



*Blue skies for local businesses at Wallace Way West in Grandview. Spotlight images courtesy of the Port of Grandview.*

## May Updates from WPPA

What a week we had in Skamania! This issue of the Manifest Newsletter comes right on the heels of our first conference of the year, and what a get together it was. From sold out lunches to packed general session rooms, you all once again voted with your feet and showed strong support and engagement for the work of Washington ports.

There were many highlights, and we'll share some quick background on award winners in a moment. But to start, a sincere thank you from everyone here at WPPA. We worked hard on executing that event, and seeing the enthusiasm and positive energy you all brought to Skamania Lodge was justification for the time we spent. Thanks for being part of a great kickoff to conference season.

We named some WPPA award winners and offer another round of sincere congratulations to our winners! If you didn't yet see our press releases calling those out, here are a few key details:

### **Community Engagement Award: Port of Bremerton**

WPPA recognized the [Port of Bremerton with its Community Engagement Award](#) for their airport feasibility study project. This award recognizes the port's commitment to transparent, inclusive, and far-reaching engagement efforts that ensured community voices were central to conversations about the future of Bremerton National Airport.

As the Port explored the potential for expanded air and cargo service, it faced a range of perspectives from the community. Rather than treating engagement as a procedural step, the Port prioritized meaningful dialogue, inviting participation through a community-wide survey, public meetings, and accessible project materials designed to inform and encourage feedback.

### **Creative Partnership Award: Port of Moses Lake**

WPPA recognized the [Port of Moses Lake with our Creative Partnership Award](#) for the W20 Project, a regionwide effort designed to address long-standing water availability, water quality, and economic development challenges. The W20 Project proposes a seasonal approach to diverting water from the West Low Canal to the north end of Moses Lake, ensuring agricultural operations remain protected while supporting a wide range of regional needs. The project is designed to improve water quality, provide additional water supply for municipal and industrial uses, conserve groundwater, and create new operational flexibility for the Columbia Basin Project.

As the lead agency, the Port of Moses Lake has coordinated an extensive coalition of partners, including the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, all three regional irrigation districts, the Department of Ecology, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Grant County, the cities of Moses Lake and Quincy, the Port of Quincy, and numerous regional water, conservation, and community organizations.

### **Environmental Stewardship Award: Port of Tacoma**

This year's [Environmental Stewardship award went to the Port of Tacoma](#) for their leadership in the environmental cleanup and habitat renewal of the Maritime Center. Located along the Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterways near downtown Tacoma, the Maritime Center project transformed a historically industrial site into a cleaner, healthier, and more resilient waterfront campus that will serve students, employees, and the broader community for generations to come.

Developed in partnership with Tacoma Public Schools and in collaboration with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the Maritime Center campus will house Tacoma Public Schools' Maritime|253 Skills Center alongside the Port's new administrative office building. The project creates a unique working waterfront learning environment where students can gain hands-on maritime, environmental science, and trades experience alongside industry professionals.

### **Outstanding Job Creator Award: Port of Walla Walla**

The final award went to the [Port of Walla Walla, as our job creator of the year](#) for their work supporting the development of the ROCKWOOL Manufacturing Facility in Wallula. Through long-term planning, infrastructure investment, and collaboration with community and industry partners, the port has helped bring one of the most significant advanced manufacturing projects in recent memory to southeast Washington.

Located at the Wallula Gap Business Park, the new ROCKWOOL manufacturing facility represents a \$175 million investment in the region and will create 125 permanent jobs once operational, in addition to substantial construction employment during development. The facility will be ROCKWOOL's first manufacturing plant in the western United States and its fifth in North America.

In addition to those port awards, we were lucky to be joined by our Spring Scholarship winner, Khmera Swazer. The daughter of a Port of Seattle employee, Khmera has excelled in academic and community work in her time at Puyallup High School, and she plans to study business and economics at Clark Atlanta University next year.

We also were honored that State Representative Hunter Abell was able to join us, all the way from Washington's 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative District, to receive his [2026 WPPA Compass Award](#). The Compass Award recognizes the work of legislators from both sides of the aisle in championing port priorities. We did not have the other recipients join us this spring, so we will announce their names as we present them with their awards.

The conference agenda included updates on industries of interest, including the timber and nuclear industries in Washington. We heard from the Ports of Everett and Seattle, and the FIFA World Cup Local Organizing Committee, about plans to host the world's biggest global sporting event in Washington this fall. And we had some economic development leaders join us to talk about our manufacturing economy and how we recruit more manufacturing businesses to Washington. Finally, we couldn't *not* talk about artificial intelligence, which is seemingly everywhere, so we were grateful to our General Counsel, Tim Schermetzler from CSD Attorneys at Law, and to a few port directors who led a discussion of AI in the context of public records and public meetings laws.

The most fun may have been had outdoors, though, with more than thirty-five people joining Eric for his morning "Rise and Shine" walk, at least that many taking part in the mini-golf tournament on Monday afternoon, and then of course the *truly awesome* gathering hosted by the Port of Skamania at their offices in Stevenson, WA. We had BBQ and beer from Backwoods Brewing, local dignitaries like current State Representative and former Port of Skamania Commissioner Kevin Waters, and even a few reps from the Port of The Dalles across the river in Oregon.

We now keep sprinting through a busy summer conference program, starting with our next event: Port Academy Series #2, hosted on June 5<sup>th</sup> by the Port of Moses Lake. Our finance folks will then gather in Everett later that month, before our standard July two-step of the Directors Seminar in Pullman and the Commissioners Seminar in Wenatchee. Then, it's on to Seattle for the Environmental Seminar in September, Chelan for Small Ports in October, and of course our *Winter Meeting* (no longer the Annual Meeting, even if it *does* technically happen before the solstice...) at the Vancouver Hilton from December 9-11<sup>th</sup>.

Read more about those events, and other exciting happenings, in our Manifest Newsletter below. Thank you all!

-WPPA Team

## Spotlight: Port of Grandview on Diversifying for Economic Resilience



*Map of Washington State highlighting Grandview's location, as well as the Cities of Seattle, Spokane, and Portland.*

Located in the heart of Yakima County, Grandview is situated between several iconic features of Washington State. Turn to the west and you'll see the hazy peaks of Mount Rainier and Mount Adams; turn to the north or south to see the rolling Rattlesnake and Horse Heaven Hills and the fertile fields of Eastern Washington.

With that central location and atop some of the most fertile growing soils in the state, the Port of Grandview can leverage the wide-open spaces of the region and the already-established support for growers to punch far above their weight. Despite having only three commissioners and two staff members, the port has bought, developed, and sold several commercial properties all over the Grandview area.

Founded in 1988, the Port of Grandview is the youngest public port district in Washington, and they have been busy ever since.

"The Port of Sunnyside was going to expand and there were some people who wanted us to have our own. We're surrounded by other ports—we border Benton County on the east, Sunnyside on the north and Klickitat to the south," said Randy Tucker, Executive Director at the Port of Grandview.

The newly formed Port of Grandview was founded to support the food-processing industry and to help diversify Grandview's industries without losing sight of the agricultural industries that helped build the town. With a staff of two people, the port works to identify sites and prepare them for sale for commercial use.

"Creating business parks was the end goal," Tucker said. "The first business park was at Wallace Way, and now we have seven."



*Anytime Fitness is a popular amenity at Wallace Way West.*

Following the early development of business parks around Grandview, the port took on a larger project—the construction of a business park for Walmart.

“The Walmart business park has been here for twenty or twenty-five years. Initially staffed by 600, now 1000 workers, it was a major thing that the port was a part of in the beginning,” Tucker said.

More development arrived over the years, as the port continued acquiring land to develop into commercial properties. In the interim between acquiring and developing the land, the port has kept these properties in productive use.

“The property we buy; we lease out to farmers who raise corn, grapes, and alfalfa until we get it developed,” Tucker said. “From there, we go to town on marketing.”

In April, the port announced the opening of the Grandview Business Park, which was sold to a local developer who put in a TravelCenters of America (TA) Travel Plaza that features a combination IHOP and Applebees, one of only two of the kind in the United States.



*The IHOP / Applebee's combo restaurant is a welcoming sight at the Grandview TA Travel Plaza.*

The business park is set for more businesses to move in, as the developer has expanded the property and set its sights on diversifying the available businesses.

Additionally, the port is working on expanding the property of a local juicer at Wallace Way West, where they built a business development center. Also, the city bought property at the site and plans to build a new facility for their Police Department in 2027.

“There are about 20 different businesses going in there. We started it a year ago and we’re already out of room,” Tucker said. “[The developer] has got restaurants, an Anytime Fitness, Deeply Rooted, a local bakery, and that’s only 2 acres out of the 20.”



*Plenty of options—and plenty of opportunity—at Wallace Way West.*

These developments have been transformative for Grandview, and this rapid development is a conscious effort by the port to ensure that developers find uses for the land they've acquired.

“We put covenants on our properties that require buyers to build within two years,” Tucker said. “It has really stimulated building development. We’re always understanding when things need more time, and developers can ask for it, but it helps to make sure we’ve got forward momentum.”

This ethos—to buy, develop, sell property and ensure it gets developed, has been a major economic boost and transformation for the community. Even with 3 commissioners and a staff of 2, the port has worked creatively to make sure that Grandview keeps growing economically, from food processing, to logistics, to any other opportunities they can find.

“I went to school in Grandview; it’s my home community,” Tucker said. “To grow the community and make it better is great. We get along very well with the city of Grandview, and we do a lot of projects together. I’m proud of it. City organizations recognize what we’re doing and it’s nice to be on that team.”

# Legislative Spotlight - 2025 Industrial Stormwater General Permit (ISGP) Appeal

*Carly Michiels, Senior Director of Environmental Policy*

As many of you attended our Spring Meeting, you know we heard presentations on the ongoing appeal of the State's Industrial Stormwater General Permit (ISGP) at the WPPA Environment and Legal Committee Meetings. Sara Frase, Senior Associate with CSD Attorneys at Law, provided a great update and overview of the 2025 ISGP appeal and answered many of your questions. But for those who were maybe not in attendance, we are sharing that update here as well!

WPPA continues to participate in the appeal of the Department of Ecology's 2025 [Industrial Stormwater General Permit \(ISGP\)](#) that went into effect January 1, 2025. With support, WPPA formally joined the appeal to the Pollution Control Hearings Board (PCHB), alongside several port and transportation stakeholders, to ensure that public ports of all sizes were represented throughout the legal process. Puget Soundkeeper and Spokane Riverkeeper also filed appeals.

WPPA's involvement in this appeal stems directly from the concerns raised during Ecology's permit development process. Throughout 2024, WPPA and member ports participated extensively in permit workshops, technical discussions, and public comment opportunities. WPPA submitted detailed comments outlining concerns with several major permit changes, including the proposed expansion of permit coverage beyond traditional industrial activities, broad new "material handling" definitions affecting transportation facilities, new PFAS and 6PPD-quinone sampling requirements, additional stormwater pollution prevention training mandates, sampling waiver limitations, and increased compliance burdens that would significantly impact port operations and tenants.

At the core of WPPA's participation and assessment of this permit is the importance of ensuring that environmental regulations remain practical, defensible, and achievable while still protecting water quality. We strongly support environmental stewardship and continue to see member ports invest heavily in stormwater management infrastructure and best practices. However, many of the provisions in the 2025 ISGP represented a significant expansion of regulatory scope and cost without clear evidence that the changes would result in measurable environmental benefits. WPPA's appeal specifically focused on issues affecting marine terminals, transportation facilities, permit certainty, sampling feasibility, corrective action timelines, and the treatment of non-industrial stormwater discharges.

Since the appeal was filed at the beginning of last year, all related appeals were consolidated before PCHB. A three-week hearing concluded in February 2026 and included testimony from Ecology staff, engineers, hydrologists, chemists, and stormwater experts. A final ruling has not yet been issued.

Importantly, participation by WPPA and other permittees has already helped secure two partial settlement agreements with Ecology addressing several key concerns raised by ports and industry. These agreements include commitments from Ecology to revisit portions of the permit in the next permit cycle, reconsider benchmark approaches and modifications to water quality standards, address implementation concerns related to corrective actions, improve flexibility for unsafe sampling locations including waivers, and revisit broad training requirements. Ecology has also committed to beginning work on the next ISGP reissuance process in 2028. While not all concerns have been resolved, these developments demonstrate the value of coordinated participation and sustained engagement by the port community.

The Washington Stormwater Center recently held a meeting with Ecology providing an update on the ISGP reissuance and this timeline. There is some additional information from that webinar that can be found on their website, and at the [link here](#).

WPPA appreciates the financial support provided by several member ports, which helped give us the ability to fund this effort. And of course, we appreciate their patience and the patience of all our members in this lengthy process. Member contributions have supported specialized legal counsel and technical expertise necessary to ensure ports had a strong voice in the appeal process and in ongoing negotiations regarding permit implementation. This approach has allowed WPPA to advocate for increased regulatory clarity and reasonable compliance pathways.

WPPA will continue monitoring developments and will provide updates as additional decisions or actions occur.

## Knowing the Waters

This month's installment of [Knowing the Waters](#), written by Tim Schermetzler of CSD Attorneys at Law, steps through legal precedent, common concerns, and best practices for managing public comments and posts on port social media pages. It includes a helpful list of considerations for developing and implementing port social media policies and procedures.

## Grants and Resources for Ports

### Port Governance & Management Guide - Updates and Trainings in 2026-2028

WPPA is partnering once again with MFA and Jim Darling of Leeward Strategies to update the [WPPA Port Governance & Management Guide](#). These updates, completed over the course of the next two years, will bring Guide content up to date and inform semi-annual CTE sessions offered at the WPPA Winter & Spring Meetings. Each session will cover approximately one quarter of the Guide, as chapters are updated. We hope to lean on the engagement and expertise of our port and associate members throughout this process—please don't be surprised if we reach out to invite you to join a committee covering a portion of the Guide in the coming months!

### Washington Zero-Emission Incentive Program – Funding Available Now

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) [Washington Zero-Emission Incentive Program \(WAZIP\)](#) is offering up to \$112 million in vouchers to help businesses purchase zero-emission medium and heavy-duty (MHD) commercial vehicles and equipment. Technical assistance is available [here](#) on the WAZIP webpage.

### WA Department of Ecology's IRAG Program – applications due June 16, 2026

The solicitation for [Independent Remedial Action Grants](#) is open. This program is administered by Ecology to provide **post-cleanup grants to local governments that independently clean up contamination** under the [Voluntary Cleanup Program](#). A [Focus Sheet](#) and [Guidance Document](#) on the IRAG program are available on the Ecology website. **Applications are due June 16, 2026.**

*For the 2025-27 biennium only:* because the recent EAGL system update caused a delay in opening the application solicitation, Ecology will consider up to an additional six months of costs incurred past the five years of the grant application, if it was submitted in EAGL within 30 days of the application solicitation opening date.

## RCO Boating Infrastructure Grants – applications due July 15, 2026

RCO administers a US Fish and Wildlife Service funding stream for developing, renovating, and maintaining public boating facilities, boating information, and boater education in Washington: the [Boating Infrastructure Grant Program](#). Projects may include acquisition, development, maintenance, and/or renovation of facilities that serve recreational boats at least 26 feet in length providing day use or stays of up to 15 days. Up to \$288,046 is available for Tier 1 (state reviewed) project applications, and up to \$1.4M for Tier 2 (federally reviewed) projects.

- A match of 25 percent is required.
- Applicants contributing 26 percent or more will receive additional evaluation points.
- **Applications are due July 15, 2026.**

## RCO Planning for Recreation Access Grants – applications due July 15, 2026

The RCO [Planning for Recreation Access program](#) funds planning projects in communities lacking adequate access to outdoor recreation opportunities, including diverse, urban, and small rural communities across the state. Up to \$1.7M is set aside to fund activities such as planning, community engagement, and collaboration to define needs and priorities for projects that would lead to capital investment.

- No match is required.
- **Applications are due July 15, 2026.**

## Engage with WSDOT in 2026 Freight Systems Plan Development – online open house still open!

If you haven't yet, please consider engaging in the [WSDOT 2026 Freight System Plan \(FSP\) Online Open House](#) to help inform their 2026 FSP. Those of you who attended their session at our 2026 Trade and Transportation Committee meeting will have some familiarity with this tool, which includes a survey and an interactive map. This online open house is a chance to **ensure port facilities and the freight routes of our partners, tenants, and customers are accounted for** in this important transportation planning document.

Eric and the WPPA Trade and Transportation Committee convened a meeting in mid-January 2026 to discuss this exercise and develop coordinated messages to share with WSDOT.

## MRSC Trainings for Local Government – April-June, Virtual and In-Person

MRSC produces virtual webinars every month, several virtual workshops throughout the year, and a small number of in-person events across Washington State. Check out [their website](#) for a list of all currently planned trainings; additional information will be added as it becomes available.

## Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) Diesel Program – Grants Available

If your organization's diesel emissions reduction project prioritizes old, large engines, engines with daily usage, and/or engines that operate within areas or close to businesses or communities with high diesel pollution, [send your project information to PSCAA](#) for a chance to receive a 25-60% reimbursement for diesel equipment replacement.

## Clean Buildings Performance Standards: Resources and Grants Available

The [Tier 1 Early Adopter Incentive Program](#) will provide up to \$16 million in incentives for approved applicants. Tier 1 applies to non-residential, hotel, motel, and dormitory buildings greater than 50,000 square feet. Demonstrated early compliance with the Clean Buildings Performance Standard can earn building owners a one-time base incentive payment of \$2/square foot, up to \$75 million. This incentive is to cover up to half the cost of energy-saving measures identified in an energy audit. A [Tier 1 incentives estimator](#) is now available to assist building owners in planning their Clean Buildings Performance Standard compliance path.

The [Tier 2 Early Adopter Incentive Program](#) will provide a base incentive of \$0.30/square foot to owners of buildings between 20,000-50,001 square feet who benchmark their building's energy use, identify an energy use intensity target, and develop and implement an energy management plan and operations and maintenance program. Additional incentives are available for multifamily building owners who are willing to sign an [anti-displacement agreement](#).

## Commerce Clean Energy Tax Credit Assistance Program

Commerce provides **technical assistance in accessing federal tax credits for clean energy projects**, including solar, battery storage, wind energy, geothermal systems, electric vehicles (EVs), and EV charging infrastructure through the [Clean Energy Tax Credit Assistance Program \(CETCAP\)](#).

## The Community Builders Collective: A Statewide Network for Project Leaders

Launching this fall, the Community Builders Collective (CBC) is a free, statewide peer network from CERB for the people behind community and economic development infrastructure projects in rural, tribal, and historically under-resourced communities.

CBC members get:

- **A statewide network of peers** facing similar challenges and opportunities
- **Practical resources and tools** to support project development
- **Live training and learning opportunities** focused on real-time needs
- **24/7 access to the community** (plus CERB staff when needed)

If you're navigating complex infrastructure projects with limited time and staff—the CBC is here to help you get it done, together. For more information sign up [here](#).

## Washington State Treasurer's LOCAL Program

The LOCAL program, offered through the Office of the Washington State Treasurer, **provides Washington municipalities with a cost-effective way to finance equipment and/or real estate projects**. Participants can take advantage of the current program rating of Moody's Aa1, low fees and expenses, technical assistance, and access to the tax-exempt bond market.

Check out the [LOCAL Program guide](#) and visit the [Program FAQs](#) for more information.

## Climate Resources at Washington Climate Action

The [Washington Climate Action](#) website is a first-stop shop for funding or other resources related to climate and natural resources, including grant writing support and contracting information.

## Commerce Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) – applications accepted on rolling basis

The [Brownfields RLF](#) provides **low interest loans to entities undertaking cleanup of contaminated properties** to support redevelopment, promote public health and safety, improve environmental quality, and create jobs at and around brownfield sites. Average loan amounts are approximately \$500,000 and up to 50% of the loan may be forgiven for public entities. Loan terms are typically 5 years or less, and the interest rate is negotiated based on project need. A 1% loan fee is required.

## Commerce Small Business Credit Initiative – accepted on a rolling basis

Through the Washington State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), the Washington State Department of Commerce is collaborating with Heritage Bank to offer the Owner-Occupied Commercial Real Estate Loan Program. The program **allows Heritage to make loans to businesses that own the buildings in which they operate, and who wish to purchase new buildings or expand current operations.** This means port tenants who are contemplating expansion but need capital could have access to low-interest loans to support their downpayment.

Heritage Bank administers the program. You can find more information [on their website](#). The bank has also worked with Commerce to [publish an informative one-pager](#).

## DOE Energy Ready Charging Smart Program – free technical assistance

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) [Energy Ready Charging Smart Program](#) offers free technical assistance to help local governments adopt procedures and practices that facilitate the growth of electric vehicles (EVs).

## DOE E2C Program Expert Match – free technical assistance

The DOE's [Energy to Communities \(E2C\): Expert Match](#) program offers free, short-term technical assistance to address near-term energy challenges in local communities.

## 179D Energy Tax Credit – expiring soon

Act now to take advantage of the [179D deduction](#) before it expires. Recent federal legislation discontinues several energy tax credits including the 179D deduction, but there is still time to take advantage of the program before it ends. **To qualify, construction must begin by June 30, 2026, meet energy efficiency standards, and building owners must obtain proper documentation and certification,** including an energy study and allocation forms.

## The Federal Funds Grant Writing Assistance Program

The [Federal Funds Grant Writing Assistance Program](#) is designed for tribes, community-based organizations, local government agencies, and other entities to help prepare and submit federal grant applications. This resource is available now and can include services such as grant application planning, writing, and review and guidance for managing federal awards.

## Federal Clean Energy Tax Assistance Program – free and available now

Administered through Commerce, the [Federal Clean Energy Tax Credit Assistance Program](#) offers tax incentives to eligible entities (including ports) through the Inflation Reduction Act. Free resources, including personalized support from clean energy tax attorneys, are available [here](#).

## Highlighted Events



Planes on the tarmac at the Port of Moses Lake

### WPPA Port Academy Series: June 5, Port of Moses Lake

**Attention Port Staff:** Registration is open for the second installment of the [Port Academy Series of 2026](#)! This educational initiative is designed to provide port staff with an opportunity to learn from one another through hands-on, port-led forums. This session will be hosted by the Port of Moses Lake on Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Participants will gain insight into how the port approaches long-range planning, economic development, and asset management in a rural setting.

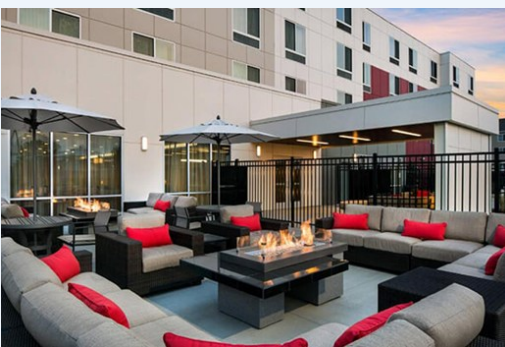
Whether you are a Port Manager, Finance Officer, Environmental Specialist, or work in another area of port operations, this event offers a practical opportunity to learn from peers and explore approaches that may be applicable to your own port. The program will include a mix of presentations, facilitated discussion, and a tour of port facilities. Lunch is provided. To support meaningful discussion, registration is limited to a small group of 25 participants.



Waterfront at Hotel Indigo in Everett

### Finance & Administration Seminar, June 24 - 26 at Hotel Indigo, Everett

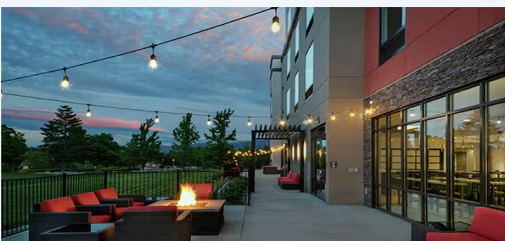
Registration is open for the [2026 Finance & Administration Seminar](#). Please plan to join us in June for this informative event! The hotel room block has closed, reach out to [Mandy Lill](#) if you need other hotel recommendations or to be put on a waiting list. You can find event information on the [event FAQ page](#) on our website. You can also [click here to view the agenda](#) and please contact [Mandy Lill](#) if you have any questions or if you would like to inquire [about being a sponsor](#). You have until June 17<sup>th</sup> to register online.



Outdoor seating area at the Courtyard by Marriott in Pullman

### Directors Seminar, July 8 - 10 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Pullman

Registration is [now open](#) for the [2026 Directors Seminar](#), held this July for the first time in Pullman and we hope to see you there! Hotel reservations must be made by June 9<sup>th</sup> so [book your room now](#) before the block closes! Read more in our event FAQs and reach out to [Mandy Lill](#) if you have any questions. *Optional:* there will be an informal gathering on the afternoon of July 8<sup>th</sup> for anyone who would like to arrive a bit early. More information to come soon!



Outdoor seating on the riverfront at the Hilton Garden Inn in Wenatchee

### Commissioners Seminar, July 20 - 22 at Hilton Garden Inn, Wenatchee

Registration opens soon for the [WPPA Commissioners Seminar](#), taking place this July 20 - 22 at the Hilton Garden Inn along the Columbia River in Wenatchee. Join fellow commissioners for a few days of learning, connection, and conversation in a beautiful setting. Be sure to reserve your room by June 20<sup>th</sup> to take advantage of the WPPA block. Call 1-800-HILTONS (1-800-445-8667) and mention the *Washington Public Ports Association*. If you have questions or need assistance, please reach out to [Mandy Lill](#).

## WPPA 2026 Conference Calendar - Save the Date

- **Environmental Seminar:** September 24-25, Renaissance Hotel, Seattle
- **Small Ports: Oct. 22-23,** Campbell's Resort, Chelan
- **Winter Meeting: Dec 9-11,** Hilton Vancouver  
(formerly known as the Annual Meeting)



*The grind never stops for Arthur at WPPA HQ.*

### As Arthur Sees It

*Notes from the Executive Director and his dog*

On a sunny February day, Mandy Lill and I drove down the highway toward the coast, bound for Grays Harbor County and the Port of Grays Harbor's annual "Business Report" get together. This is a gathering of port commissioners and staff, tenants, labor partners, local elected officials, and other community partners. It's a chance to hear from the important business sectors that the port represents, but in this case, it also had an unexpected highlight: a keynote from former State Historian John Hughes.

John Hughes was the editor-in-chief of the Daily World in Aberdeen, where he spent 42 years, from delivering papers to serving as editor and publisher. He spoke with the group about the history of the Port of Grays Harbor and its role in Washington's economy—bringing trade and commerce to a small, rural community on the coast. He talked about the transition from a timber economy, and how the port's leadership helped steer the community through some tough times.

I was able to meet John after the talk, and I told him how much I'd enjoyed his historical take on the role of the port in the community. In that conversation, John mentioned that he had a great friend who'd been a longtime port leader himself: Don White, who served WPPA with distinction for *more than thirty years!*

Don still lives in Olympia and, at 91 years old, he writes light-hearted novels for a vocation (he brought one for me, [The Kicker](#)), and he is an occasional visitor to WPPA offices. Don had recently stopped by and mentioned that he wanted to catch up with me, so I used this chance run-in with John Hughes as an excuse to convene one of the most interesting lunches I've had in years!

Don, John, and I met at Budd Bay Café in April, where we talked about the history of Washington ports, the history of the state generally, and both of their experiences as young men living and working in Grays Harbor County. They were ribbing each other about past political items, remembering the names of dignitaries who'd swung through Grays Harbor County or who they'd met in Olympia or DC, and all through it throwing out the names of larger-than-life port figures in "the Harbor," from Hank Soike to Jack Thompson.

I am still trying to get a handle on the exact dates of Don's service to WPPA, but I know that he was Deputy Director as far back as 1984 (the year before I was born), and that he was succeeded in his role by Pat Jones, who was only three directors before me! Pat took over at the Association in 1992, when Don had been the director for four years, after taking over the top spot from the legendary Lou Holcomb who he'd loyally served as deputy. Don figures he served thirty years at WPPA, which would've put his start date sometime in the early sixties, close to when WPPA was formed. The fact that he is still in the neighborhood, swinging by our offices to say hello, is a pleasure that I wish you could all experience.

Mostly lunch was just fun: a chance for them to reminisce on work they'd done together, and for me to hear from two people whose careers had so much in common with the work we all do now. Don talked of the same challenges we face now, whether navigating legislature with priorities that didn't align, or navigating the differences between large and small port members. They both talked of WPPA's lobbying might in the Legislature, and of ports being seen as economic development leaders at times when the state's economy struggled. With each different issue that was raised, I would smile, laugh at the light moments in their recounting, and then enjoy telling them that not much has changed!

Lunch ended with well wishes and plans to see each other again, and as I made my way back to my car and headed back to the office, I could not shake what was a strangely positive feeling: that things are mostly the same. We have a way of telling ourselves, call it "recency bias" or "prisoner of the moment," that the age we are living in is the Most or the Biggest or the Loudest. The files on my desk are particularly daunting, and the unanswered voicemail, newly challenging. But beyond the obvious signs of the changing of the years, at its core, the work that Don and I are doing is the same: get to know our members, represent them with the legislature, and position ports to be viewed as pragmatic problem solvers in difficult moments. That inspiration will carry me into the busy summer, and hopefully it does something for you, too

**Washington Public Ports Association**  
**360.943.0760 | [www.washingtonports.org](http://www.washingtonports.org)**