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# The East County JOURNAL

Dedicated to serving East Lewis County since 1945

June 10, 2026

\$1

Vol. 82 No. 23 • USPS 363-940



Chris Johnson photos | East County Journal

## Graduations shine

Morton, Mossyrock and White Pass school districts hosted their respective graduation ceremonies over the weekend, with Morton honoring its seniors on Friday, June 5, while Mossyrock and White Pass graduations were on Saturday, June 6. From left, Morton Assistant Vice Principal Kimberly Thompson hugs Morton senior Noemi Lopez, Mossyrock graduates Adyson Barrows and Taylor Schwartz celebrate getting their diplomas and Mossyrock graduate Austin Farnsworth gets his diploma from White Pass Interim Principal Curtis Patching. For more images from the graduation ceremonies, see the pages listed below.

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## Hospital District adopts revised Strategic Plan

BY BUDDY ROSE  
East County Journal

Lewis County Hospital District No. 1 commissioners adopted a revised strategic plan for the next four years during their regular meeting on Wednesday, May 27. The plan is the outcome of a series of recent public workshops and meetings hosted over the past six months and includes revised mission and vision statements for the hospital district and a series of strategic priorities and goals to be pursued between 2027 and 2030.

The new mission statement is, "To provide every patient the best care and every employee the best place to work." The revised vision statement is, "Building a healthier future with our community."

Along with these are a series of related

values to be part of day-to-day operations within the district. They include: One team, one mission; Go out of your way to brighten someone's day; Own it, embrace it; Care like crazy; Motivate, elevate, appreciate; Know the way, show the way, ease the way; and Find joy along the way.

Five strategic priorities expressed as goals to be implemented as part of the plan were identified along with specific tools to be used to accomplish them. The goals are: Create clinical and operational excellence; Accelerate community health and wellness; Optimize facilities and technology; Attract and retain the best talent; and Drive responsible growth and financial sustainability.

In a related matter, the board of commissioners also approved a revised orga-

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Sheli Harbaugh courtesy photo | East County Journal

EMT students Linda Cooper and Brandon Russell work on 'victim' Layla Dehart with Laura Krause evaluating the skills that they learned during a class exercise in 2026.

## Hybrid EMT training program is a multi-agency collaboration

BY AMBER BROWN  
East County Journal

Lewis County Fire District 4 (LCFD 4) Morton has been sponsoring a volunteer to become emergency medical technician (EMT) certified. "LCFD 4 has been the training ground for a pilot hybrid EMT program that has had success," EMS/EMT Captain Sheli Harbaugh said.

"The multi-county, hybrid EMT class is being put on collaboratively between the

Washington State Department of Health (DOH), through the Rural EMS Workforce grant project, Angie Riggsby of Caliber Education and the City of Buckley Fire Department EMS training program," Harbaugh said.

The program is 75 percent online where students take classes on Tuesday and Thursday nights with the teacher present through a virtual classroom. The practical

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## Community garden needing to grow crop of volunteers

BY AMBER BROWN  
East County Journal

At the regular meeting of Livable Packwood on Thursday, May 28, member Kim Pawlowski reported about gathering information for the tables that she will be manning over the summer. The Livable Packwood Pantry always has a booth at the Packwood Saturday Market and Pawlowski was prepping the materials needed for the booth.

Member Hannah Jeter reported that the housing committee has been working on getting planning and discussion completed before being ready to take

any action. "They have been working on what the focus of the housing committee will be," she said.

Pawlowski gave the report for the Packwood Community Garden noting, "We made about \$800 at the Packwood Saturday Market Plant Sale." She is still looking for volunteers. The volunteers have been facing challenges with the new growth experienced over the winter. They now have a few more raised beds and places where they can have vines follow poles.

The challenges come with watering and weather. There is only one water spigot to water the entire garden, while the weather

has been rapidly shifting between hot and cold temperatures. The volunteers need to go out and make sure that the plants are prepped to handle the cold temperatures and be watered when the weather gets hot.

Pawlowski reported that the Livable Packwood Pantry was able to purchase a new freezer with the funds from the CHOICE grant and the remainder of the funds will be used to fund the East Lewis County Fresh Food Program that is found at the Packwood Saturday Market.

"We just submitted a Food Access grant applica-

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## Randle permit center open for convenience, but not being used much

BY AMBER BROWN  
East County Journal

Getting a county permit has been made easier by Lewis County Community Development. Instead of having to drive to Chehalis to apply, there is now a permit center in Randle that will have staff on hand every Friday to assist applicants to answer questions, set up a SmartGov account, scan documents, submit applications and there will be bacteria and nitrate bottles for water testing.

"The East Lewis County Permit Center is something that our

community has been asking for quite some time and we are excited to finally make it a reality," permit tech Jennifer Cervantes said. "With this new space now available and the implementation of mobile-friendly software, it made sense to launch this pilot effort and better serve residents in East Lewis County."

Residents of East Lewis



Jennifer Cervantes



Tara Snelson

County have been asking for years to have services brought to the East end of the county because the drive to the county seat in Chehalis is such a long way away. The development of the Area 7 - Kiona Shop for the Department of Public Works made it accessible to have an office space available to bring a permit center to the East end of the county.

One of the concerns is that there hasn't been a utilization of the center. They've been open for four weeks and have had a total of five people come in to use the services. The belief is that many people do not know that it is available for use. The staff are committed to populate the permit center until June 26. After that, they will reevaluate if it is beneficial to keep it open.

The center is staffed with two employees. One is a planner and the other is a permit tech. "If we continue to see strong interest and community support, we plan to remain open on Fridays

throughout the summer," planner Tara Snelson said.

The hope is that the permit center will be staffed throughout the summer and then will return again next summer. "Summer is the busy season for permits," Cervantes said. "People still build during the winter, but the number of permits that we see during the summer is significantly higher."

The permit center can scan some documents. However, for large plans, they would need to take the plans into the main office

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