wobble, the first instinct for many businesses is to scale back spending, and marketing is often one of the first things on the chopping block. But history and consumer behavior suggest that cutting visibility during uncertain times may be one of the costliest mistakes a business can make.

Maintaining a consistent brand presence, even on a tighter budget, can not only preserve your customer base but it can also help you grow it.

**Consistency Builds Trust**

Brand consistency is more than just using the same logo and colors. It's about delivering a unified message across every touchpoint – from your website and social media to email marketing and local ads in your market.

This consistency creates a sense of reliability and professionalism, which becomes especially valuable when customers feel uncertain.

Your brand can be that familiar face in a crowded room.

When everything else feels unpredictable, a steady, recognizable presence stands out and feels safe.

That's why the brands that maintain consistent messaging – in tone, visuals, and values – are often the ones customers turn to again and again.

**Advertising in a Downturn: A Long-Term Advantage**

History has shown us, businesses that continue to advertise during economic downturns often come out ahead.

During the 2008 recession, brands that sustained their advertising efforts not

Split Heritage

Continued from page 6

validates Lowe's claim. The visual double entendre of Kimono Dragon or the whimsical Maya Roller King 'Jaguar Painter' complement the special rendition of Frank S. Matsura's camera, or the thought-provoking Tamarack Jack decorate must-have apparel selections.

"We do not use any AI, clip art, pre-made art from any sources, or anyone's IP," said Lowe. "Each and every design we complete has a story behind it."

The business tagline: "Human - Made Art."

**Marketing Strategies**

"We wear our designs to restaurants, coffee shops, and events around the county," said Lowe.

"This allows for natural interactions for us to



COURTESY OF SPLIT HERITAGE APPAREL  
Experimenting in linoleum block printing as part of the Kimono Dragon research process.

share our brand."

Lowe said the couple found customer interest at a recent premiere screening of the documentary Our Mister Matsura they attended in Omak April 18.

Other tools include book-mark size flyers with partial designs, a QR code for their splitheritageapparel.com on Spotify, and applying to have a space

only maintained customer loyalty but captured market share as competitors went dark.

A well-recognized example is when Netflix doubled down on its marketing efforts while Blockbuster reduced its footprint and cut costs in 2008.

Netflix invested in marketing and technology, pivoting toward streaming, while keeping its brand messaging consistent around convenience and value.

Their decision paid off in a big way, setting the stage for Netflix to become a household name and eventually dominate the entertainment landscape.

When others pull back, maintaining your marketing efforts allows you to stand out more.

With less noise in the market, your message carries farther. It's also usually more cost-effective – advertising costs often

drop when demand is low, giving you more value for your dollar.

**The High Cost of Going Quiet**

While it may seem like a smart short-term cost cut, disappearing from your customers' view comes with consequences. Out of sight really does mean out of mind.

When your business stops showing up, whether in search results, social feeds, inboxes, or local publications, you lose momentum.

Customers don't stop needing products or services; they just look elsewhere.

Rebuilding awareness is expensive and time-consuming. It's much easier and more effective to maintain visibility than it is to start over.

**How to Stay Present – Without Breaking the Bank**

Staying visible doesn't mean blowing your budget. Focus on being consistent and strategic.

Evaluate the channels you already use, look at what works, look to where you could improve, look to where you can grow your target audience.



STOCK PHOTO

Here are a few ways to keep your brand strong during slow times:

- Stick to your brand identity: Make sure your colors, fonts, and messaging are the same across platforms.
- Be clear and empathetic: Let customers know how you're supporting them during uncertain times, whether it's through flexible service, added value, or simply a reliable presence.
- Maintain a rhythm: A regular newsletter, scheduled social posts, and consistent print or digital ads can go a long way.
- Think local and loyal: Don't overlook the power of community-based advertising and existing customers. They are your most cost-effective audience.

**Stay the Course**

Uncertain times test ev-

everyone, and it's natural to want to tighten the belt. But visibility and consistency aren't luxuries. They're essentials.

They reassure your customers, uphold your reputation, and position your business to come out stronger on the other side.

So while others may choose to go quiet, let your brand be the steady voice that customers continue to hear. Show up, stay consistent, and stay seen.

The businesses that keep showing up are the ones that get remembered and rewarded when the economy turns around.

*Amy Yaley is the COO of Ward Media and the co-owner of Apple Capital Marketing & Northwest Swag Works. She can be reached at amy@ward.media.*

Brian Fair

Pioneer Title Company



Chelan and Douglas

real estate market

outpaces national trends

The real estate market in Chelan and Douglas counties continues to buck national trends, posting significant gains in March even as sales across the United States declined.

On April 24, the National Association of Realtors announced that March's single-family home sales dropped by 5.9% from February, marking the largest monthly decline since 2022.

However, Chelan and Douglas counties reported a 36% increase in unit sales

and a 40% rise in dollar volume during the same period.

Financing activity also strengthened in March, aided by a 0.3% drop in interest rates for most of the month. The lower rates contributed to 31 more financed deals compared to February. The Wenatchee market led the surge, with a 40% increase in unit sales and a 47% jump in dollar volume.

For the quarter ending March 31, all subregions of Chelan and Douglas counties reported gains over

the previous year. Chelan County saw a 12% increase in unit volume.

The Upper Valley recorded a 39% rise in unit sales, and the Wenatchee market posted a 7.5% gain.

The sales price per square foot for existing homes is now reflecting a steady increase. Market analysts noted that the "shock" of rising interest rates in 2022 appears to have been absorbed. Properties priced under \$500,000 and over \$700,000 showed both quarterly and annual increases.

Pascacio

Continued from page 6

lash and brow tinting, and eyelash perms and lifts for both men and women.

Tranquility Day Spa & Salon has been rec-

ognized as "Wenatchee World's Best Day Spa" every year from 2011 through 2024.

The facility, located at 735 N. Wenatchee Avenue, offers a comprehensive menu of spa ser-

vices including natural facials, radio frequency treatments, microdermabrasion, peels, waxing, manicures, pedicures, body treatments, massage services, and full salon offerings.



Real Estate

Top Properties Chelan County

March 2025

Buyer	Seller	Sale Price	Address	City	Living Area	Year Built	Bed-rooms	Bath-rooms	Garage Area	Pool	Fire-place
SDC WENATCHEE 1 LLC	MALAGA ORCHARD HOLDING COMPANY LLC	\$7,296,562	4235 FIREHOUSE RD	MALAGA	0	0			0	N	N
SEATTLE MARINE MANAGEMENT CO LLC	TRIPEN INC	\$2,250,000	101 BASS LN	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N
ELLIS RYAN R	PHENNING GARY F & SANDRA L	\$2,093,000	7828 E LEAVENWORTH RD	LEAVENWORTH	2396	2016	2	2.25	280	N	N
PALISADE CAPITAL HOLDINGS LLC	SUNSET CONDOMINIUMS LLC	\$2,000,000	1328 W WOODIN AVE	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N
DRAKE SIMON & AIMEE	TRUSTY LELAND G JR & HILLARY S	\$1,990,000	17065 RIVER RD	PLAIN	8641	2003	7	7.5	1233.7	Y	Y
TOLA LLC	BEALL ORCHARDS LLC	\$1,800,000	UNASSIGNED	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N
RIVERFRONT SQUARE LLC	HIBBARD LARRY E	\$1,600,000	114 E WOODIN AVE	CHELAN	4720	1910			0	N	N
BREWER VERNON E & ANITA J	BERTILSON KEITH & TRACEY	\$1,495,000	4225 W EAGLEROCK DR	WENATCHEE	2665	2006	5	5	1600	N	N
HOWELL MARY K	MARBETT PHILIP & CHERI	\$1,197,000	1529 DEMPSEY RD	LEAVENWORTH	1312	2021	2	1	784	N	Y
CAMPAGNARO MICHAEL A & GINA M	MOORE LESLIE B	\$1,150,000	120 RIDGEVIEW DR	CHELAN	2179	2015			628	N	N
SHOULTS DAVID T & GABRIELLE M	FORTUITY LLC	\$1,000,000	UNASSIGNED	CASHMERE	0	0			0	N	N
MELTON TAYLOR H & KARA G ETAL	HENNING JEFFREY A & LINDSAY K	\$1,000,000	3665 DIANNA WAY	WENATCHEE	1865	2002	4	3.5	913	N	Y
MARTIN RICHARD A & TERRI L	PAR HOLDINGS LLC	\$995,000	111 E MOUNTAIN BROOK LN	WENATCHEE	2178	2007	3	3.5	474	N	Y
PINE AND PEAKS LLC	KORTMAN KELLY	\$850,000	16821 LAKEVIEW DR	LAKE WENATCHEE	1656	1995	2	2	230	N	N
POLCZYNSKI COLTON & MENCONI JESSICA	BRANDT TRAVIS & NOELLE	\$825,000	224 STONEYBROOK LN	WENATCHEE	3481	1993	5	4	0	Y	Y
KING KRISTINA & ISAAC	STEVIC MICHAEL S & STEPHANIE W	\$825,000	400 SPRING VIEW PL	CHELAN	1314	2021	4	2.5	736	N	Y
BOHMER LIZA & WILLIAM	PINE TOP CABIN LLC	\$799,000	2417 SALAL DR	LAKE WENATCHEE	1320	1991	3	1.75	0	N	Y
TROGDON THOMAS D & HEATH KAREN A	BOETTCHER SAM ETAL	\$777,500	12758 PINE RIDGE DR	PESHASTIN	1825	1999	3	2.5	0	N	Y
LAKE CHELAN COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNCIL	PRINSLOO DORETTE	\$750,000	91 WAPATO WAY	MANSON	2184	1950			0	N	N
HUTCHISON ADAM S & ROWENA V	ANTONIOS LANDSCAPING & ROCK WALLS INC	\$750,000	12 ABE LN	MANSON	1908	2023	3	3	288	N	Y
FAST RILEY & MADELEINE	POH VENTURES LLC	\$725,000	101 LIBERTY LN	CASHMERE	0	0			0	N	N
PAUL AARON & HEMPILL BONNIE F	BRAY RODNEY ETAL	\$695,000	34223 STEVENS RD	STEVENS PASS	1736	1991	4	2	0	N	N
HAAS HEATHER L & MICHAEL E	AIRWAY EXCAVATION & CONSTRUCTION LLC	\$674,900	2908 RIVIERA BLVD	MALAGA	1271	2024	3	2	400	N	N
DIXON WHITNEY B & KILEY C	OBERFELDER JEFF E & SHELLY A	\$670,000	116 ROLLING ROCK RD	CHELAN	2168	2014	4	2.5	1076	N	Y
KOSSOW JARED	LUCKENSMEYER MATTEW F	\$658,525	202 CHAPEL ST	CASHMERE	1272	1935	4	2	1000	N	Y
DILLY LUKE & EMILY	CROSSLIN LEE C & LISA	\$624,999	210 E PETERS ST	WENATCHEE	2556	2001			0	N	N
CASADOS KATLYN & ADRIAN	WILHELM LENESE S	\$620,000	1752 LOWER MONITOR RD	WENATCHEE	2640	2000			0	N	N
BRANDT TRAVIS	STRUCK HENRY P	\$597,600	2026 WOODRIDGE ST	WENATCHEE	1941	2011	3	2.5	528	N	N
LIU MENGYUAN & JIANG YANG	DAWSON STEVEN & TIA	\$595,000	17102 CAMP 12 RD	PLAIN	1209	1993	2	1.5	0	N	Y
MARTIN ROSS J & HAILEY J	ARTHUR VINCENT M & CHERYL K	\$585,000	1928 HIDEAWAY PL	WENATCHEE	1926	1997	4	3	528	N	Y
VANGUARD DEVELOPMENT GROUP LLC	SMELLEY JAMES B	\$570,000	921 HIGHLAND DR	WENATCHEE	2520	1928	5	2.75	400	N	Y
MELTON ANDREW	ARNOLD THOMAS R	\$560,000	2951 MISSION RIDGE RD	WENATCHEE	1156	1983	3	2	484	N	Y
KRUEGER EDWARD R & LINDA S	CARTY DIANA E	\$549,900	312 CANYON CREEK DR	WENATCHEE	1562	2005	3	2	552	N	Y
SHAY BRIAN R	SHABNOW TRACEY & TASHA	\$549,000	12592 MAPLE ST	LEAVENWORTH	0	0			0	N	N
BERNAL JASMIN I & HAHN GUY S	GROTH AMY G	\$540,000	149 SARATOGA LN	MALAGA	1936	2014	3	2.25	600	N	N
FERGUSON PRESTON M & JESSICA B	FIEBELKORN SOPHIE	\$535,000	118 S DELAWARE AVE	WENATCHEE	3107	1910	4	1.75	506	N	Y
ATLAS CONSTRUCTION ADVISORS LLC	HOME RUN TEAM LLC	\$525,000	229 SUN VALLEY DR	WENATCHEE	2296	2013		2.5	936	N	Y
LIMON JOSE & KATELIN	BROWNLEE KEVIN M	\$511,250	190 ADEL LN	WENATCHEE	2544	2019			0	N	N
MELINE MARK & ANITA D	IBARRA OSVALDO & ALICIA	\$500,000	206 PATON ST	CASHMERE	1008	1948	2	.75	912	N	N
WENNING BERTA K	DUNDAS SHAUN F & CHERI L	\$490,000	1750 CENTRAL AVE	WENATCHEE	1746	0			0	N	N
ATKISSON GRANT & ASAD AMINA	VIVA WENATCHEE LLC	\$485,786	212 BERRYMAN WAY	MALAGA	0	0			0	N	N
HARRINGTON KEVIN B & LISA E	PETERSON RYAN	\$485,000	709 SCHONS PL	WENATCHEE	1149	1956	3	1.5	264	Y	Y
MC MATH KRISTINE M & GARY S	HEALEY JESSIE	\$479,900	2921 SIERRA BLVD	MALAGA	1230	2008	3	1.75	440	N	N
HENSON TOBIN & HENSON OWEN	RUMMEL SYLVIA A	\$459,900	215 N MILLER ST	WENATCHEE	874	1930	3	2	360	N	Y
KRAEMER AUGUST W	OLD MONITOR ORCHARDS LLC	\$452,500	3903 OLD MONITOR RD	CASHMERE	1204	1925	4	1	0	N	N
TORRES EDWIN G & MORRISON JULIA C	NELSON MITCHELL L	\$450,000	1224 PERSHING ST	WENATCHEE	972	1946	2	1	240	N	N
GIERSDORF LANCE & MALISSA	HAGER DWIGHT & GARIBAY AUDELINA	\$445,000	1613 WESTWOOD AVE	WENATCHEE	1307	1993	3	2	400	N	N
VARGAS HERNANDEZ ELISEO & CASTRO GAYTAN VIRGINIA	PRAG CAROL A	\$440,000	1506 MAPLE ST	WENATCHEE	1568	1992			384	N	N
REYES SERGIO V ETAL	RINCON INVESTMENTS LLC	\$439,000	1223 MONTANA ST	WENATCHEE	1506	1952	3	1	0	N	N
ACKERMAN JEREMY	IRON BACK MIKE LLC	\$431,000	22 LAVON LN	MALAGA	1348	2024	3	2	362.5	N	N
GUERRA ISRAEL & BRAVO VALDOVINOS SELENA L	IRON BACK MIKE LLC	\$430,000	21 LAVON LN	MALAGA	1348	2024	3	2	362.5	N	N
GALLAGA GARCIA OSCAR ETAL	SCOTT CHANTEL & JOHNSON AARON M	\$420,000	1013 PRINCETON AVE	WENATCHEE	1208	1930	4	1.75	576	N	Y
HESTER WESLEY C & NATALIE S	WALL LOUANA F	\$420,000	1016 VASSAR AVE	WENATCHEE	1390	1948	4	1.75	0	N	Y
DEISENROTH LYNN P & DEISENROTH ERIN	ELLIOTT LOLA C	\$420,000	921 COLLEGE ST	WENATCHEE	1536	1984	3	2	484	N	N



Real Estate

Top Properties Chelan County

March 2025

Buyer	Seller	Sale Price	Address	City	Living Area	Year Built	Bed-rooms	Bath-rooms	Garage Area	Pool	Fire-place
ZONES AMBER	EIDER PROPERTIES LLC	\$420,000	1030 FINCH LN	WENATCHEE	1743	2023	3	2.5	220	N	N
SONES WILLIAM T & ARNDT SHEENA	EIDER PROPERTIES LLC	\$419,000	1030 FINCH LN	WENATCHEE	1743	2023	3	2.5	220	N	N
DE JONG DANIELLE	EIDER PROPERTIES LLC	\$415,000	1030 FINCH LN	WENATCHEE	1639	2023	3	2.5	220	N	N
RUVALCABA JENNIFER & RUVALCABA MARIA	ESQUIBEL ANTONIO MORA & VIOLETA OCHOA ETAL	\$413,000	214 PERRY ST	CASHMERE	1536	2008	3	2	0	N	N
GARDNER ANNE C	HOWARD SUSAN N	\$412,500	126 QUAIL RUN	WENATCHEE	1143	0			0	N	N
MORRIS LARRY A & KIMBERLY K	PETERS LEAH E	\$410,000	UNASSIGNED	LEAVENWORTH	0	0			0	N	N
BUGNI PETE & GLORIA	DRINKWATER JOHN E ETAL	\$400,000	6312 ALDER CT	WENATCHEE	2048	1991	2	3	0	N	N
FITZGERALD MAURA A	EIDER PROPERTIES LLC	\$399,000	1030 FINCH LN	WENATCHEE	1639	2023	3	2.5	220	N	N
RODDICK MARISA M	TATE TONY A & BENNY J	\$380,000	1007 YALE AVE	WENATCHEE	1398	1946	3	1.75	0	N	Y
SCHEFFLER MICHAEL & SCHMIDT CRESTA	DEENIK SARAH K & LOUIS Z	\$370,000	605 YAKIMA ST	WENATCHEE	1064	1910	2	.75	432	N	N
OCHS ELDON & LORI RIX	SAGE HOMES LLC	\$364,900	390 EMMA DR	WENATCHEE	1270	2024	3	2	420	N	Y
MARR DEVON & WHITNEY	ZORICH KATHERINE M	\$355,000	14941 GOLDEN DELICIOUS ST	ENTIAT	1060	2000			0	N	N
YOUMANS SCOTT B & ANDREA J	LARSON RICHARD R & MARLENE R	\$355,000	8 WELLS AVE	MANSON	1248	1977			0	N	N
NELSON RONALD L & PATRICIA V	SAGE HOMES LLC	\$354,900	384 EMMA DR	WENATCHEE	1542	2024	3	2	420	N	Y

Real Estate

Top Properties Douglas County

March 2025

Residential

Sale Price	Address	Total Acres	Year Built	Residential Area	Basement Area	Bedr.	Bathr.	Garage Area
10,300,000	80 9TH ST NE	1.78	0					
1,887,500	256 VINEYARD DR	1	3378		2.00	0.75	1358	
950,000	975 BRIARWOOD DR	0.64	2111	2057	4.0	2.5	1072	
929,990	1596 S Kelvin Ct	0.32	2365	1403	4.0	3.50	727	
915,000	2596 CATALINA AVE	0.22	1918	1986	4.00	3.00	850	
825,000	668 S NEWTON AVE	0.44	1998		3.00	2.50	778	
819,900	104 35TH ST NW	0.29	2312		3.00	2.50	560	
790,000	405 W BEECH ST	1.08	3095		4.00	2.50	720	
769,000	790 10TH ST NE	0.46	1695	1643	3.00	3.50	504	
750,000	1013 HARRISON CT	0.21	1690	1680	5.00	3.00	528	
713,000	100 MALLOY PL	0.17	1892	947	3.00	3.50	711	
698,000	868 NE TYLER PL	0.21	1772		3.0	2.0	914	
689,000	123 SPRINGHILL DR	0.29	2516		3.00	2.00	704	
639,900	2116 S MELODY LN	0.22	2340		5.00	2.50	490	
619,000	4614 SE COLOCKUM VIEW DR	2.07	1280		3.00	1.00		
590,000	42 YARROW LN	5.04	3280		4.00	2.50		
580,000	591 S LAWLER AVE	0.12	2432		5.00	2.50	380	
547,000	1790 5TH ST NE	0.29	1450	1150	3.00	2.00	864	
545,000	407 S JARVIS AVE	0.17	1774		3.00	2.00	576	
528,000	2353 VEEDOL DR	0.2	1283	1169	3.00	3.00	616	
505,000	3954 NE BLUERIDGE DR	0.26	1204	952	3.00	2.50	400	
500,000	30 MOUNTMORVIC RANCH RD	20.8	1158		1.00	1.00	1296	
497,495	486 HAMMOND LN	0.14	0					
490,000	524 N LANDER CT	0.23	1192	528	3.00	2.00	480	
489,900	1359 THEO WAY	0.16	1420		3	2	352	
476,950	91 N MARY AVE	0.34	1032		3.00	2.00	494	
475,000	166 S NEVADA AVE	0.14	1703		3.00	2.00	433	
475,000	2452 NW COLUMBIA AVE	0	1308		3.00	2.00	552	
474,900	2216 2ND ST SE	0.14	1580		3.00	2.00	480	
462,500	1341 JUNO ST SE	0.14	0					
460,000	1114 S NEWBERRY LN	0.16	1352		3	2	440	
458,500	1109 CAROLYN ST SE	0.23	1624		3.00	1.50	252	
455,000	1753 GARY ST NE	0.43	1203	1203	3.00	2.00	294	
452,500	411 N HUBER CT	0.2	1036	1000	3.00	2.00	350	

Farm

Seller	Buyer	Sale Price	Street	Total Acres
NORTHERN FRUIT COMPANY	5020 NW CASCADE LLC	2,500,000	5020 NW CASCADE AVE	7.69
KRR TWIN W LLC	DOUBLE D VINEYARDS LLC	1,210,000		29.88
MARTIN, RICHARD A & TERRI L	CENTRAL INVESTMENT PROPERTIES LLC	1,160,000	ZANOL LOOP RD	25.09
YASSERI, MOHAMMAD REZA	SANDOVAL, PEDRO A & ENEDINA	700,000		9.12
BEDOLLA, HUMBERTO	DANIEL CARVAJAL & YANETH MACIAS CARRILLO	329,000		3.78
AFK VINEYARD SERVICES LLC	CARLSON, STEVEN & COLLEEN	295,000		5
MOEN, JAY S & LACY C	ZACHERY WALLER & ASHLEY HERRINGTON	200,000	254 S Partridge LN	1.12
FERRIS, STEVEN J & CATHERINE L PAYNE	STEINKE, KURTIS & WIYAKA	75,000	6 PENDELL RD	7.6
SHELLER, BEVERLY J	PAYNE, GUY R. & DANYELLE S.	45,000		164.43
KALCAT DIRT LLC	DOUGLAS COUNTY TLS	894		71.97

Commercial

Seller	Buyer	Sale Price	Street	Total Acres
MAYER VENTURES LLC	NICHOLSON PROPERTIES	\$380,000	720 VALLEY MALL PKWY	0.23
MT HERMON FOUNDATION	PECH, GREGORY	\$300,000	135 W Third St	4.06
GONZALEZ &, NICOLAS	SAHRA MARIBEL AVALOS SEPULVEDA	\$140,000	341 11TH ST	0.08
STATE OF WASHINGTON	NORTHERN FRUIT CO INC	\$25,000		

450,000	1117 TEDFORD ST SE	0.27	1275	925	2.00	1.5		
439,000	119 EASTRIDGE DR	0.16	1056	1056	4.00	2.00	572	
437,948	416 W ASH ST	0.2	1628	1300	4.00	3.00		
435,000	304 S HOUSTON AVE	0.3	1510		3.00	2.00	572	
435,000	1101 CHERRY CIR	0.16	1034	1000	3.00	2.00	400	
430,700	1989 4TH ST SE	0.27	1229		3.00	2.00	462	
430,000	1467 DENNY PL	0.13	1379		3.00	2.00	462	
421,750	333 N JOSEPH AVE	0.47	1120		3.00	2.00		
420,000	461 N KELLER AVE	0.32	2440		2	1		
410,000	2110 6TH ST SE	0.42	1000	1000	3.00	1.00	352	
400,000	2289 FANCHER HEIGHTS BLVD	0.49	2439		4.00	2.50	698	
374,900	851 N MACAW AVE	0.2	0					
370,000	1240 5TH ST NE	0.18	988		2.00	1.00	400	
365,000	4 KEANE AVE	0.2	1044		3.00	1.00	392	

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# Existing home sales fall 5.9% in March as median price tops \$400,000

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Existing-home sales fell sharply in March, slipping 5.9% from February to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.02 million, according to the National Association of Realtors®.

Sales declined in all four major U.S. regions, with year-over-year drops in the Midwest and South, a gain in the West, and no change in the Northeast.

Compared to March 2024, total existing-home sales – including single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums and co-ops – declined 2.4%, down from 4.12 million a year earlier.

“Home buying and selling remained sluggish in March due to the affordability challenges associ-

ated with high mortgage rates,” said NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun. “Residential housing mobility, currently at historical lows, signals the troublesome possibility of less economic mobility for society.”

The median existing-home sales price rose to \$403,700 in March, a 2.7% increase from \$392,900 one year ago. It marked the 21st consecutive month of year-over-year price gains and the first time the median price exceeded \$400,000 for the month of March. Prices rose in all four regions.

Total housing inventory at the end of March stood at 1.33 million units, up 8.1% from February and 19.8% higher than the 1.11

million recorded a year ago. Unsold inventory represents a 4.0-month supply at the current sales pace, an increase from 3.5 months in February and 3.2 months in March 2024.

“In a stark contrast to the stock and bond markets, household wealth in residential real estate continues to reach new heights,” Yun said. “With mortgage delinquencies at near-historical lows, the housing market is on solid footing. A small deceleration in home price gains, which was slightly below wage-growth increases in March, would be a welcome improvement for affordability. With real estate asset valuation at \$52 trillion, according to the Federal Reserve Flow

## Regional variations

March saw declining sales activity across all major U.S. regions compared to February, with the sharpest drop recorded in the West. Year-over-year, the Midwest and South posted declines, the West saw an increase, and the Northeast remained unchanged. Median home prices rose in every region, with the Northeast leading in annual price growth.

**Northeast**  
Sales declined 2.0% from February to an annual rate of 490,000, remaining identical to March 2024. Median price: \$468,000, up 7.7% from one year earlier.

**Midwest**  
Sales fell 5.0% to an annual rate of 950,000, a 3.1% decrease from March 2024. Median price: \$302,100, up 3.5% year-over-year.

**South**  
Sales contracted 5.7% from February to an annual rate of 1.81 million, down 4.2% from the prior year. Median price: \$360,400, up 0.6% from last year.

**West**  
Sales plunged 9.4% to an annual rate of 770,000, but rose 1.3% compared to March 2024. Median price: \$621,200, up 2.6% from the previous year.

of Funds, each percentage point gain in home prices adds more than \$500 billion to the household balance sheet.”

According to the monthly REALTORS® Confidence Index, properties remained on the market for a median of 36 days in March, down from 42 days in February but up from 33 days in March 2024.

First-time buyers accounted for 32% of March sales, up from 31% the month before and matching the share from a year earlier. The 2024 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers, released in November, found the annual share of first-time buyers was 24%, the lowest ever recorded.

Cash buyers made up 26% of transactions in

March, down from 32% in February and from 28% in March 2024. Individual investors and second-home buyers, who comprise a significant share of cash buyers, purchased 15% of homes, down from 16% in February and unchanged from one year ago. Distressed sales, in-

See HOME SALES Page 15

## High Camp

Continued from page 1

I really felt like he was the right person for the facilitation of hosting people in the wilderness, to work with me to do this,” said Cowan.

The pair took the helm of Alpine Lakes High Camp in December, tasked with the duty of carrying on its nearly 50-year legacy of outdoor exploration, founded by legendary hikers Bill and Peg Stark.

“It’s infused in us a deeper sense of responsibility around the torch that we are carrying now, and we couldn’t be more excited about it and honored, really,” said Shelstad.

In 1959, Bill and Peg Stark bushwacked their way into the little-known Alpine Lakes area, discovering a wilderness they would spend the rest of their lives exploring and sharing.

Named two of the state’s hiking legends by Washington Trails Association in 2005, the Starks took hundreds of trips into the backcountry, often leading groups of hikers and ski-



COURTESY OF KW CAPTURE / ALPINE LAKES HIGH CAMP  
New co-owner Travis Cowan.



COURTESY OF KW CAPTURE / ALPINE LAKES HIGH CAMP  
New co-owner Tom Shelstad.

ers, and were influential in establishing the Enchantments and Alpine Lakes Wilderness in the 1970s.

In 1978, they founded “Nomad Camp,” a collection of tent platforms and lodge at 5,000 feet in the Chiwaukum Mountains, just north of the designated Wilderness area.

The backcountry establishment became known as “Scottish Lakes High Camp” with an assortment of cabins, introducing hundreds of hikers and skiers to an area beloved by the Starks.

In 1994, the aging couple sold the camp to Don and Chris Hanson, who expanded the cabins, op-

erations, and community of guests over the next two decades before passing the torch to the Donahues in 2017.

Over the years, the backcountry getaway, now known as Alpine Lakes High Camp, expanded its cabins and land, extended its seasons, and added special offerings such as a cold plunge, sauna, and catskiing.

Yet, its original spirit of outdoor adventure has remained the same.

The cabins are off-the-grid, relying on water from a mountain spring, sourcing heat from wood stoves, and brightening the night with propane lights.



COURTESY OF KW CAPTURE / ALPINE LAKES HIGH CAMP  
High camp is off-the-grid, with only a few solar panels on the lodge to provide a small charging station for devices.

While camp relies on a level of self-reliance, such as packing in food and linens, it has continued to attract dedicated visitors seeking community and connection deep within the wilderness.

High Camp’s location offers a multitude of activities, including skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, fishing, and biking.

“It’s a section of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness that isn’t used very much, because it’s so hard to get to. So we have some of the only real easy access to that,” said Shelstad.

One of the first groups Shelstad and Cowan host-

ed as new owners was a collection of visitors who met at High Camp over the last 20 years, and have made an effort to return together each year.

“They now book out the entire camp. And it’s this whole family, High Camp family, that they’ve created,” said Cowan.

“To forge those long-term relationships, I think, are the stories that touch me the most.”

“We want to keep the spirit the same. The spirit is golden, and we just want to be able to open it up to more people,” said Shels-tad.

The pair has opened

bookings to all seven days of the week in order to encourage longer stays.

“Stepping away from your phone for two nights and into nature is one thing, but really, by the time you’re readjusting mentally... and you’re grounding into nature, you’re leaving,” said Cowan.

As they enter the spring season, Shelstad and Cowan are preparing to tackle the challenges of operating remote cabins, such as learning the infrastructure that has been under snow the last few months, maintaining the surrounding forest’s health, and checking their list twice before hauling tools and materials in for projects.

“This spring is going to be an opportunity for a lot of learning of what the systems are and how they can be improved and how they need to be maintained. So I would say we have a steep learning curve ahead of us, and I’m looking forward to it,” said Cowan.

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# Career & Workplace

Colleen Malmassari

Contributor for Ward Media



## Staying sharp on I-9 compliance

For business owners and nonprofit leaders, compliance can feel like one more complicated task on an already packed to-do list. But overlooking certain responsibilities – like proper handling of Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification – can lead to consequences, including government audits and costly fines.

Whether you're hiring your first employee or growing your team, understanding Form I-9 compliance is essential to protecting your organization and ensuring a smooth hiring process.

### Introduction to Form I-9: Purpose and Legal Requirements

The Form I-9 is used to verify the identity and employment authorization of individuals hired to work in the United States.

Every employer, regard-

less of size, is legally required to complete the Form I-9 for each new hire.

The process is straightforward in theory: the employee fills out Section 1 on or before their first day of work, and the employer completes Section 2 within three (3) business days of the hire date after reviewing acceptable documentation.

However, even with E-Verify, if used, there is room for mistakes to be made. Ensuring your onboarding team has the proper training for completing the Form I-9 correctly is essential.

Equally important to completing the Form I-9 is retaining it properly.

Employers must keep each I-9 form for either three (3) years after the date of hire or one (1) year after the employee separates from employment – whichever is later.

If you use digital stor-



STOCK PHOTO

age, ensure systems meet federal and state regulatory standards for access, backup, and data integrity.

Best practice is to conduct an internal audit annually to help catch and correct issues before they become liabilities.

Consider leveraging technology, which can benefit I-9 management by adding automated reminders to help stay ahead of expiring work authorizations with timely notifications.

Doing this alongside documenting the audit

process and showing steps towards revising incorrect processes or forms shows good faith should you be audited.

### Key Changes in the Updated Form

Recent changes have added new layers of complexity, particularly for employers with remote teams.

In 2023, the I-9 form was updated to introduce a remote document inspection process for employers enrolled in E-Verify.

While this created more

flexibility in workplace standards, it also introduced new compliance steps that employers must follow carefully.

It's also important to ensure that anyone involved in the hiring or onboarding process is trained on Form I-9 requirements, including what documents are acceptable and how to avoid unintentional discrimination.

Did you know the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued a new edition of the Form I-9 on April 2, 2025?

This new edition dated 01/20/2025 is currently available for download and has an expiration date of 05/31/2027.

The new form has some minor changes in language and an updated privacy notice.

Employers may continue to use prior editions of the I-9 form until their respective expiration date.

Those two (2) previously released versions include: the 08/01/23 edition, valid until 07/31/2026 and the 08/01/23 edition, valid until 05/31/2027; the latter listed edition was released in August 2024.

While it is acceptable to use the previously released editions, it is best practice for employers to update to the new version as soon as possible to ensure the new I-9 form is in use by July 31, 2026.

### Resources for Employers

Ultimately, while Form I-9 compliance might not be the most exciting part of the onboarding experience, it is a vital one.

By investing time in understanding the rules, creating a repeatable process, and reviewing your records regularly, you can protect your business or

See CAREER & WORKPLACE Page 15

# GOING OUT OF BUSINESS

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# Loop Trail Café serves up nostalgia as trail's only riverside eatery

**Just a few steps from the Apple Capital Recreation Loop Trail and less than a hundred yards from the parking lot you'd use to leave your car behind and take the 10-mile journey across two bridges all along the banks of the Columbia, there's a little café with a woman named Dianne behind the register.**

By **ANDREW SIMPSON** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

**I**t's taken her a long time to get here, but she's now the owner of the Loop Trail Café, a restaurant with the distinction of being the absolute only eatery directly on the Loop Trail.

There are plenty that are nearby, but it's just hers that sits 150 feet from the water, ready at a moment's notice to offer refreshments to people walking and biking the Loop.

Dianne Hall started out with just hot dogs, and that's kind of a fitting analogy for how the café came into existence in the first place. Hall's background, as well as her son Josh's, who helps her out at the café, is rooted in making do with what's available.

Hall opened the café back in September, but had a few lean months, since that was the end of summer, when most people might frequent a spot like hers. But she had a brilliant idea: She would ask customers what they wanted to see on the menu, and build from there. In no time, she'd added breakfast sandwiches and burritos to her offerings, since she's up early and there at 6:30 every morning.

And Hall knows the kitchen. She's worked every aspect of the food service industry, from being a server at a Denny's to cooking at a sports bar and even a Yan Can restaurant owned by Martin Yan, the famous TV chef. She hasn't always been on the fun side – she stocked a Golden Corral buffet for a while – but when the fun has been there, she's followed it. Dianne traveled with the food trucks that supplied corn dogs and elephant ears for Apple Blossom every year since her son Josh can remember.

“She kind of enjoyed that, besides being a roadie sleeping in a tent, she loved the people she met all over... so many personalities!” Josh says. “I think she taught me values that have come back tenfold and inspired her to be independent again and go for her dreams. By teaching me those values, she rediscovered them in herself.”

When the space at 1 Fifth Street, Suite 160 opened up, it came with history for many locals. It had been the previous home of the Hard Hat Winery, whose storied run came to a close when the owner's

scandalous past caught up with him. But Dianne Hall jumped at it. It wasn't the fact that it's some prime location right downtown, although it's just a few blocks from where the new YMCA will be opening up. It was that her dream suddenly became a reality.

“I always wanted to be right by the river. The river is life, and when people walk through the door here, they become family. I feel like I live on the Columbia River now, and it's a blessing.”

Add to that the fact that she got to become a landmark overnight: The only restaurant right on the Loop Trail. Hall seems surprised to learn that there are no other restaurants or cafés directly on the trail, but she's genuinely excited. Upon hearing the news, she shares a fist bump with Josh, who's been busy in the back rolling out dough for their Zombies.

Everyone loves food with



ANDREW SIMPSON/WARD MEDIA  
Dianne Hall started cooking so early today, she hasn't even had a chance to scribble out the day's specials on the menu board yet.

a funny name, and the Zombie comes directly from Wenatchee High School. Josh remembers eating them in the mornings at the school, and customers who were also nostalgic for the legendary handheld breakfast suggested the café carry them, so now Hall has a hot case with fresh-made Zombies – pastries with sausage links and cheese inside – right next to the espresso machine, luring customers with their flaky crust.

Before the day goes on too far, however, the Zombies and breakfast burritos begin to compete for attention with Loopy Dogs, an all-beef hot dog opened in the middle with cheddar melted inside, served on a hoagie roll. And for any old time when you need

something sweet, you can pick up one of Hall's Pie-ookies, an actual pie in the size and shape of a cookie. Today she's got cherry, and it looks tempting.

Hall took a risk opening right next to construction, with the park improvements going on just a few steps away. But she's banking on the risk being worth the reward. Down by the river, the residential community is very loyal to the restaurants in the area. People living at the Riverside 9 Apartments have Wenatchee Valley Brewing right at the end of the complex, and the Riverside Pub, Cigar Bar, and Pool Hall are just down the road. With the new apartment complex just built at the curve where Worthen becomes River-

side Drive, Dianne Hall has a built-in customer base that lives within walking distance, and the clientele she's picked up who have learned about the café while enjoying the Loop Trail.

In the end, it will be up to Wenatchee to decide how Hall and her son (who she intends to make a partner) fare as the lone eatery right on the Loop. For right now, however, it looks like people should give them a try before the weather gets much nicer, because even on cold days, she's had a lineup outside waiting for Zombies and coffee.

That's something worth getting up early for.

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## Career & Workplace

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organization from unnecessary risk and support a stronger, more compliant workplace.

Here are three (3) resources for employers for completing Form I-9 correctly:

1. USCIS I-9 Central Website - The official USCIS resource hub with the most up-to-date forms, instructions, and guidance for employers. Includes a comprehensive handbook for employers and FAQ section addressing common scenarios.

2. HR Consultant Services – Back40 Advisors LLC (<https://www.back40advisors.com>) can provide personalized guidance, conduct I-9 audits, address specific compliance questions, and offer training for your team on proper I-9 completion procedures.

3. E-Verify Employer Hotline (888-464-4218) - Direct phone support from USCIS representatives who can answer specific questions about Form I-9 completion, document verification, and electronic submission requirements.

*Colleen Malmassari, a Society for Human Resource Management-Certified Professional, Professional in Human Resources, is the founder of Back40 Advisors LLC.*

# Washington job openings increased slightly in February

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

**W**ashington had 140,000 job openings in February, up slightly from 139,000 openings in January, according to data released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Regional Commissioner Chris Rosenlund noted that the job openings rate in Washington was 3.7 percent in February, an increase from 3.6 percent in January.

Nationally, the job openings rate was 4.5 percent in February and 4.7 percent in January. All figures are seasonally adjusted.

The ratio of unemployed persons per job opening in Washington was 1.3 in February, compared to the national measure of 0.9.

Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia

had ratios in February that were lower than the national ratio, while 14 states had higher ratios and five states matched the national measure.

Washington recorded 111,000 hires and 114,000 separations in February. This compares to 94,000 hires and 104,000 separations in January. Over the 12-month period ending in February, hires in Washington have averaged 110,000 per month, while separations have averaged 112,000 per month.

These figures include workers who may have been hired and separated more than once during the year.

Among separations in February, 61,000 were quits and 44,000 were

layoffs and discharges. In January, there were 59,000 quits and 35,000 layoffs and discharges.

Over the past year, quits in Washington have averaged 64,000 per month, with monthly totals ranging between 57,000 and

70,000. Layoffs and discharges have averaged 40,000 per month, ranging from 33,000 to 51,000.

The State Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey estimates for March are scheduled to be released on Tuesday, May 20.

## Home sales

Continued from page 13

cluding foreclosures and short sales, represented 3% of transactions in March, unchanged from February and up from 2% in March 2024.

Freddie Mac reported the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged 6.83% as of April 17, up from 6.62% a week earlier but down from 7.1% one year ago. Single-family home sales fell 6.4% to a season-

ally adjusted annual rate of 3.64 million in March, a 2.2% decrease from March 2024. The median existing single-family home price was \$408,000, up 2.9% year-over-year.

Sales of existing condominiums and co-ops were unchanged in March at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 380,000 units, 5.0% lower than a year earlier. The median condo price rose to \$363,000, up 1.5% from \$357,700 in March 2024.



# Local businesses rooted in stewardship are reshaping the upper Wenatchee Valley landscape

As environmental awareness grows across North Central Washington, a new wave of land stewardship is taking root in the upper valley.

By **TAYLOR CALDWELL** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

Local businesses such as Derby Canyon Natives, Alpenglō Living, and Shelter and Seeds are helping landowners transform their landscapes to be more sustainable, through native species, ecological design, and regenerative practices. “There’s a tremendous amount of growth in the industry right now...There’s a lot of young people that are pretty environmentally conscious... and there’s just an increasing awareness in our area about water use and water efficiency, as well as habitat. So it’s going to continue to increase over time, in my opinion,” said Derby Canyon Natives owner Mel Asher. Since the early 2000s, the Peshastin-based nursery has been sourcing and growing native plants for homeowners and large restoration projects in North

Central Washington. Each year, Asher grows approximately 150,000 plants ranging over 120 different native species. Over the years, Asher has seen a growing interest in native plants as landowners become increasingly aware of the benefits. Because they are adapted to the local climate and soil, native plants are often more resilient, low maintenance, and require less resources to keep alive, compared to non-native species. Additionally, they attract native pollinators that are dependent on specific native plant species. “[A] big challenge is just keeping up with demand right now. It seems like [there’s] such a growing interest in gardening and landscaping, and between interest from landowners and all of the habitat projects that we provide plants for, I’m routinely selling out

of species,” said Asher. Design services for promoting ecosystem health have also become popular. Former public lands conservationist and co-owner of the recently opened Alpenglō Living Hannah Dewey offers landscape and garden design implementation, soil health consultation, crop rotation and integrated pest management guidance, and vegetation recommendations that incorporate native plants and pollinators. “I’m very into this concept of helping homeowners create these backyard stewardship gardens... We live in the wildland-urban interface, so a lot of homeowners here live directly adjacent to public land. So how do we kind of merge, [or] create this more cohesive ecosystem? And I think that that can really happen at a personal level,”



COURTESY OF DERBY CANYON NATIVES  
Derby Canyon Natives is a Peshastin-based nursery supplying native plant species from the shrubsteppe near the Columbia River, up to the forests near Stevens Pass.

said Dewey. Another Leavenworth-based business, Shelter and Seeds, offers landscape consultation, design, and implementation with ecological land and water stewardship at the focus. “When you work with the land in a more ecological or natural way, it’s easier, it’s cheaper, and it’s more sustainable. A lot of people get overwhelmed, and they say, “Oh, I don’t have a green thumb. I can’t do this’... It’s very approachable if you can just kind of learn some simple aspects of what you’re doing,” said owner Sean Eriksen. In addition to assisting with native grass lawns and native gardens, Eriksen’s work also includes creating edible gardens, water retention earthworks, food forests, and compost systems, all of which contribute to a sustainable and regenerative landscape. “For the last few cen-

turies or so or more, land stewardship has mostly been extractive... We’re now in an ecosystem that is relatively scarce in terms of food, medicine, materials and biodiversity. So regenerative landscape is aiming towards bringing back the richness of ecosystems used to be and then expanding on that,” said Eriksen.   
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