

Economic Alliance Update

November 10, 2025

10:02 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Richard DeBolt, Todd Chaput, Becky Butler

Guest(s):

Recorder: Tammy Martin

Public comment: None

Richard DeBolt said that as of January 1, 2026, he will no longer be the Director of the Economic Alliance. Todd Chaput has been voted in as the new Director by the Board of Directors.

Richard said the EA met with representatives from Centralia and Chehalis about budget requests and issues. Richard said the Economic Alliance will focus on capital requests.

Todd Chaput said the .09 committee has recommended approval of one of the three applications it received for Distressed Counties funding: the Chehalis River Basin Flood Control Zone District's \$250,000 request for the airport levee design. Todd said the committee rejected the county's application regarding Vader Water and that the committee will reconvene Dec. 5 to review the third application, which involves public education regarding the water retention project.

Todd said EA will provide its recommendations regarding 2026 .09 committee membership at the end of the year.

Todd said a Woody Biomass conference will take place later in the week. Todd said there will be a panel for questions and answers. Todd feels this would help with slash burning, but Commissioner Brummer feels that scarifying the ground prevents nutrients from returning to the soils.

Todd said there is a "retail gap" roundtable planned to identify opportunities for growth within Centralia and how to best increase retail sales.

Richard provided updates on various projects:

- Project May is moving forward with groundbreaking in January.
- HPM is starting construction and has a goal to be ready for operation in May.
- Project Steelhead is moving forward with site-delineations.
- Project Far Sight is looking at a site in Centralia.

Todd said the CEDS is complete and on the website. Todd said it will be approved at the next board meeting and will include tourism.

Todd thanked the BOCC for the funds received from LTAC for the 2026 year. The annual report will be posted on the Discover Lewis County (DLC) website.

Richard informed the Board that the state tourism TPA was unfunded for 2026. He suggested researching a local TPA tax and to have language in the works.

Adjourned at 10:25 a.m.