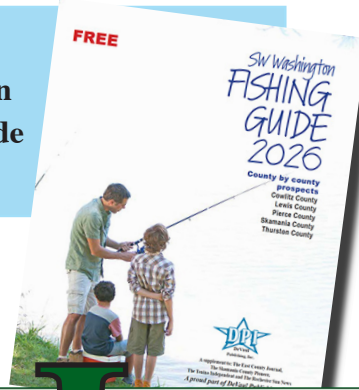


Outdoors: Opening Day for lowland lakes fishing is Friday
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2026 SW Washington Fishing Guide
INSIDE



MWP Alums & Friends' Zach Walton, left, drives to the basket during the Timber Tourney at Morton HS
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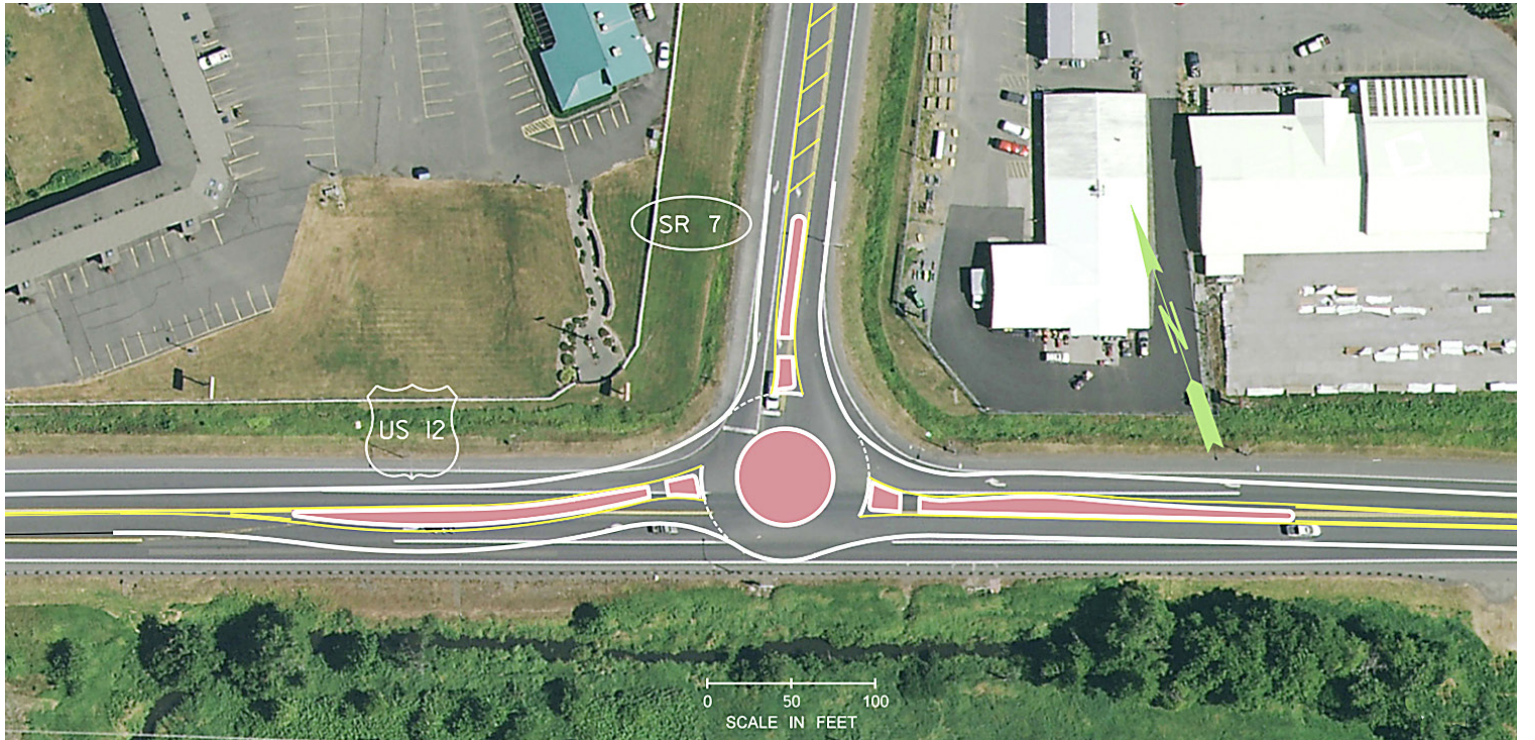
Roundabout making its way to Morton highways

BY AMBER BROWN
East County Journal

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has determined that the best solution to reduce crashes at the intersection of U.S. Hwy 12 and State Route 7 in Morton is to install a roundabout.

“WSDOT looked at several options, including a single lane roundabout, a traffic signal and a special turn lane. After comparing safety benefits and costs, they found that a single lane roundabout would be the best solution to reduce serious crashes,” said Tiffany Mancillas, WSDOT communications consultant from the southwest region.

Many people in the Morton area have questioned why a roundabout is the option chosen, rather than doing a stoplight similar to the one found in Mossyrock. “A traffic signal was one of the alternatives looked at for this intersection, but it didn’t meet the requirements to be installed. Most of the crashes at this location were T-bone crashes. Roundabouts reduce this risk and are better at preventing these kinds



Washington State Department of Transportation courtesy illustration | East County Journal

An artistic look at a proposed roundabout at the intersection of U.S. Hwy. 12 and State Route 7 in Morton is expected to be in place by the summer of 2027, according to state transportation officials.

of crashes than traffic signals,” Mancillas said.

“Studies show that roundabouts can reduce overall crashes by 37 percent, reduce injury crashes by 75 percent and reduce

deadly crashes by 90 percent,” Mancillas said.

There are four major factors that WSDOT uses to identify if a roundabout is the correct choice. Those four factors are crash his-

tory, how the intersection works, types of vehicles and the cost. For crash history, it was identified that all of the crashes between 2015 to 2019 were from vehicles on SR 7 turning onto U.S. Hwy 12.

Another determining factor is the type of vehicles. With several local facilities that use large trucks, WSDOT had to

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Charlie Plante | East County Journal

Rafael Pantoja-Martinez, owner of Xtinct Auto Detailing, works on buffing out some imperfections on a vehicle on Tuesday, March 17.

Details are what set Xtinct Auto apart

BY CHARLIE PLANTE
East County Journal

Rain or shine, one car wash, Xtinct Auto Detailing, is on the move to pressure wash, buff, polish, wax and clean your car inside and out, even shampooing the seats.

Rafael Pantoja-Martinez, the owner and founder of the business,

has a van with all of the car washing essentials, including a 275-gallon tank to not use the client’s water.

“We’re mobile, great on pricing, great on care and highly recommended by others,” Pantoja-Martinez said. “We’re also great in the rain.”

For rain, he simply brings a 10-foot by 10-foot canopy to keep the

car protected from the elements while he works on it. If someone did not want him to drive to their location, he has access to a covered shop where someone can bring their vehicle.

Despite the rising daily costs, Pantoja-Martinez said he is com-

See **Details** Page 4

TRL second act in budget cuts is latest plot point

BY AMBER BROWN
East County Journal

The first act of a budget crisis story with the Timberland Regional Library was laying off staff. At the Feb. 10 TRL board meeting of a budget deficit of \$3.8M through a press release on Jan. 29. “We have now reached a point where expenditures are outpacing revenues beyond what we can manage through incremental adjustments, and we must make hard decisions,” Cheryl Heywood, executive director of Timberland Regional Library (TRL), said in a press statement.

Some of the proposed changes were: Lowering

the free amount of printing at each library, cutting back purchases of new materials and the most abhorrent to the library community was laying off staff. At the Feb. 10 TRL board meeting

“We have now reached a point where expenditures are outpacing revenue ...”

— Cheryl Heywood
TRL executive director on budget issues facing the library system

more than 200 people signed up on Zoom to express their disagreement with the decision and another 100 people submitted written testimony.

However, this did not stop the TRL board from allowing staff layoffs to occur.

“Trustee Dustin Loup made the motion to ‘approve the implementation of a reduction in force as discussed for the

See **TRL** Page 3

Historical ‘Red Book’ reprints currently sold by Mossyrock group

BY BUDDY ROSE
East County Journal

Sales of the republished historical “Red Book” officially began at the monthly meeting of the Mossyrock Area Historical Society on Wednesday, April 1. A reprinting of the original book published in 1976 by Mossyrock Grange No. 355, officially titled “Memories from Family Albums of School District 206,” was recently completed by Gorham Printing in Centralia.

Three hundred copies were produced for the initial run by Gorham and more are anticipated as those are sold. At the April 1 historical society meeting, attended by more

than 40 society members and non-members, 57 copies were sold at \$50 per copy. Additional sales were planned for the April 8 meeting of the Mossyrock Grange at the Grange Hall on Isbell Road, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

The Red Book name came from the red cover of the original book and the reprint duplicates that along with the official title and a photo of the Grange Hall in Mossyrock. The book covers the original Mossyrock School District that stretched from Salkum to the former town of Nesika, about six miles east of Riffe.

It is a large collection
See **Red Book** Page 2



Buddy Rose | East County Journal

Barbara Stark is shown purchasing one of the 300 republished copies of the local history “Red Book,” from Mossyrock Area Historical Society trustee Jim Myers during the historical society meeting on Wednesday, April 1.