

Lions 4H flag program given to civic groups

By Skamania Lions Club For The Pioneer

The Skamania County Lions Club formally handed over its decades-long U.S. flag display program to the Wind River Business Association and the Feral Farmers 4H group on Saturday, April 25.

Members of the Hilltop 4H club accepted the flags for the Wind River Road display effort, managed by WRBA. Those groups have put up the flags on federal holidays on behalf of the Lions Club for about five years.

Feral Farmers 4H agreed to take over the flag display for Second Street in Stevenson. Its members have managed the flag program for the past few years.

Lions Club President Philip L. Watness thanked the volunteers for taking on the essential patriotic program and provided nearly five dozen new flags to WRBA/Hilltop 4H and Feral Farmers. The flags were purchased through a generous donation from the Tony Hegewald Family, in honor of their son Braden Hegewald, who



Skamania County Lions Club courtesy photo | Skamania County Pioneer

Members of the Hilltop 4H and Feral Farmers 4H clubs of Carson and Stevenson, respectively, accept flags from the Skamania County Lions Club on Saturday, April 25.

died in a tragic accident. “We hand these flags over to our partners to carry on this grand patriotic tradition,” Watness said. “We thank you for your devotion to the flag program.”

He said the Lions Club will focus on its other programs – assistance to people in need of eyeglasses

or hearing aids, providing scholarships to local high school seniors and fundraising to support those and other programs in Skamania County.

The local service organization hosts two events on May 1-2. From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, May 2, the club partners with Riverview Bank to shred con-

fidential documents at the bank, named for the late Fred Cloe, who devoted thousands of volunteer hours to the local club over the years, including managing the club’s recycling and flag display programs.

The Skamania Lions sells plant starts, household items, and other prod-

ucts at Springfest, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., both Friday, May 1, and Saturday, May 2, at the Exhibit Hall on the Skamania County Fairgrounds.

The service group invites people to volunteer for its various efforts. Email skamaniacountyliions@gmail.com or call/text 360-818-8277.

Skamania County launches new boating regulations

By Amy Spring Courtesy of UpLift Local

Getting a boat in the water this year should be a bit easier for recreational users at the Wind River boat launch in Skamania County, a popular spot for fishing with access to the Columbia River. That’s because commercial guide services, for the first time, are banned from Wind River, restricted instead to launching from Drano Lake, about eight miles to the east along U.S. Hwy. 14.

All commercial guide services are affected, including fishing, kayak or stand-up paddleboard guides.

Boating will also gen-

erally cost more at both county launch sites. For residents, annual recreational boat launch permits doubled this year to \$20. Non-county resident rates are \$40, and commercial guide service passes have jumped to \$300 for guides who live in Skamania County and \$500 for others.

Wind River and Drano Lake are two of the busiest launch locations on the Washington side of the river in the Columbia Gorge. Skamania County manages both areas, and county commissioners discussed complaints about boat launch overcrowding and parking challenges several times

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Little White Salmon forest resiliency and fire risk mitigation project has been completed

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest has prepared a final Environmental Assessment and signed a Final Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Little White Salmon Forest Resiliency and Fire Risk Mitigation Project, occurring in Skamania and Klickitat counties. The final DN authorizes thinning, fuel management and restoration activities across 9,897 acres to improve forest health, increase forest resiliency to stressors and reduce wildfire risk to highly val-

ued resources in the Little White Salmon watershed. The final DN also authorizes a project-specific Forest Plan amendment under the 2012 Planning Rule to the Gifford Pinchot Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan.

The amendment allows 11 stands within the project area to exceed the assigned Visual Quality Objective (VQO) of Retention for an additional two years, beyond the one year allowed for in the Forest Plan, while

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Douglas Burkhardt courtesy photo | Skamania County Pioneer

A new road named Juniper Street is being built off State Route 14 at Elm Street in Bingen to provide a second access to the Port of Klickitat. This is a southward view, from State Route 14, of the new underpass beneath the BNSF railway tracks, constructed as a key part of the project.

Bingen Point access project aims to resolve safety concerns

By Douglas Burkhardt Courtesy of UpLift Local

Travelers driving either direction through Bingen on State Route 14 by now are familiar with ongoing one-lane highway construction closures and resulting traffic delays just east of downtown Bingen. When the dust settles, there will be a safer route to Bingen Point and the port because access will no longer be cut off by trains going through town.

The lane closures are due to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) project known as the “Port of Klickitat Access Improvements,” which shifted into high gear in September 2025. It’s a \$34.3 million undertaking to provide a new way into and out of Bingen Point,

with boat ramps and parks and the Port of Klickitat’s industrial areas.

Currently, there is only one entry to the Bingen Point area: Maple Street, which is directly east of the SDS Lumber mill in Bingen. But with a busy Burlington Northern Santa Fe mainline going through Bingen, that entry is blocked at times with train traffic, potentially creating unsafe vehicle backups onto SR 14, which runs parallel to the tracks, just one block north.

Even more serious is the potential for emergency vehicles being unable to access the Bingen Point area in the event of a fire, medical emergency or other critical situation. In a worst-case scenario, a train derailment at the crossing could leave first responders with

no way to get across the tracks.

To help resolve this potentially dangerous issue, BNSF built a new railroad bridge two-tenths of a mile east of Maple Street. The construction currently causing delays getting through Bingen is, among other things, creating a new road to allow traffic to pass under this bridge to access the port area.

The new road, called Juniper Street, will cut south from SR 14, essentially as an extension of Elm Street, cross under the train tracks and connect with Marina Way. A roundabout at the new Elm Street/SR 14/Juniper Street intersection is planned to help traffic flow. Kerr Contractors Oregon is tackling the road construction.

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News Briefs

Vessel passage means temporary closure of Interstate Bridge Saturday

The Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge will be fully closed to all traffic from 8 a.m. to approximately 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 9, for a bridge lift to accommodate passage of the vessel Zorro. The bridge may reopen sooner if conditions allow, though with a 100-year-old bridge, some delays are always possible.

These closures are required under U.S. Coast Guard regulations (33 CFR § 117.869), which mandate the bridge open with at least 12 hours’ notice from river traffic.

Thanks for your patience and understanding as staff work to keep both river and road traffic moving safely.

For real-time traffic conditions, can check the live bridge camera online at: www.portofhoodriver.com/live-cam-viewer

Source: Washington State Department of Transportation

Candidate filing period for elected offices this week

The Skamania County Auditor’s Office would like to remind anyone interested in filing for elected office in 2026 that Candidate Filing Week is May 4-8. Candidates are encouraged to file online, but declarations can also be accepted in person or via the mail (with any filing fees due at the time of filing).

“There are a number of important elected positions open for election this year, and we expect a lot of interest,” Skamania County Auditor Robert Waymire said in a press statement. “Positions open for local filing include Skamania County Commissioner District No. 3, Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, Sheriff, Treasurer, Prosecutor, District Court Judge, PUD Commissioner District No. 3, and Precinct Committee Officer positions for both political parties. We ask that citizens interested in filing for elected office be aware of filing deadlines and requirements for the office that they are interested in.”

Additional information, including offices open for election, filing fees and incumbent information is available on the Auditor’s Office website at www.skamaniacounty.org/elections, or in the office located at 240 NW Vancouver Ave., Room 27, in

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Community Friendship Feast



Enjoy a free dinner, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Thursday, May 14, at Stevenson United Methodist Church fellowship hall, 325 NW Jefferson Ave., Stevenson

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This day in history

- 1937 The Hindenburg bursts into flames upon touching its mooring mast in Lakehurst, New Jersey.
- 1954 Roger Bannister runs first four-minute mile.
- 1955 West Germany joins NATO.
- 1994 English Channel tunnel opens.