

## Economic Alliance Update

June 2, 2025

11:04 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Todd Chaput, Lanae Langdon, Richard Debolt, Becky Butler

Guest(s): Kirk Pearson director of the USDA Rural Development

Recorder: Tammy Martin

### **Public comment:** None

Richard Debolt expressed gratitude to Troy Weiss for the lobbying work performed in 2025.

Richard announced a retail study for Centralia, which is being conducted in partnership with Centralia Outlets. He said Lanae Langdon successfully secured the grant for this study, which is expected to be completed by the end of summer.

The next .09 meeting has been canceled. The following meeting is scheduled for September. Commissioner Brummer raised concerns about smaller water districts in desperate need of repairs and suggested they be considered as future applicants for funding or support.

Richard introduced Kirk Pearson. Kirk said that he is doing self-assessments around Washington State for rural projects. He said there are committee projects and programs for rural communities.

Richard highlighted ongoing recruitment initiatives.

Todd presented Q1 2025 visitation data, showing an increase in total trips from visitors traveling more than 50 miles to Lewis County. However, the average duration of stays is approximately four days. Todd also reported that the annual meeting was well attended. He said efforts are underway by the EA to establish a Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) tax. For the TPA to be implemented, support from at least 60% of lodging businesses is required. This initiative would fund Discover Lewis County without the use of LTAC funds.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.