

Economic Alliance Update

February 5, 2024

1:31 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Richard DeBolt, Todd Chaput, Becky Butler

Guest(s): None

Recorder: Tammy Martin

Public comment: None

Richard DeBolt said the EA is working with the Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA) people to keep .09 continuing. Also supporting a local property tax bill. Commissioner Brummer said the property tax bill did not pass.

Richard said the EA banquet was well attended. The staff award was presented post-humous to Buck Hubbard. The renewable resources will be held tonight at the TransAlta hall at Centralia College. Richard figures close to 130 people RSVP'd. Richard said the Women in business presentation and Hispanic Business Owner forum in May. Richard said there is an inclusive crew fair in April, Bowling tournament in May.

Richard says the recruitment piece of the EA has been very busy. There are seven manufacturers looking at the region and 2 hotels to be located in Centralia. There are 2 wood manufacturers looking at the Bioeconomy Development Opportunity Zone (BDO) zones in Lewis County. Richard said there are several smaller manufacturers looking at Lewis County development.

Todd Chaput said he appreciates the more stream-lined systems for LTAC. Todd said the press release for the strategic plan was sent out last week. Todd said there were some mailers sent as well. The EA is looking to expand their reach with Google and social media accounts. Commissioner Brummer says he sees excessive expenditures for social media posts and asked if Discover Lewis County would or could be the hub of the social media presence. Commissioner Brummer feels the duplicity of the social media sharing feels almost out of control. Commissioner Swope said that becoming a hub wouldn't necessarily increase bandwidth but would be supporting each center. Todd said making the connections and building the network is what DLC has been working on.

Todd said the Career and Technical Education (CTE) team at Napavine is working on providing internships with local area businesses. PAC Mtn is working on apprenticeship for juniors in high school with future manufacturers. Toledo is working on grant options with the waterline and looking for grants to begin summer construction. There is an exposed 6" water line and if it becomes damaged, the people of Toledo will be without water.

Meeting adjourned 1:58 p.m.