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Additional experiences and seating being planned in Mossyrock

BY BUDDY ROSE
The East County Journal

Mossyrock Mayor Randall Sasser outlined plans to add family and visitor-friendly experiences to the town during the regular city council meeting last week. The ideas stem from the addition of the large concrete pad adjacent the sidewalk in front of the Community Center beneath where the time capsule was buried on June 22.

Sasser said two metal benches have been ordered to be placed on the pad near the plaque denoting the time capsule. They will serve to make a welcoming place for local or visiting pedestrians to relax for a while. He is also planning for two larger plaques to be located there that will feature a thumbnail history of the town plus a summary of Cowlitz Indian history associated with the local area. Sasser also said additional benches could be placed at strategic places along sidewalks elsewhere in the town to encourage people to spend a little more time here.

Regarding the recent focus on reducing speeding motorists, particularly on Williams Street in front of the school, Sasser noted the idea of adding speed bumps or humps will not be legally feasible since the street also serves as a truck route. Instead, he offered alternative options of adding large painted areas across the street along with the speed limit painted on the pavement as a reminder to motorists to slow down.

Reporting on public works, the mayor said the city is continuing efforts to reduce water loss in the city water system, primarily associated with various leaks. A reasonable goal is to limit water loss to 30% of the water put in the system compared to the usage recorded by all water meters. A recent measurement of water loss was 41.7 percent. Efforts are ongoing to identify and locate leaks using available technology.

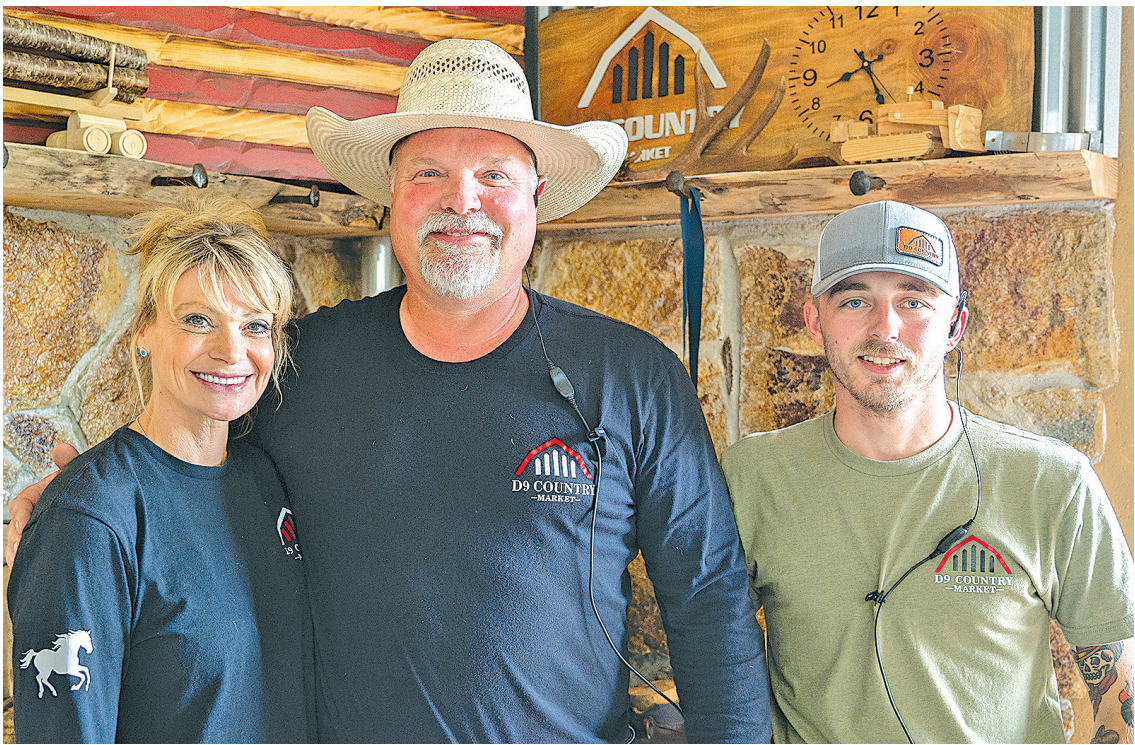
One known substantial water leak has been identified along

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By Buddy Rose / The East County Journal

Lewis County Fire District #3 Fire Chief Bill Edgington addressed the Mossyrock City Council last week with information about the EMS Levy renewal that is on the upcoming Aug. 4 Primary Election ballot. In the background are council members Ron Lindgren, on the left, and Teresa Quinlan, on the right.



Photos by Charlie Plante / DeVault Publishing

From left, Katie Johnson, Kyle Deskins and Kody Deskins pose for a photo in the D9 Market on Wednesday, June 10.

Three business family meets needs

BY CHARLIE PLANTE
East County Journal

Three local businesses sit off to the side on U.S. Hwy. 12, selling hay, groceries, gas and burgers.

The businesses are a grain and feed store, a market and gas pump as well as a diner. They all sit under the same title: D9. The name is rooted from the early 1900s, when the first person to use the name had nine children and the last name Deskins.

“Owning a business has its high points and low,” Kyle Deskins, the owner and founder of the D9 businesses in Ethel, said. “It’s gratifying. It’s rewarding to be a part of something this big.”

Across all three stores, he

employs 42 people, 28 at the market, six at the diner and eight at the grain and feed store.

He started the grain and feed store nine years ago. “I’m ambitious and got a lot of ideas,” so in 2025, he bought the market and diner from the previous owners.

Deskins’ businesses are growing with no signs of stopping, he said. Most of his business comes from repeat customers and tourists, as “Ethel is the gateway to the mountains,” Deskins said.

Each day there are about 1,500 people coming in and out of all of his businesses, according to Deskins.

“Every bit of (his proceeds) goes back into the business,” Deskins said. Currently, he and

Katie Johnson, his business and romantic partner, are remodeling and creating an outdoor patio for the market.

He also said his proceeds go back into the community by donating to “schools and organizations ... gotta invest in your community,” not specifying beyond that.

“If you take care of the community, the community will take care of you.”

The businesses are mostly family run. In 2023, when his son, Kody Deskins, came out of the Navy, they ran the grain and feed store together.

Now, Kody runs the market and Kyle Deskins’ mother-in-law runs the diner. Kyle’s

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Backpack program available again for White Pass students

BY AMBER BROWN
East County Journal

Gretchen Fritsch reported on the Backpack Program at the regular meeting of Livable Packwood on Thursday, July 16. The Backpack Program is where backpacks are filled with food and sent home with students. At first, it was for long weekends and by the end of the school year it was up to two times a month. The students are identified by the school.

In a previous meeting it was decided that Livable Packwood did not have the bandwidth to continue the program through the summer. However, Footsteps of Hope, the non-profit from the West end of the county that has worked with the Backpack Program in the past, has been

able to secure funding to provide food for the students.

Footsteps of Hope identified three schools in Lewis County to provide funding and supplies for. They schools were chosen because of the poverty rates and other criteria. The schools chosen were Pe Ell, Mossyrock and White Pass school districts.

Fritsch worked with White Pass School District Superintendent Mark Westley to identify the number the backpacks needed to be available for the parents of students to come to the school district office and pick up. 74 students were identified, 4 more than at the end of the school year, and Westley had sent out notices to the parents that these backpacks were available.

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Countywide burn ban took effect on July 15

Annual seasonal burn restrictions took effect at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, July 15, 2026, in all unincorporated areas of Lewis County.

The restrictions enacted by the Lewis County Fire Marshal will remain in place through Oct. 15, 2026, unless the BOCC determines conditions warrant lifting the restrictions earlier.

Under the seasonal restrictions, outdoor burning is prohibited on all lands regulated by Lewis County. Recreational campfires remain allowed in designated

campgrounds and on private property when constructed and maintained in accordance with county requirements.

Requirements for recreational campfires: measure no greater than three feet in diameter, ring must be of approved materials, 10-foot clearance of flammable material at ground level and 20-feet overhead clearance, be attended at all times by person 16-years or older and have a five-gallon bucket of water on hand.

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NerdPros to offer internship program for '26/27 school year

BY AMBER BROWN
East County Journal

NerdPros has come to an agreement with the Morton School District to provide an internship to students throughout the 2026-27 school year and potentially longer. Each internship will be for a 15-week period, correlating with the school’s quarter system, and the students will receive a work study credit as well as being able to put the internship on their resume.

NerdPros is a gaming-oriented store located at 171 Main Ave., Morton. The business is run by Alissa Read, Marcus Read and Damon Hanger. All three business partners have passed

the background checks required by the school district.

“We are working within the framework that the school provides,” Alissa Read said. “The students will be doing schoolwork through the school that corresponds to the hands-on learning that they are receiving at NerdPros.”

Read has had a pilot program running for a few months with three students. One of those students is her son. The pilot program has allowed the business and the school to assess what needed to be taught and what rules would need to be followed.

Some laws set forth by Washington state are that the student must be 16 years old,

which is why NerdPros is aiming this internship at juniors and seniors in high school.

The number of students who will be allowed to do the internship has not yet been identified. The program will begin in October, which will allow the school district to identify which students will meet the requirements and have teachers and staff recommend them for the program.

NerdPros is working with the school superintendent John Hannah, high school principal Chelssi Hanger, the Career and Technical Education teacher Jordan Nelson and other staff to create this program and identify the students.

“The point of the internship

is to teach the skills required for a student to show up and be successful,” Read said. “We will teach them how to write a resumé and provide a reference for them for their future employment. We will have them do a mock interview, teach them how to dress appropriately and teach them what questions to ask during the interview.”

Read explained that during the mock interview, they will teach the student to be aware of what questions are appropriate for the business to ask, be aware of red flags and to remember that the business is also being interviewed. By going through this process, she hopes to teach the students to be prepared for the future.

For daily tasks, NerdPros will be teaching the students timeliness, cleanup duties, stocking shelves and customer service. They will also be learning more particular skills like properly counting back cash, profit and loss margins, retirement and health benefits, markup and overhead costs and the difference between grants and loans.

“I want to make sure that they understand the real value of money. They need to be able to contemplate the cost of an item and how much real-life time it took them to earn the money that the item costs,” Read said.

“I will focus on teaching them

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