

## Economic Alliance Update

April 1, 2024

1:31 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Rieva Lester, Becky Butler, Todd Chaput, Richard DeBolt, Ross Nielson

Guest(s): None

Recorder: Tammy Martin

**Public comment:** None

**Comp plan and Tech team for IPAT:** Richard DeBolt said the Economic Alliance (EA) has been working with Mindy Brooks to create a comp plan for the TransAlta properties.

**.09 Contract:** Richard said the EA provided the .09 contract for FY24-25. Richard asked to make small changes and bring them before the Board for approval. He would like examples of the “dashboard” asked for.

**Reynold / Harrison Dig Once:** Todd Chaput is looking to use the remaining funds from Commerce to offset costs associated with design and engineering. Commerce is going to establish a dig once program for the entire state and rank projects according to need.

**Tourism:** Todd said the EA has started working on reaching out to communities for information to put on the trifold. The trifold will have a QR code that leads to the website. The dashboard is looking to be running at the end of May. Todd said the EA submitted a grant for GIS survey for Packwood trails systems. White Pass Scenic Byway proposed a bid to clean the signage on I-5. Todd said the goal is to inspect each sign and make repairs as necessary.

**Events:** Todd said the bowling tournament was a huge success. The tournament was paid for with private dollars and raised funds.

Richard said there is an upcoming low-impact career fair to help those with disabilities. The Autism Coalition has a new program director that will be taking on more of the primary role in hosting the career fair. The fair will be held at Centralia College April 25.

**BDO:** Richard said the Bioeconomy Development Opportunity Zone (BDO) has an AA rating. Clients are interested in the Aberdeen area as well as Lewis County. The BDO zone has an 85-mile radius. Todd said the EA will be having a program that will explain what the BDO zone is, the incentives available, and the locations permitted within the zone.

**Recruitment:** Richard said there is a timber company looking at proposed sites at the Chehalis Port, there is a data center looking at the Winlock Port, and a security manufacturer looking at the Winlock

site as well. Richard said he is working on two hotel sites for the City of Centralia. Richard said there are also a few smaller businesses looking for space as well.

**Lawsuit:** Richard said counsel has been retained and there is a court date scheduled in April regarding a lawsuit filed against the EA.

Meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.