

- **Annual Public Meetings** - Over the past few months, PacMtn presented its annual report at public meetings across all five counties in the region. The reception was overwhelmingly positive, with county commissioners—both those serving on the **Consortium of Elected Officials** and others—expressing strong support for the work PacMtn and the WorkSource system are doing in their communities. Commissioners particularly appreciated the insights shared on regional workforce progress and the implementation of the One Workforce model. A recurring concern, however, centered on the costs associated with WorkSource facilities, especially among those serving on the Consortium. This feedback highlights the ongoing need to ensure transparency and efficiency in resource allocation while maintaining high-quality services for job seekers and businesses.
- **Nancie Payne Award Presentation at Vaughan Company** - PacMtn recently visited **Vaughan Pump** in Montesano, WA, to present the prestigious **Nancie Payne Award** along with the accompanying prize money. The visit provided an excellent opportunity to engage with the team and learn more about their commitment to workforce excellence. **PacMtn board member Stacie Vaughan** and **Marketing Director Stefanie Vaughan** accepted the award on behalf of Vaughan Pump, sharing insights into their company culture and dedication to Quality Jobs. Their emphasis on employee development, retention, and innovation reflects the values that the Nancie Payne Award seeks to honor, making them a well-deserving recipient.



- **Engagement with Grays Harbor County Leadership** - PacMtn CEO William Westmoreland recently met with Consortium Member Commissioner Rick Hole and Grays Harbor County Manager Sam Kim to discuss key workforce and economic challenges in the county. This meeting provided an opportunity to learn more about Sam Kim’s role in county government; a newly established position—and to explore Commissioner Hole’s leadership within the Consortium. The discussion highlighted significant regional challenges, including low Prime Working Age (24-59) workforce participation, access to affordable housing and childcare, and the continuing impact of the opioid epidemic. Despite these challenges, there was a strong sense of optimism and commitment to supporting positive change in the community. The conversation also explored the role of Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and how PacMtn can better align workforce investments and initiatives to support the county’s economic and workforce needs.
- **State Budget Shortfall and Workforce Funding Impacts** - With lower-than-expected state revenues, newly elected Governor Bob Ferguson has largely adopted former Governor Inslee’s budget recommendations. While Economic Security for All (EcSA) remains funded at levels similar to the last budget cycle, the Community Reinvestment Project (CRP) is not included—which accounts for approximately 33% of the total EcSA program budget. CRP resources play a critical role in the local workforce model, funding key initiatives such as expanded BIPOC employer engagement through contracts with EDCs and Chambers, small business grants, participant incentives, and the Matched Investment Savings Account (MISA) program.

As Chair of the Washington Workforce Association (WWA), PacMtn CEO William Westmoreland is actively involved in efforts to restore CRP funding or, at minimum, increase the EcSA base allocation. WWA is coordinating a legislative hill climb to advocate for these critical investments in workforce development. With both legislative chambers expected to release their budget proposals soon, the focus will shift toward reconciliation and ensuring workforce programs remain a funding priority. More updates will follow as budget negotiations evolve.

- **United Learning Center Visit in Lewis County** - On January 28th, PacMtn visited the construction site of the United Learning Center (ULC) in Lewis County, hosted by Annie Oien of United Way of Lewis County and Todd Chaput of the Economic Alliance of Lewis County. This project, supported by multiple funding partners, including the Bezos Foundation, will provide a Montessori-style preschool program, as well as space for the Boys and Girls Club and a Children’s Museum. The scale of collaboration and the deep community engagement behind this effort are truly inspiring.

The ULC is a complex, multi-faceted project that highlights the visionary leadership of both Todd and Annie, as well as the dedication of the Lewis County community to expanding educational opportunities for young children. During the visit, discussions focused on potential partnerships to support Youth and their families, aligning with PacMtn’s commitment to workforce development and community-driven solutions. With the facility slated for completion later this year, this initiative represents a critical investment in early learning, family support, and long-term economic resilience in the region.

Stories of Hope and Impact

Shared from our valued partners:

“When this participant first connected with the EcSA, CRF and WIOA Youth programs, they had a clear goal: to build a career in healthcare. However, like many young adults entering the workforce, they faced significant barriers to employment—they lacked formal training, hands-on experience, and the confidence to navigate the job search process. Without a certification or relevant work history, breaking into the healthcare field felt overwhelming.

Determined to support their journey, the EcSA team took a multi-step approach to help them gain the skills and experience they needed. The first step was enrollment in a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training program, fully funded through co-braided resources from EcSA, CFR and WIOA. To ensure success, staff worked closely with the participant to provide job coaching, resume development, and interview preparation, helping them feel prepared for the next steps.

Transportation was another major challenge—without reliable access to a vehicle, attending training and job interviews became an additional obstacle. To remove this barrier, the program provided transportation assistance so the participant could focus fully on their training. Additionally, the participant received support for professional attire, making sure they had the necessary clothing to attend interviews and start work with confidence.

As the participant completed their CNA coursework, the team recognized the need for practical, hands-on experience before full-time employment. To bridge this gap, they were placed in a Work Experience (WEX) opportunity at a local healthcare facility, where they gained valuable on-the-job training, exposure to real-world patient care, and mentorship from seasoned professionals. This experience proved to be a turning point—after successfully completing the WEX, they secured full-time employment as a CNA, earning \$21 per hour.

What made this success even more impactful was the employer’s recognition of the participant’s commitment and potential. Seeing their dedication and strong work ethic, the employer offered to cover additional certifications, ensuring continued career growth and advancement. The participant, who once doubted their ability to enter the field, now has a stable job, a clear career path, and the opportunity to advance in healthcare.

Their story is a powerful example of how targeted support, skills training, and wraparound services can break down employment barriers and help participants achieve self-sufficiency. The combination of strategic funding, employer engagement, and participant perseverance created a life-changing opportunity—one that will continue to open doors for their future in the healthcare industry.”