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Real News Real Impact

Over 400,000 signatures submitted for initiative to repeal cap-and-invest scheme



Brian Heywood, founder of Let's Go Washington, with supporters submitting signed petitions to repeal Washington State's cap-and-invest program on November 21, 2023, in Kent. | SOURCE: Let's Go Washington.

By MARIO LOTMORE

KENT—Citizens action group, Let's Go Washington, announced on November 21, that it has surpassed the signature threshold to submit Initiative 2117, that if enacted into law, will prohibit carbon tax credit trading, also known as "cap-and-invest," and repeal provisions of the Washington Climate Commitment Act passed by the legislature on April 24, 2021, and signed into law by Governor Jay Inslee on May 17 of that same year.

"We are turning in today, the first set of six initiatives," Brian Heywood, founder of Let's Go Washington, an-

nounced standing in front of a Shell gas station in Kent. "We have 418,399 signatures that we are turning in."

Upon the Secretary of State's Office validation of signatures, it will certify I-2117 for the Legislature in its 2024 session to take one of the following actions:

- Adopt the initiative as proposed resulting in it becoming law without a vote of the people;
- Reject or refuse to act on the proposed initiative resulting in it being placed on the November 5, 2023, General Election ballot; or
- Propose a different measure deal-

ing with the same subject where both measures will be placed on the November 5, 2023, General Election ballot.

Heywood shared that gas prices impact everyone. Having moved to Washington state from California, he experienced firsthand the repercussions when what he calls the legislature becoming completely out of sync of what the everyday person experiences.

"People are just mad.... not because they don't like it; it's because they are making a choice between groceries and

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First flu death of the season reported in Snohomish County

By SNOHOMISH DEPT OF HEALTH

SNOHOMISH COUNTY — The county's first flu-related death of the 2023-24 flu season was reported last week. An Everett woman in her 60s with underlying medical conditions died November 13.

While most people recover from flu with care and rest, flu can be a serious illness and cause deadly complications. Last flu season, 12 Snohomish County residents died, ranging in age from their 20s to over 80 years old. Flu deaths had dropped off during the preceding two flu seasons while enhanced COVID prevention measures were in place. However, the county saw 11 flu-related deaths during the 2019-20 season, 26 in 2018-19, and 40 in 2017-18. The worst flu season for the county in recent memory was 2016-17, with 45 flu-related deaths.

Statewide, the most recent flu season (2022-23) was the deadliest in the last five years. The Washington State Department of Health reports that 269 people died from flu in Washington last season, including 264 adults and five children.

People at higher risk of severe illness include young children, older adults, people with chronic conditions or who are immunocompromised, pregnant individuals, and residents of nursing homes or long-term care facilities.

So far, indicators of flu transmission overall remain low in Snohomish County and statewide. COVID activity also remains low, but there has been a recent uptick in respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity. It is likely that transmission of these viruses will increase in the coming weeks as we approach more holiday gatherings.

Everyone can play a role in reducing the spread of illness this season. You can help by:

- Getting your annual flu vaccine if you have not done so already. It is available at clinics and pharmacies throughout the county. This is also a good time to make sure you are up-to-date on other vaccinations, particularly COVID vaccinations for ages 6 months or older and RSV immunizations for those who are eli-

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Motorsports continue at Evergreen Fairgrounds

By MARIO LOTMORE

MONROE—Because of health concerns related to indoor air quality, motorsports were scheduled to end at the Evergreen State Fair Park Indoor Arena, but Councilmembers and the Executive Office worked together and with passage of the 2024 Snohomish County Budget on November 8, motorsports and the much-anticipated Arenacross will now go on!

The Council approved \$672,000 in improvements to the Evergreen State Fair Park Indoor Arena to include the following:



Evergreen State Fair Park Indoor Arena. SOURCE: Evergreen State Fairgrounds.

- Installation of carbon monoxide monitors at six locations in the building;
- Physical separation of the concession area to

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County passes nearly \$2 billion 2024 budget

By KIENAN BRISCOE

SNOHOMISH COUNTY—Snohomish County Council approved its 2024 Budget at a Public Hearing on Wednesday, November 8, including 23 amendments presented by council members. The \$1.661 billion budget focusses on public safety, helping the vulnerable, protecting natural resources, and strengthening the economy, according to County Executive Dave Somers.

“Improving public safety; saving lives by helping our most vulnerable residents; preserving and protecting our natural resources; ensuring we grow wisely; strengthening our economy; and serving all of our community equitably,” were key priorities Executive Somers said.

On September 26, 2023, the council received the 2024 budget proposal from the Office of the Executive. In the following weeks, the council and staff reviewed the proposed budget.

A community budget forum was held on October 11 with a subsequent public hearing on October 24 open to the public. Discussions continued during legislative sessions on October 25 and November 1 to cover the council’s priorities and amendments introduced. The budget was then approved unanimously on November 8 by all five council members.

There were 22 action items in total at Wednesday’s meeting, each relating to a different Budget Ordinance. Despite some contention, 23 out of the 38 amendments passed.

“We appreciate the collaboration we have with the Executive and his staff,” said Snohomish County Council Chair Jared Mead. “The Council understands the hard work that goes into balancing the County’s many priorities.”

The approved 2024 budget also funded: the County Council, Paine Field Airport, the Departments of Emergency Management, Finance, Human Resources, Health, Human Services, Information Technology, Facilities & Fleet, Conservation and Natural Resources, Planning and Development Services, Public Works, the Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office (both law enforcement and corrections), District Court, the Hearing Examiner’s Office, the Medical Examiner’s Office, the Office of the Public Advocate, the Office of Public Defense, the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, Treasurer, Office of Recovery

and Resilience, the Office of Social Justice, and Superior Court.

2024 SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUDGET ORDINANCES

Below are the ordinances voted on by Council:

General Property Tax Levy increase: Budget Ordinance 23-113, relating to Property Taxes, Fixing the 2024 General Property Tax Levy for Snohomish County and Preserving Future Levy Capacity.

The ordinance sets the 2024 estimated levy rate at .4956 cents per \$1000 of assessed value with an estimated \$105,521,352 in property tax revenues.

The ordinance passed unanimously by council.

Budget Ordinance 23-114, authorizes a 1% General Levy property tax increase which is the maximum manual increase allowed under current state law without either using bank capacity or a vote of the people.

The ordinance passed 3-2 with council members Sam Low and Nate Nehring opposing.

Road tax levy increases: The next two ordinances relate to a road tax levy and were submitted with Executive Somers’ recommended 2024 budget. Ordinance 23-115 fixes the road levy rate at .8299 with estimated road levy taxes of \$75,666,943.

The ordinance passed unanimously.

Ordinance 23-116 authorizes a 1% road property tax levy increase in the amount of \$722,090.

The ordinance passed 4-1 with all but Councilman Nehring voting in favor.

Conservation Futures Property Taxes: The next two ordinances were also submitted under the Executives recommended budget.

Ordinance 23-117 fixes the 2024 Conservation Futures Levy rate at .0216 cents with estimated conservation future levy taxes of \$4,605,771.

The ordinance passed unanimously.

Ordinance 23-118 authorizes a 1% Conservation Futures Levy increase of \$43,826.

The ordinance passed 3-2 with council

members Nate Nehring and Sam low voting no.

Surface Water Management: Proposed Motion 23-423, approves the 2024 Surface Water Management Annual Construction Program which includes \$21,985,701 of funding for various projects – an approximate \$3 million increase from the previous year.

The motion passed unanimously.

Proposed Motion 23-424, approves the 2024 Surface Water Management Six-Year capital Improvement Plan which includes \$132,645,184 in funding – an increase of \$18,108,993 from the previous year.

The motion passed unanimously.

Transportation: Proposed Ordinance 23-119 approves the 2024 Annual Construction Plan for County Transportation Improvements. State law RCW.36.81.130 which requires each county to prepare and adopt a comprehensive transportation program which contains information on how each county will spend its funds on transportation projects – related to capacity, safety, bridges, neighborhood improvements, and non motorized transportation purposes. The statute further requires the county road engineer file with the county legislative authority for considering an adoption plan for laying out construction and maintenance of all county roads for the next year.

The ordinance passed unanimously.

Proposed Motion 23-425 adopts the 2024-2029 Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program which sets aside \$293,800,000 in funding from the budget – a \$28.7 million, or 11%, decrease from 2023.

The motion passed unanimously.

Solid Waste: Budget Motion 23-426 approves the 2024 Solid Waste Management Division Six-Year Capitol Improvement Plan. This plan includes projects related to capacity, safety, and system improvements. The proposed budget is \$16.95 million – an \$11 million increase from the 2023 budget.

The motion passed unanimously.

Budget Motion 23-427 adopts the 2024-2029 Solid Waste Management Division Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan with the proposed budget of \$109.325 million – an \$18 million an increase from 2023.

The motion passed unanimously.

Growth Management: Budget Ordinance 23-120, relating to the Growth Management Act, adopts the 2024-2029 Capital Improvement Program as part of the Snohomish County Capital Facilities Plan which budgets to ensure facilities like fire protection, surface water management, transportation, parks, recreational facilities, electric

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CONTACT INFORMATION

PUBLISHER Mario Lotmore publisher@lynnwoodtimes.com	REPORTERS Doug Buell doug.buell@lynnwoodtimes.com
MARKETING SPECIALIST Michele Mitsuchi-Stork sales@lynnwoodtimes.com	George Ftikas Jr. george.ftikasjr@lynnwoodtimes.com
SENIOR STAFF REPORTER Kienan Briscoe kienan.briscoe@lynnwoodtimes.com	Olivia Thiessen olivia.thiessen@lynnwoodtimes.com
	Emily Chu and Jonah Rand

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12918 Mukilteo Speedway C23, PMB-162 Lynnwood, WA 98087
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With \$3 million surplus, residents argue against 22% property tax increase



Former Lynnwood Councilman Ted Hikel at the Lynnwood City Council meeting on November 20, 2023, questioning \$23.9 million in budget increases within the last two years.

After hearing these figures, Council Vice President Julieta Altamirano-Crosby asked Meyer what the percentage increase is.

“It sounds big: it’s 22.22%,” Meyer said. “The ordinance is rounded to 22.23% so the county can round to that \$5.5 million.”

This \$5.5 million is the projected amount for 2024 if the levy is increased and would be a \$1,000,000 increase from 2023. The general fund forecast continues this \$500,000 increase every year: 2025 at \$6 million and 2026 at \$6.5 million for a total of \$12.5 million, for example.

To meet this forecast 2024, the levy would increase from the current \$0.43 per \$1000 of assessed valuation to \$0.53 per \$1000.

After a question from Councilmember Jim Smith, Meyer stated the city saw

By **GEORGE FTIKAS**

LYNNWOOD—The Lynnwood City Council is considering a 22.23% increase on the property tax levy and held a public hearing on it during a special business meeting on November 20 before its work session.

None who spoke during public comments were in favor of the increase, most citing the rise in inflation as their primary concern. Most speakers also agreed that the city should cut costs rather than increase taxes.

“To say that we’re going to increase property tax by 22.2% is really a stunner,” Councilmember George Hurst said. “I understand that we have inflation and it impacts not only residents, but it impacts the city. Inflation impacts us. I can foresee some increase, but a 22% increase is a lot and I really have to look at this hard before agreeing to something like that.”

The first public commenter questioned whether the city was adequately utilizing the funds they take in.

“This year you lost \$1.75 million because you weren’t doing safety checks on inmates and one died,” Glen Bowers said. “Now the EPA has fined you half a million dollars because our wastewater facility isn’t operating to standards. And these are fines for your mistakes, but we’re the ones that have to pay.”

During public comments, former Councilmember Ted Hikel questioned the pay that city directors and employees receive. In comparing the current budget with the previous 2021-2022 budget just two years ago, he identified \$23.9 million in increases; yet the City

has not identified any opportunities for cost avoidance or savings.

“The Development and Business Services up \$5 million, the Executive Department (Mayor Christine Frizzell) up \$1.2 million, Human Resources up \$400,000, IT up \$900,000, Legislative only up \$200,000, Courts up a million, Parks up \$4 million, Police up \$10,000,000, Public Works – one of the bigger departments – only up \$500,000, Fire Marshals up \$700,000, Non-Department, again another million dollars,” Hikel said.

He then shared that City directors make between \$168,000 to \$217,000 per year, more than twice their subordinates and that of the average Lynnwood resident.

“There is something wrong with the pay when you compare it to all the people in the community who are working in other businesses — they [Lynnwood residents] don’t make that kind of money,” Hikel said. “People are wonderful, they’re great, who work for the city, but the remuneration and the added benefits they get for retirement, for health and insurance — this is way out of proportion to what the community earns as a whole. You’ve got to think about that.”

Prior to the public comments, Finance Director Michelle Meyer gave an overview, relaying much of the information The Lynnwood Times previously reported on.

Based on the 2023 average home price in Lynnwood of \$643,000, the city’s portion of the property tax is roughly \$280 a year. If passed, this would increase the property tax by \$59 to \$338 a year or “right under \$5 a month to

the average homeowner,” according to Meyer.

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2023 Mukilteo Community Awards Gala winners

By MARIO LOTMORE

The Mukilteo Chamber of Commerce hosted its third annual Community Awards Gala on Friday, November 17, at the Rosehill Community Center where local businesses were recognized for their commitment to improving Mukilteo through giving, programs, and volunteerism.

Community award winners of the night were the following:

- Community Member winner Debra Bordsen
- Non-Profit winner Casino Road Kids Ministry
- New Business winner Delaney's Landscaping
- Small Business winner Nic's Barbershop
- Large Business winner Ivar's
- Chamber Volunteer of the Year winner Kim Greenough
- Chamber Board Member of the Year winner Christina Stollwerck
- Chamber Ambassador of the Year winner Randy Robichaud

The Board surprised Executive Director Kandace Barnes with an award for all of her hard work over the years. Just over 100 attendees enjoyed music, dinner that was provided by Red Cork Bistro, a photo booth, photos by John with Watkins Photography, and both a live and silent auction.

President and CEO Kandace Barnes, shared with the Lynnwood Times the importance of the Chamber recognizing local businesses and members in the community.

"They really are the backbone of the community," Barnes said. "The opportunity to recognize those people who really are the backbone of our community. We are just so thankful for them."

Barnes, her team, and many volunteers hosted wine fests, Music at the Beach concerts, a Mukilteo Car Show, a Beer Garden at the Lighthouse Festival, Spooktacular for Halloween, and a luncheon series this year all of which are returning for 2024.



Mukilteo Chamber of Commerce's third annual Community Awards Gala on Friday, November 17. Photo courtesy of John Watkins Photography

from page 3 LYNNWOOD PROPERTY TAX LEVY

an increase in sales tax revenue, bringing in a \$3 million surplus in that area. However, according to Meyer, these funds have already been allocated.

"We only collect only a small amount from property taxes because we happen to be a large retail center, so we collect most of our revenues from sales tax, which is unique," Meyer said. "In the mid-biennium amendment process, we are highlighting that that money is actually already spent on a few amendments that needed to happen for this biennium."

After hearing public comments, Smith agreed with one of the speakers and suggested the city conduct internal or external audits to find areas to cut costs.

One suggestion to make up for not passing the levy made by Smith was increasing fees at the Lynnwood Recreation Center for non-city residents, as they don't pay the property tax that benefits it.

This is the third time the proposed property tax increase has been brought before the council. Meyer also mentioned that this is not new information to the council, as it was part of the 2023-2024 budget passed in December

2022.

According to the tax distribution from the Snohomish County Assessor's Office, cities and towns account for 8.92% of the property tax. The school districts and state schools have the highest percentages at 34.33% and 28.98% respectively.

This was something one public speaker commented on. The Edmonds School District is considering a proposed increase in their levy and bonds of \$714 million over 4 years, so while the proposed amount for Lynnwood might be small comparatively, multiple increases in various levies would become overwhelming.

The council will take action on the proposed property tax levy next week, as the state requires the city to certify their levy with the county by the end of November.

Last year, the council did not vote on an increase to the property tax levy, something Council President Shannon Sessions pointed out.

"Everybody always forgets when we don't do it," Sessions said. "If we keep not doing it, we're going to be in trouble. I don't know how I'm going to vote on it yet, but it's important to note that it's lovely how everybody always forgets when we don't do it."



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Are traffic cameras right for Mukilteo Speedway?

COMMENTARY BY TOM JORDAL, MUKILTEO CITY COUNCILMAN



Tom Jordal

- Rosehill Community Center
- Olympic View Middle School
- 92nd Street Park

The cameras are being considered to address the problems of speeding and noise on Mukilteo Speedway, primarily leaving the waterfront heading south on Mukilteo Speedway. Local residents have long endured the noise of vehicles accelerating up the hill on Mukilteo Speedway.

The City and Council will be discussing the traffic camera proposal at the November 27th Council Work Session and December 4th Council Meeting. Note that public comment is only allowed at the December 4th Council Meeting. Both are held starting at 6 p.m. at Mukilteo City Hall located at 11930 Cyrus Way.

I welcome your insights and opinions on this proposal to help the City and Council make informed plans and decisions.

THE TRAFFIC STUDY DATA

A study conducted over two weeks this summer and fall determined the speeding problem to be significant. At Rosehill, 14.6% of all southbound traffic was going 11 mph or more over the speed limit, with 2% of all cars exceeding the speed limit by 20 mph. In the school zone, where the speed limit is 25 mph when lights are flashing, 78% of all cars exceeded the speed limit. Near 92nd Street Park, 13-23% of all vehicles headed north were speeding by 11 mph or more. This equates to a combined annual rate of nearly 1,000,000 speeding incidents in these three areas.

The Mukilteo Police Department does its best to control traffic in these areas, but with a limited number of officers on duty at any given time, they must prioritize the most urgent and pressing calls which limits their time for traffic control.

WHAT CAMERA DATA IS CAPTURED

The proposed cameras will take pictures of vehicles that exceed the speeding threshold during designated periods of time. The cameras near Byer's Park and 92nd Street would be triggered by drivers exceeding the speed limit by 11 mph during park opening hours. The camera near Olympic Middle School would be triggered by drivers exceeding the limit by 6 mph when the school zone lights are flashing. The cameras are inactive unless triggered by vehicles exceeding these speeds.

The speeding vehicle and its license plate are captured while the driver and any visible passengers are blacked out from the video. This data on speeders is transmitted from a private company, which operates the cameras, to the Mukilteo Police. The police then review the video and driver data and issue a ticket. The ticket issued is considered a parking infraction and does not affect a driver's insurance rates.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO TRAFFIC CAMERAS

The expected benefits of installing traffic cameras in these specific locations are simple and relatively predictable based on data from the many cameras already in use in Washington State.

Drivers learn that they need to abide by the speed limit, or they receive a ticket in the mail. This motivates drivers to accelerate more slowly as they proceed up the hill, which lowers their speed and reduces their engine noise.

Historical data shows that 96% or more of drivers change their driving behavior and adhere to the speed limit, although the full change can take two to three years. Installing traffic cameras at the north end of Mukilteo Speedway will reduce speeding and noise, making the road safer and the neighborhood more peaceful.

ADDRESSING TRAFFIC CAMERA CONCERNS

Mukilteo residents have brought up several concerns regarding traffic cam-

eras. I would like to address each of the concerns that I've been made aware of here and share my thoughts on them.

In full disclosure, some of these concerns come from my family and friends, and I've been direct in my responses to them.

(1) Many people don't want to get caught for speeding unless there's a policeman involved. They think it is unfair to use technology as they are not allowed to use counter-technology. Some described it to me as a game of cat and mouse and that camera technology is unfair. This is a very honest response, but even those making it realize it's not defensible and a bit absurd. It is important to adhere to the speed limit even when no one is looking, especially when children may be present.

(2) Some say it's unfair to expect drivers to change their behavior with no warning. During the first month of operation, the system will issue a warning citation. There are speed limit signs, speed indicator signs and school zone warning signs on the Speedway and the City is considering placing additional speed indicators to alert drivers who are speeding so they can slow down.

(3) There are those who are concerned Government surveillance can be used to track people's movements and stifle gatherings of groups they oppose. The traffic cameras are operated by a private company and only send information on speeders exceeding the

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LEISURE CARE

Son of Hamas founder stands with Israel at Snohomish event amidst statewide protests



Hundreds attended Pursuit Church NW on November 5, 2023, to hear Masab Hassan Yousef's story. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

SNOHOMISH—*Son of Hamas* author and former member of the controversial Palestinian group Hamas, Masab Hassan Yousef, spoke at Pursuit NW Church in Snohomish Monday, November 5, condemning the attacks of his former resistance movement and showing his support for Israel.

"I'm not an advocate for the Jewish people or anyone — this is the truth," said Yousef. "If I have to advocate for any people, I wouldn't be here tonight, but I love the Jewish people. I have so many Jewish friends that we shared bread together, we laughed together, so if anybody touch the Jewish people, they touch me somehow and of course I'm going to be outraged."

Mosab was born on the West Bank of Ramallah, in 1978, His father, Sheikh Hassan Yousef, is one of the founders of Hamas, an organization that many countries consider a terrorist threat due to their use of suicide bombings and other deadly attacks against Israel. The United States designated Hamas a foreign terrorist organization on October 8, 1997.

For years Yousef played an integral part of the movement and was imprisoned several times by the Israeli intelligence. He withstood torture in prison only to discover Hamas was torturing its own Palestinian people in an endless search for collaborators, he said. Around this time Yousef began to question who his enemies really were.

"I did not like my father's movement because his movement was to annihilate the state of Israel. This is not defense," said Yousef. "A good father would risk their lives to protect their children, not sacrifice their children for their own political gamble. He wants to annihilate the Jews and relocate 10 million people, but these people have a birthright to that land."

Yousef said he began to see that his father's movement would become a "vicious cycle of violence" that would

never end. He added that if the movement had a political agenda, then negotiations may be an option but "it's a religious movement and no political value or price can satisfy their religious ambition because they want the holy land."

"How can you negotiate with that? That is why democracy doesn't negotiate with terrorist groups because they use force as a means to obtain their political goals. Democracy is not based on the use of force — it has an army to protect it but it's based on dialogue, not on the gun only," said Yousef.

"Hamas is a terrorist group by all standards," he continued. "In fact, terrorist is an understatement, because what they did on October 7 was barbaric... Hamas initiated the war, that was the cause, what we are witnessing right now is the effect of that war. Israel does not target civilians, bottom line. Ten years I was a part of the Israel intelligence operation and I know, and I trust Israel one hundred percent, they do not have the intention of harming civilians but they cannot be responsible for what happens to civilians when Hamas used them as human shields."

HAMAS TERRORIST ATTACK OF OCTOBER 7, 2023

On October 7, 2023, Hamas led a series of coordinated attacks against Israel — on a Sabbath day and date of many Jewish holidays — killing over 1,000 Jewish civilians and approximately 350 Israeli soldiers. Approximately 3,000 Palestinian militants infiltrated Israel from Gaza using trucks, powered paragliders, bulldozers, and speedboats, opening fire on Israeli civilians and setting homes on fire. Additionally, Hamas took approximately 200 Israeli hostages, approximately 30 of which were children. That day was the largest number of Jews killed on a single day since the Holocaust.

At least 44 nations considered the attack an act of terrorism but Hamas, and many Arab nations, blamed Israel saying the attack was provoked by Jewish



Pastor Russell Johnson of The Pursuit NW (left) with Masab Hassan Yousef (right) at Pursuit Church NW on Monday, November 5, 2023. SOURCE: The Pursuit NW

settlements in the West Bank and in Gaza.

In response, Israel declared a state of emergency and preparedness for war pledging the destruction of the military and governmental capabilities of "Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad." The Israeli military urged civilians living in Gaza to flee on October 17 and led an airstrike on October 31 before troops and tanks poured in. At least 11,000 people have been killed in Gaza as of November 13, according to the Washington Post.

Additionally, at least 37 journalists have been killed while covering the conflict making October the deadliest month of journalists since the Committee to Protect Journalists began tracking data.

UW AND OTHER COLLEGE'S NATIONWIDE HOLD PROTESTS IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINE

In early October, hundreds of Palestinian supporters showed up en masse at University of Washington's Red Square with signs and megaphones. Those who stand with Israel also showed face.

Some protesters even had photos of the Hamas paragliders who dropped into Israel on October 7 on their signs.

Noah, a University of Washington student, informed the Lynnwood Times there were posters circulating around campus blaming the Jews for the conflicts in the middle East, which he believed to be promoting antisemitism.

Additionally, students could be spotted around removing photos of "kidnapped children," taken hostage by Hamas after their infiltration of Israel.

On October 26 a walkout of faculty and staff was also held at the university. Students displayed signs that read "Rise, Resist, Return; Gaza" chanting "we will free Palestine." Some signs read "Free Palestinian Freedom Fighters," marching through campus.

"We don't want Israel to exist, we don't want Zionist counter-protesters to exist," said a protester on the UW campus October 26 while explaining the demands of protestors were for the UW to: "cut ties with weapons companies, UW to condemn the attacks against Palestinian students, UW to cut ties with Israel, and to end the siege on Gaza now."

Both gatherings were organized by the student-led group Students United for Palestinian Equality and Return, a

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John Michael Graves, High School Regional Manager at Stand with Us Northwest (left) and Randy Kessler, Regional Director at Stand with Us Northwest (right) at Pursuit Church on November 5, 2023. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

from page 6 **SON OF HAMAS**

group dedicated to justice for the Palestinian people, holding educational, awareness, and speaker events annually, in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

According to its website: “SUPER UW understands the struggle for Palestinian liberation as intimately entangled in global struggles for economic, social, and cultural justice, including the struggles of other indigenous peoples around the world, and the structural inequality we face in our own country. We understand that the true definition of “solidarity” is an honest understanding that our own liberation is tied up in the liberation of others; and that the oppressed must lead the struggle.”

UW President Ana Mari Cauce, during her annual President’s Address, condemned the Hamas attack on Israel while recognizing Dr. Hayim Katzman, who recently earned his PhD at the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington and lost his life during the attacks.

Ironically, Katzman’s scholarship focused on the intersection of religion and politics in Israel and Palestine in hopes to creating understanding that would lead to peace.

During that address Cauce was asked what the University would do about pro-Hamas fliers that had been circulating around the school.

“We can have debates about the Palestine conflict for the last 75 years but there is no question that these Hamas attacks on civilians were absolutely reprehensible, and no one should be celebrating these atrocities. This event is not condoned by the university in any way,” said Cauce. in reference to the protests

Cauce closed by saying the focus of the University is to focus on its students and those who have been affected by the Hamas attacks.

Randy Kessler, Regional Director at Stand with Us Northwest, an Israel education group, informed the Lynnwood Times he has noticed a rise in antisemitism in the region.

John Michael Graves, High School Regional Manager at Stand with Us Northwest, chimed in to note anti-Jewish racism has skyrocketed in high schools, particularly, more in the last month than ever before since taking his position.

“We live in a country that protects free speech rights,” Kessler said about the rise in Pro-Palestinian protests in the area. “Our job is to shed light on the facts and help people understand what they’re seeing in the news today.”

Kessler continued that he believes that high school and college students are standing with Palestine because of social media’s influence and lack of education.

“Many of these people are probably progressive individuals who may have seen one thing sympathetic to Palestine, they interact with it and it takes them down an entire rabbit hole without seeing the whole picture,” said Graves. “Social media antisemitism is a dehumanization of Israelis, it’s a dehumanization of Jews. Because Jews or Israelis fit a certain narrative to them, anything goes, and we see this taken in spades on social media.”

“I think a lot of us can look back on our high school years and remember how foolish we were in middle school. Everyone can look back and remember the things they did and you ask them why and they say ‘I don’t know, I just wasn’t thinking about it,’” Kessler added. “Our goal is when we hear kids use anti-Semitic slurs – it’s not to cancel them, it’s not to destine them to a lifetime of being labeled an antisemite, it’s to educate and show them they made a mistake.”

On November 14, Congress held a committee on the rise of antisemitism, particularly at college campuses.

“It has been over a month since Hamas’ terrorist attack on innocent civilians in Israel and the start of a brutal, ongoing war in Gaza. This conflict has directly devastated thousands of people—Israelis and Palestinians alike and countless families and friends across the world and in the United States,” Ranking Democratic member Robert C. Scott (VA-03) said in his opening remarks. “Tragically, but not surprisingly, this conflict has also been marked by a rise in both antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents on America’s colleges and universities...My colleagues would do well to recall this country’s centuries-long history of racism and antisemitism.”

LYNNWOOD PROTESTS IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINE, KIRKLAND PROTESTS IN SUPPORT OF ISRAEL

On Sunday, November 19, protests in support of Palestine broke out in Lynnwood on 188th Street and 44th Avenue. The gathering had approxi-

THE SNO-KING COMMUNITY CHORALE PRESENTS:

LIGHT RETURNING

3PM
12.09.23
EDMONDS CENTER FOR THE ARTS

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edmonds ARTS COMMISSION

“Cultivating strong community bonds through music”

Please join Sno-King Community Chorale (www.sno-kingchorale.org) as we present Light Returning. Our 90-member choir will sing through the darkness and into the light, celebrating the holidays, the beauty of winter, and the love of family and friends. Our Light Returning concert is ALS facilitated.

Date & Time: 3 p.m., Saturday, December 9, 2023
Place: Edmonds Center for the Arts
Address: 410 4th Ave N, Edmonds, WA 98020

Tickets: \$15– Youth / \$22 – Senior/Student / \$25—Adult
<https://www.edmondscenterforthearts.org>

mately 30 people and was organized by an unknown person local to the area, Maren McKay, Lynnwood PD Public Information Office, informed the Lynnwood Times. The group marched up and down 44th avenue from the Lynnwood Recreation Center to the fire department spanning about 2 hours. There were no incidents.

On the same day a protest calling for the release of the, estimated, 240 Israeli hostages Hamas took after its attack on Israel on October 7, including at least 33 children, took place in Kirkland on 3rd and Central Way, right in front of Peter Kirk Park. About 200 attendees flew Israel flags, extended picket signs with the faces of “kidnapped children”, and chanted “bring them home” from megaphones while cars honked their horns as they drove passed. There were also no incidents.

“They need to bring all of the kidnapped children home soon, not yesterday, not a week ago – now,” a protester told Lynnwood Times reporters. “This is not a Jewish thing or a Palestine thing, this us just to call for the release

of the abducted children.”

Silencing the crowd from its chants, a Jewish woman and a man picked up a megaphone to sing Hatikvah, Israel’s National Anthem, the crowd quickly joined in.

“As jews we have a special sense for antisemitism and it is looming and it is here, so we need to stand together as a community and that’s why I’m here today,” David, another protester told the Lynnwood Times.

David shared that he has been attending pro-Israel rallies every week which he said is “so important to combat those who have been standing with Hamas which he said “is so unfathomable.” A week prior, David attended a pro-Israel rally which was held at Bellevue Square on November 2.

BACKGROUND OF THE ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Israel is the world’s only official Jew-

Hundreds attend Apprenticeship Career Fair

By MARIO LOTMORE

EVERETT—Sno-Isle Tech Skills Center hosted its 7th annual Apprenticeship Career and Job Fair on November 16, attracting hundreds of young adults eager to start careers in construction and advanced manufacturing, aerospace, transportation, healthcare, culinary, carpentry, IT, and even maritime.

“Earn while you learn,” said Trudy Swain, Partnership Coordinator, Sno-Isle Tech Skills Center when telling the Lynnwood Times one of the many benefits of a vocational career path. “I want to thank our great partners at Workforce Snohomish, SnoCo Connect, AJAC, and Bill Gable.”

The job fair is Washington State’s largest apprenticeship event where attendees met with representatives from over 30 apprenticeship programs from King, Pierce, Snohomish, Whatcom, and Skagit counties. Swain went on to share that 600 people attended last year and they expect 900 this year. In its first year the fair host 20 programs with 300 attendees.

“It was really Jeff [Dunleavy] who decided that it would be great if we held a National Apprenticeship Week celebration,” Bill Gable of Workforce Snohomish told the Lynnwood Times when asked how the annual Apprenticeship



Sno-Isle Tech Skills Center 7th annual Apprenticeship Career and Job Fair on November 16 Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

Career and Job Fair got started. “National Apprenticeship Week is a celebration of apprenticeship programs, the employers, and those apprentices... its all in honor of them. We want to honor all they have done. Having apprenticeship programs can help change people’s lives – we are talking about careers, not jobs.”

National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) which began in 2015, “is a nationwide celebration where industry, labor, equity, workforce, education, and government leaders host events to showcase the successes and value of Registered Apprenticeship for re-building our

economy, advancing racial and gender equity, and supporting underserved communities,” according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Over the last nine years, more than 800,000 people have participated in more than 6,800 events, and 1,300 proclamations in support of NAW. For 2023, NAW was recognized from November 13 through 19.

“I got into it because I like to work with my hands,” said Jordan Russeff of Cement Masons & Plasters Local 528. “I enjoy the adventure of it.”

Russeff shared that he wasn’t the person who enjoyed sitting in a classroom. He preferred being active and working with his hands, then “seeing the [finish] product he created.”

Sno-Isle Tech Skills Center is a public school in Everett offering technical and vocational training for high school students within 14 local school districts – Arlington, Darrington, Edmonds, Everett, Granite Falls, Lake Stevens, Lakewood, Marysville, Monroe, Mukilteo, Skykomish, Snohomish, South Whidbey and Sultan. It provides training, certification and post-secondary credit to high school junior and senior students or anyone age 16 to 20 who have not earned a high school diploma or GED. Each student spends a half day at Sno-Isle and a half day at their school. At Sno-Isle TECH, each student receives state-of-the-art vocational instruction too expensive to offer at every high school.

To discover apprenticeship opportunities visit Workforce Snohomish or if in high school, Sno-Isle Tech Skills Center.

Statewide apprentice opportunities can be found at the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries by visiting <https://lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/apprenticeship/become-an-apprentice>.

ESD Director apologizes for using profanity during meeting

By KIENAN BRISCOE

LYNNWOOD—Edmonds School District Board Member Keith Smith apologized for using profane language during a, self-defined, “diatribe” last month where he defended student’s rights to use school bathrooms regardless of gender.

The apology came at an Edmonds School Board Meeting in Lynnwood on Tuesday, November 14.

“I would just like to apologize to our community. I used profane language at our previous board meeting and that is a regrettable choice of language. It clearly shocked the conscious[ness] of our community and went against the community’s standards for conduct,” said Smith. “Moving forward I’m hoping we can get back to the business of the district, there’s lots for us to do and I think it’s best to focus on that moving forward.”

At the School Board’s last meeting, held on October 24, Smith tuned in remotely to articulate his thoughts regarding an incident that was brought to his attention via email, in which he claims a community member was acting as an unofficial “bathroom monitor” at the Edmonds School District Stadium located on campus of Edmonds-Woodway High School. Allegedly a person was checking students’ ID’s before they entered the restrooms to verify their biological identity.

Consequently, Smith said a student felt discriminated against and belittled when they were refused entry to a bathroom that matched their gender identity.



Board Director Keith Smith apologizing to the general public and fellow Directors of the Edmonds School District on November 14 for his use of profanity during a school board meeting in October. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

The Edmonds Police have no record of the incident taking place nor did Keith go into specific detail, only that it was brought to his attention via email.

Still, Keith spoke passionately, to say the least, about the occurrence for nearly five minutes – calling for whomever did this to be banned from any and all school-related activities.

“I apologize in advance to my board colleagues. And if you have little ears out there, please close them. Who the f*ck does that person think they are?” Said Smith at last month’s meeting. “We have gone now from just letting people come up to the podium and say things that are hurtful, that are offensive. They are discriminatory and derogatory. We have gone from that, now to actually taking action against our

students. We have adults who are now actually taking realistic action because of this rhetoric.”

Smith also speculated that this “bathroom monitor” might have assaulted a student if they refused to enter the bathroom. He added that he wished to track whoever was responsible down and hold them accountable, all while condemning parents and community members for supporting gender exclusive bathrooms at Edmonds School District schools.

“What those people who come up and say it’s for safety is, is they’re saying they believe that our students, our elementary schools and middle school students are secret rapists and molesters waiting for their chance,” said Smith. “That’s what it is. Either that or

they’re arguing about the sanctity of a craphole.”

Just last month a Virginia high school student’s family filed a \$30 million lawsuit against a Northern Virginia school system after they “failed to accurately investigate and attempted to cover up” a sexual assault that took place in a female bathroom by a male student, ABC News reported, adding fuel to the flame in the national debate regarding allowing transgender students the ability to enter gender specific restrooms that adhere to their gender identity.

According to Washington Human Rights Commission chapter 162-32-060, protected under state law RCW.60.120, regarding gender-segregated facilities, all covered entities “shall allow individuals the use of gender-segregated facilities, such as restrooms, locker rooms, dressing rooms, and homeless or emergency shelters, that are consistent with that individual’s gender expression or gender identity,” and “A covered entity shall not request or require an individual to use a gender-segregated facility that is inconsistent with that individual’s gender expression or gender identity, or request or require an individual to use a separate or gender-neutral facility.”

At Tuesday meeting’s public comment section, a handful of concerned parents and community members approached the podium to express their disdain for Director Smith’s comments, particularly his use of profanity, while asking for his immediate resignation.

Steven Lynn, Mountlake Terrace resident, held the Board accountable for not holding the same standards of

Lynnwood philanthropist seeks individuals who lost loved ones to addiction for Christmas Tree memorial

By KIENAN BRISCOE

Each year Patrick Crosby, who is Chairman of the Northwest Chapter of six-time UFC Champion Randy Couture's Xtreme Couture G.I. Foundation, displays a Christmas Tree memorial on his front lawn adorned with photos of veterans who have given their lives to serve their country. This year, for the first time ever, he plans to install a second tree honoring family members who have lost a loved one to drug and alcohol addiction.

"It is with a heartfelt request that I reach out to you. I am seeking individuals who have experienced the loss of a loved one to addiction, whether they be parents, family members, or friends," said Patrick Crosby.

The tree will be installed at his recovery house on 44th Avenue West in Lynnwood, called the 44th Recovery House, during a tree lighting ceremony

on December 9, 2023, at 6 p.m. The facility will also be adorned with several festive lights throughout the season. The tree lighting ceremony is open to anyone and everyone and will feature live caroling in addition to the titular tree lighting.

Those interested in having their loved ones honored on the tree can submit a 3x5 photo to 6406 208th Street, Lynnwood, 98036 or email electronic photos to Crosby at: patrickcrosby@frontier.com.

The images will be printed, laminated, and prominently displayed on the tree as a tribute to their memory, Crosby says.

Crosby also encourages anyone interested to send cards to the families or friends which will be represented on the tree. Those interested can address their cards to 17804 44th Avenue West, Lynnwood, 98037.

At the end of the holiday season Crosby and his team will scan all of the cards and distribute them to everyone who has registered and wishes to participate.

"Though this undertaking is undoubtedly painful, my intention is to foster unity among grieving families and friends. Through shared experiences, care, and support, we hope to facilitate healing and understanding," said Crosby. "As the saying goes, there is strength in numbers."

The last four years, Crosby, who is also husband to Lynnwood City Council Vice President Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, has honored fallen veterans and their families on a tree right out front of his house in Lynnwood.

Crosby has been active in Lynnwood's veteran community for

many years, hosting weekly meetings for veterans, working with them with recovery from substance abuse and PTSD, and hosting motorcycle runs and MMA fights. All of the events and fundraisers put on by Crosby, by extension of Couture's Foundation, returns 97% and a half of all money raised back to the community they serve — raising about \$300,000 a year for veterans and their families.

As a former addict himself with 36 years of recovery under his belt, honoring those lost to substance abuse is a cause that's near and dear to his heart.

WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

The Lynnwood Times wants to know what issues you would like us investigate Email editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com.

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gas," Heywood shared with host Brandi Kruse on her Tuesday podcast of undivided.

He explained to Kruse that the "cap-and-invest" scheme is a money grab by the legislature and a triple hidden tax on Washingtonians.

"First of all you see it in the gas prices [at the pump]... Then if you go and buy groceries, every single thing in a grocery store came on a truck that had to pay this hidden gas tax. Now your eggs, your milk and your cheese prices are up. And then we have the hidden increase in your home heating costs with PSE," said Heywood.

In 2021, the Washington State Legislature passed the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), which creates a market-based program (called the "cap-and-invest" program) to cap and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, according to the Department of Ecology. To achieve this, the scheme puts a price on greenhouse gas emissions emitted in Washington state increasing the cost to deliver electricity, natural gas, and carbon-based fuels that is forwarded to end-users.

Using a 1990 baseline, CCA seeks to reduce state greenhouse gas emissions 45 percent by 2030, 70 percent by 2040, and 95 percent and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Starting on January 1, 2023, businesses and organizations that emit more than 25,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases a year such as carbon dioxide, were charged a carbon offset fee which is then used to invest in climate projects throughout the state and with the goal to transition Washington to a lower-carbon economy. Affected businesses include fuel suppliers, natural gas and electric utilities, waste-to-energy facilities (starting in 2027), and railroads (starting in 2031).

"It is patently ridiculous to assume the oil companies would just absorb the hit from the governor's 'Cap and Gouge' plan," wrote Senator John Braun (R-Centralia) in a July press release.

"The simple truth is that companies pass increases in their overhead on to their customers through higher prices — just as small business and gig workers pass along increased costs from taxes and regulations to their customers in the form of higher prices."

A gallon of regular unleaded gas in Washington state cost \$3.84 on average the first week of January; as of November 21, that price is \$4.431, according to AAA. The National average is \$3.295. Washington state currently ranks third in the nation behind California at \$4.962 and Hawaii at \$4.731.

According to Todd Myers, Environmental Director at the Washington Policy Center, "carbon allowances" comprise 51 cents per gallon as of the latest auction in August. If removed, the average price per gallon in Washington state would drop 13 percent to \$3.921.

"Washington's Climate Commitment Act is the cause of the highest gas prices in the nation and is disproportionately affecting those with lower incomes," Braun continued.

The cap-and-invest program sets a limit on overall carbon emissions in the state. Businesses emitting more than 25,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases a year are required to obtain carbon allowances equal to their covered greenhouse gas emissions which are purchased through quarterly auctions hosted by the Department of Ecology, or bought and sold on a secondary market. Businesses not complying with the CCA program will be fined up to \$50,000 per violation, per day by the Department of Ecology.

The state estimates approximately 75% of statewide greenhouse gas emissions will be covered under this cap-and-invest scheme. As of August, Washington state has received \$1.213 billion in revenues from the three greenhouse gas allowance auctions with a fourth auction scheduled for December 6, 2023. An additional \$184 million in revenue was collected on behalf of eligible electric and gas utilities to provide credits to customers for increased costs.

On Thursday, December 22, 2022,

state regulators approved hundreds of millions of dollars in rate increases for Puget Sound Energy (PSE) electric and natural gas customers that took effect on January 1, 2023. The three settlements address issues around establishing the company's overall revenue requirement; credits for customers of PSE's Green Direct program, which provides clean power to corporate and government customers; and the recovery of costs for a portion of the Tacoma Liquefied Natural Gas Facility.

PSE is not allowed to profit from the natural gas it purchases for customers, and the Purchase Gas Adjustment (PGA) is the regulatory tool PSE uses to reflect the changing purchase costs of natural gas. In November of 2022, PSE used PGA to implement a 17 percent increase on customers.

In September of 2023, PSE announced that its natural gas customers will see higher rates reflected on their monthly bills, resulting from costs incurred by PSE to purchase allowances to cover greenhouse gas emissions and comply with the cap-and-invest program. On November 1, PSE increased natural gas rates by an overall average of 2.13% percent, to recover costs from January 1, 2023, through September 30, 2023, for the costs to comply with the Cap-and-Invest Program. However, because projected natural gas purchase costs are anticipated to lower, according to PSE, also starting in November, it has lowered overall gas costs to customers by an average of 24.20 percent. PSE is still determining impacts to electric customers.

Currently thirteen states have adopted carbon pricing policies: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.

Historically, Washingtonians have overwhelmingly rejected carbon pricing policies—in 2016 with I-732 at 59.25%, and in 2018 with I-1631 at 56.56%. According to the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission, a total of \$2.7 million was spent by committees for and against I-732; whereas in 2018, that amount jumped to \$47.9

million — \$16.42 million in support and \$31.58 million against.

If I-1631 would have passed, and assuming emissions would remain at 2019 levels of 102 million metric tons (the latest state reported data according to KING5), from 2020 to the end of 2023, the state would have received \$7.344 billion in revenues to fund various environmental projects such as clean energy infrastructure and to increase the resiliency of water and forest resources.

Heywood shared with Kruse that although he is currently receiving vitriol from opponents simply for exercising his free speech rights, he will not be deterred.

"If you are commuting 30, 40, 50 miles a day, this law hits you every single day," said Heywood.

Let's Go Washington is currently collecting signatures on five other statewide initiatives which are:

- I-2113: Reasonable Police Pursuit
- I-2124: Opt Out Of State-Run Long Term Care Coverage Act
- I-2109: Repeal the Capital Gains Tax
- I-2111: No State Income Tax
- I-2081: Parental Notification

Residents can sign any or all petitions at one of over 150 locations across the state. In Snohomish County, those locations are the following:

- Family Policy Institute, 16108 Ash Way #107, Lynnwood, WA, 425-608-0242
- Pulse for Health, North Kelsey Street, Monroe, WA
- Sound Loan, Wetmore Ave, Everett, WA

The team at Let's Go Washington are confident they will get all six statewide initiatives on the November ballot saying that these issues are popular with Washingtonians. The group's deadline to turn in signatures for the remaining five initiatives is December 29, 2023.

To learn more visit <https://letsgowashington.com/>, email contact@letsgowashington.com, or call 425-403-8185.

from page 7 **SON OF HAMAS**

ish state. The capital of Israel, Jerusalem, is one the world's oldest cities where Christians, Jews, and Muslims lay claim to the land, both culturally and religiously, based on their respective texts.

In the Torah—also known as the Old Testament in Christianity—Jerusalem is commonly featured, most notably as the site where Abraham, the first patriarch of Judaism, nearly sacrificed his son Isaac to God in a trial of devotion. According to scripture, Jerusalem was a site chosen by God established in his name and those who could not make the pilgrimage to pray here during biblical times were supposed to pray in the direction of it.

In the Quran, the main scripture of Islam, Jerusalem was the last place the prophet Muhammad visited before ascending to the heavens. Because of this Jerusalem was the first Qibla, or direction which Muslims should pray. Today that direction is Mecca. Islamic tradition also predicts Jerusalem will play an important role in the future and will be the site of the end of the world.

Jews, Christians, and Muslims have all controlled Jerusalem at some point in history with King David establishing Jewish control of the city back in 1000 BCE, Christians seizing control during the Crusades, and the Ottoman Empire – whose official religion was Islam – ruled the city from 1517 until 1917, renaming the region Palestine.

During these transitions of control Jewish people were displaced from the land with many of them fleeing to Europe where they also faced oppression, but in the 1800's many of them began returning and by 1914 there were more than 75,000 Jews living in what, at that time, was still called Palestine.

The British took control of modern-day Israel, Palestine, and Jordan after World War I, from the Ottoman Empire. This was a direct result of the Great Arab Revolt led by Hussein bin Ali of the Kingdom of Hejaz that started in Mecca on June 10, 1916. In exchange for a successful revolt within the Ottoman Empire, Henry McMahon representing the British Empire, agreed to a unified Arab state stretching from Aleppo to the north in modern day Syria to Aden in the south which is in modern day Yemen.

The British reneged on their agreement with Hussein, unknown to him at the time, with the secret signing of the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916. This

treaty between the British and France was a mutual understanding between the two powers of dividing the Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire between the two powers. Both the Russian Empire, led by Czar Nicholas II, and the Kingdom of Italy blessed the treaty.

The treaty allocated British control of what is today Israel, Gaza, West Bank, Jordan and southern Iraq. France was to control southeastern Turkey, the Kurdistan Region, Syria, and Lebanon. Russia was to get Western Armenia in addition to Constantinople and the Turkish Straits already promised under the 1915 Constantinople Agreement. Italy was promised Anatolia.

However, Russia fell victim to the communist Bolshevik Revolution from March 8, 1917, to June 16, 1923, which resulted in the execution of Czar Nicholas II and his entire lineage and the rise of the Soviet Union. Shortly after the Moscow Bolshevik Uprising that ended in November of 1917 resulted in the communist seizing control of Moscow, the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, disclosed the Sykes-Picot Agreement which double-crossed Hussein. World War I ended on November 11, 1918, with partitioning of the Ottoman Empire leading to the domination of Western Europe in the Middle East.

The League of Nations approved, in 1922, to establish a national home for the Jews but this would not come into fruition until after World War II and the genocide of over 6 million Jews and millions more displaced.

The state of Israel was created on May 14, 1948, which divided British-mandated Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state. The United Nations passed Resolution 181 (otherwise known as the Partition plan) a year before as a way to assist the Jewish people after facing persecution during the second World War. The Jewish people agreed with sharing the land, but many Muslims thought the partition unfavorably favored the Jews sparking years of violent conflict almost immediately.

Israel won the first Arab-Israeli war dividing the territory in three parts: the State of Israel, the West Bank of the Jordan River (controlled by Jordan or Transjordan at that time), and the Gaza Strip (controlled by Egypt). The division resulted in the displacement of about 750,000 Palestinians. The Jews considered this war to be a war of independence while the Muslims considered it to be catastrophic, seeking refuge in the Gaza strip and West Bank.

Arab nations continued to wage war against Israel for decades. Israel won the Six Day War in 1967, gaining control of significant portions of territory. In 1987 the First Intifada — a series of riots and protests by Palestinian militia — responded to Israeli military occupying parts of Gaza and the West Bank.

As a result of this violent uprising, Israel, and the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) created a peace treaty called the Oslo Accords in the 1990's, which carried into the 2000's. However, both Israelis and Palestinians could not agree to terms such as the status of Jerusalem, the rights of refugees, and Israeli occupation of certain lands.

In the year 2000 the Second Intifada commenced following Ariel Sharon's, who later became Israel's Prime Minister, visit to the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Sharon paid a visit to the mosque to prove to the Jewish people that Jews have a right to visit the Temple Mount, he said however, many Muslims considered this act to be of-

fensive sparking the Second Intifada severing all peace that the Oslo Accords hoped to establish. This conflict ended in 2005 when Israel withdrew its troops from Gaza.

In 2006, Hamas — a militant Islamic group designated a terrorist organization in 1997 by the U.S. State Department — won the parliamentary elections in the West Bank and Gaza. In 2017 Hamas called for the formation of a Palestinian state. Israel did not accept this proposal because in it, Israel was not formally recognized as a sovereign state.

Many countries have attempted to establish a peace agreement between Israel and Palestinians suggesting a two-state division of land.

On December 6, 2017, President Donald J Trump announced the U.S. formally recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, effectively endorsing Israel's control of the city.

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South County Fire Board adopts 2024 Budget

By SOUTH COUNTY FIRE

EVERETT—South County Fire’s Board of Commissioners voted unanimously Tuesday to adopt a balanced budget that funds emergency services operations for 2024.

The nearly \$110 million operating budget funds current levels of emergency services and includes a 1% increase in both the fire and EMS property tax levies, as allowed by Washington state law. Commissioners also approved a 2% increase in the benefit charge.

Regional fire authority (RFA) voters first approved the benefit charge in 2020. A benefit charge is based on building size and use rather than assessed value.

Smaller structures, such as homes, are charged less than large commercial buildings because it costs less to serve them during a fire.

“The benefit charge allows us to keep overall rates lower for the vast majority of taxpayers, while delivering the same high-quality emergency service,” said Assistant Fire Chief Bob Eastman. “With the benefit charge, your fire risk dictates what you pay rather than your property value. It’s a more equitable model for our community.”

An owner of a 2,000-square-foot home will pay an additional 75 cents per \$1000 of assessed value for the benefit charge in 2024.

The levy rates and benefit charge apply to properties within the RFA, which includes the cities of Brier, Lynnwood, Mill Creek and Mountlake Terrace along with communities in unincorporated southwest Snohomish County. The City of Edmonds contracts with the RFA to provide emergency services and collects its own taxes and fees to pay for the services provided by the RFA.

South County Fire provides fire and emergency medical services to nearly 300,000 residents of Brier, Edmonds, Lynnwood, Mill Creek, Mountlake Terrace and unincorporated southwest Snohomish County.

Learn more about the benefit charge at www.southsnofire.org/benefitcharge.

from page 1 **MOTORSPORTS**

reduce exhaust, noise, and dust around the kitchen, serving and dining areas;

- Installation of a trench drain along the entire building to facilitate cleaning;
- New sheeting surrounding bulkhead corners; and
- Ventilation consultant evaluation and upgrades.

Councilman Sam Low of District 5, home to the arena, is a strong supporter of motorsports at the Fair Park. His Amendment 9 to the 2024 adopted budget requesting Fair Park leadership to present an Improvement Work Plan to Council prior to any work commencing passed unanimously by Council. He also ensured that the motorsports are to continue in tandem with arena improvements which will also benefit equestrian users as well.

“The Fair Park has a rich history of motorsports in this part of the state,” said Councilmember Low. “Families and individuals from throughout the West Coast, mountain states and several provinces of Canada have come

to rely on this arena for competitions. Funding is critical for ensuring this sport remains a fixture in Snohomish County. I appreciate the work Executive Somers did with the council to include this in his 2024 budget.”

Funds for the improvements will come from Real Estate Exercise Tax (REET) dollars and will not come from typical fair/revenue-based dollars. This is a one-time funding that must go directly to facility improvements and cannot be used for other purposes.

“Motorsports have been associated with the Fair Park for many years,” said Vice-Chair Nate Nehring. “These investments will ensure that we can provide multi-use venues that keep competitors, vendors, and guests safe.”

The first Indoor Arenacross in Washington was at the Fair Park in 1987. The Fair Park continues to provide a much-needed site for this sport given the limited availability of similar venues across the state. The motorsports season in Snohomish County runs from early November through January.

In February of this year, Evergreen State Fair Park said goodbye to Build-

ing 400 after nearly 70 years of memories, in the County’s Department of Conservation and Natural Resources ongoing effort to improve the environment while providing quality entertainment for residents.

Building 400 housed both the Democrat and Republican parties booths, commercial vendors selling products such as ShamWow, hot tubs, patio furniture, model trains, Christmas decorations, and handmade blankets to name a few. It has also served as a low-class dairy barn; hosting exhibits, small animal and craft shows. Plans are to turn the 25,000-square-foot space into a plaza that will accommodate the flow of visitors to rides and food vendors.

The fairgrounds are located at 14405 179th Avenue Southeast in Monroe. The fairgrounds offers 193 acres of space for year-round events, an equestrian center, the Evergreen Speedway and RV sites on the grounds. The Evergreen State Fair Park is a proud resource to the county’s agriculture and local communities to support education and youth development.

For tickets and a schedule of events, visit <https://www.evergreenfair.org/>.

from page 1 **FLU SEASON**

gible.

- Staying home and away from others if you have symptoms of illness. These include cough, fever, body or headaches, fatigue, runny or stuffy nose, or a sore throat.
- Choosing to wear a mask over your nose and mouth in indoor public spaces when flu or other respiratory viruses are circulating at high rates. You can monitor the current status of flu, COVID and RSV on the Health Department’s Respiratory Illness Dashboard.
- Covering coughs and sneezes
- Washing hands thoroughly and often with soap and water, and using hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.

Find more information and updated flu reports throughout the flu season at www.snohd.org/flu. For statewide data and more flu information from the Washington State Department of Health, visit www.flufreewa.org.

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conduct for its Board Members than it does for the general public when speaking on the record, particularly relating to keeping comments civil, without disparaging or targeting comments against specific groups of people. He then went on to call Board Member Smith’s comments “outrageous, vulgar, disparaging, and without a doubt premeditated” given his precursive “warning for little ears.”

“This lack of self-control is unacceptable for someone who is supposed to be guiding the school district,” Lynn continued. “He has also shown throughout his tenure that he has not given the respect for whom he serves. One should be able to listen to someone even if he disagrees with their point of view.”

Lynn called for Smith’s immediate resignation.

Another resident, Jason Moore, approached the podium with an A-frame sign reading “children cannot consent to puberty blockers” and began handing out printouts to the Board. He then referenced an email sent by Smith on October 24 in which Smith writes “I am being pressured to giving a public apology.”

“It was a late night and I was kind of tired but when I heard his comments

[last meeting] it was shocking to hear,” Moore told the Lynnwood Times. “And it wasn’t just that he used the F word, big deal, it was the parts about derogatory comments towards the public and false accusations against the public – those were the real shocking parts.”

The email Moore mentioned Tuesday is in reference to an email Director Smith sent on October 25, a day after his comments, in which he wrote to a redacted recipient and used his official school board email:

“I find it incredibly outrageous that the members of the public who can’t stand to hear the word f*ck are totally ok with hearing veiled hate speech every week.”

The email was obtained through a public records request by Parents for Safe Schools, a coalition of parents and community members fighting against the “tyrannical leftist agenda,” its website states.

The Lynnwood Times reached out to Smith to elaborate on what was meant by “veiled hate speech” and he replied that he has received several emails from families of transgender students who do not feel safe attending board meetings, feeling targeting and disenfranchised.

In another email acquired by the Lyn-

wood Times, also sent on October 25 to a redacted recipient, Smith noted he is “a firm believer in not accepting apologies.”

Director Smith informed the Lynnwood Times he had no intention of revisiting the comments after the previous meeting because he believed that they spoke for themselves. However, he was happy to apologize for his use of profanity, understanding that many people felt that it was inappropriate.

“I stand by everything else I said. Any attempt to belittle, harass, or otherwise harm our students because of their sexual identity is 100% unacceptable. We had a student who was made to feel less than others and I cannot accept that in our district,” Smith told the Lynnwood Times. “What I did not want, and am happy to project to all of our LGBTQ+ students, is for people to believe that an apology for a profane word meant that I did not completely stand behind our LGBTQ+ students as they learn who they are and how to express themselves in the world. My fear was that those students would feel betrayed by me and I wanted the specific parent that I emailed to know that wasn’t the case. And I hope that all of our LGBTQ+ students know that I will always be their ally as long as I am on the board.”

Karen Mossman, Mountlake Terrace

resident, told the Board she was “utterly appalled” at Smith’s comments at the October 24 Board Meeting. She believed his use of profanity was indicative of Smith’s immaturity and unprofessionalism in his position and called for him to step down. Mossman then targeted Board President, Nancy Katims, for not immediately stopping Smith’s comments once they got out of hand.

Sarah Dilling, a resident, had a different take. She thanked the School Board for being an accepting place that does not reflect “the hatred that is within our community” before specifically thanking Smith for “expressing rage [she] often has” at Board Meetings and “elsewhere in society.”

Gays Against Groomers, a nonprofit organization who state they “oppose the recent trend of indoctrinating, sexualizing and medicalizing children under the guise of LGBTQIA+, took to X (formerly Twitter) to share they believed Smith’s apology was ingenué, calling Director Smith a “fraud.”

Dr. Rebecca Miner, Superintendent at Edmonds School District, could not speak whether there would be any ramifications for Director Smith’s outburst simply noting: “we have clear civility guidelines in our board materials and we try to honor those as we can.”

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power, schools, public water supply, and wastewater systems are able to support population and employment growth.

An assessment conducted this year found that the CIP's list of projects, revenues, and financing do sufficiently provide public facility capacity to serve households and growth.

There was a proposed amendment to this ordinance that would add text to the projects selected under each project district under the county city partnership projects.

The ordinance, and its amendment, passed unanimously.

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources: Budget Motion 23-428 approves the 2024 Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Office of Energy and Sustainability (OES) Grant Work Plan in the amount of \$7,292,761 from 11 grants with a combined match of \$1,250,261 for a total of \$8,543,022.

The motion passed unanimously.

Budget Motion 23-429 approves the 2024 Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Surface Water Management (SWM) Grant Work plan which includes \$118,631,929 from 42 grants – \$11,677,781 total amount matching funds from 12 out of the 42 grants which are new. Since many of these grants span a number of years only a portion of these grants are reflected in the 2024 budget.

The motion passed unanimously.

Department of Emergency Management: Budget Motion 23-430 approves the 2024 Department of Emergency Management Grant Work Plan, which contains \$9,575,513 of grants funds – up 13% from 2023. It also includes \$1.2 million of matching funds – up 24% from 2023 for 18 different grants.

The motion passed unanimously.

Health Department: Budget Motion 23-431 approves the 2024 Snohomish County Health Department Grant Work Plan which contains \$30,953,340 of grant funds and \$155,000 of matching funds for 40 different grants.

The motion passed unanimously.

Human Services Department: Budget Motion 23-432 approves the 2024 Human Services Department Grant Work Plan which contains \$216,517,386 of grant funds – up 46% from 2023 – and \$9,702,775 of matching funds – down 15% from 2023 – for 59 different grants.

The motion passed unanimously.

Prosecuting Attorney's Office: Budget Motion 23-433 approves the 2024 Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) Grant Work Plan which contains \$8,242,191 in grant funds and \$8,043 in matching funds for 8 different grants.

The motion passed unanimously.

Sheriff's Office: Budget Motion 23-434 approves the 2024 Sheriff's Office Grant Work Plan \$3,983,000 in grant funds and \$14,100 in matching funds for 13 different grants.

The motion passed unanimously.

Superior Court: Budget Motion 23-435 approves the 2024 Superior Court Grant Work Plan which contains \$4,124,195 in grant funds and no matching funds for five different grants.

The motion passed unanimously.

Fleet Services Division rental rates: Budget Motion 23-436 approves the schedule of rental rates to be charged by Fleet Services Division in 2024. Snohomish County code 4.34.015 subsection 2 directs the Fleet Manager to prepare a schedule of rental rates to be forwarded to the county council for approval. This year the rates are proposed to increase by approximately 5% from last year.

The motion, and its substitute motion passed, unanimously

Other matters: Budget Ordinance 23-121, adopting the 2024 Budget and Making Appropriations for the Operation of County Agencies and Departments and Capital Improvements for the period beginning January 1, 2024, and ending December 31, 2024, also passed and Motion 23-475, establishing reimbursement allocations for Council office travel expenses in the 2024 Budget was approved.

2024 SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Council members proposed a total of 38 amendments to the budget. The council discussed these amendments for nearly two hours, the bulk of the 3 hour meeting with some members disagreeing more than others. Despite some contention, 23 out of the 38 amendments passed. Below is a summary the proposed amendments and by whom:

- Amendment 1; Council amendment package to the 2024 executive recommended budget ordinance (Proposed by whole committee): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 2; Conditioning Agreements related to Affordable Housing and Behavioral Health (Proposed by Councilman Low): Removed by Councilman Sam Low
- Amendment 3; creating additional Housing programs for allocation of Affordable Housing and Behavioral Health Sales Tax funding (Proposed by Councilman Low): Passed 4-1 with Councilwoman Meghan Dunn voting no
- Amendment 4; Facilities New Start Center 6 FTE Funding (Proposed by Councilman Low): Passed 3-2 with Council members Meghan Dunn and Strom Peterson voting no
- Amendment 5; Adding 1 New FTE Park Rangers (Proposed by Councilman Low): Failed 2-3
- Amendment 6; Park Ranger Lord Hill Park (Proposed by Councilman Low): Removed by Councilman Sam Low since Amendment 5 failed
- Amendment 7; Lord Hill Parking Lot Improvements CIP Funding (Proposed by Councilman Low): Passed on consensus
- Amendment 8; Additional Entertainment Funding for Evergreen Fair (Proposed by Councilman Low): Passed 4-1 with Councilwoman Meghan Dunn voting no
- Amendment 9; DCNR-Fair Park Improvement Work Plan (Proposed by Councilman Low): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 10; Allocate funding in Non departmental for use on early learning research (Proposed by Council Chair Jared Mead): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 11; Requirement for funding appropriated toward Early Learning Research (Proposed by Council Chair Mead): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 12; Remove \$50,000 professional services from Executive's Office, Program 310

(Administration) (Proposed by Council Vice Chair Nate Nehring): Removed by Councilman Nate Nehring

- Amendment 13; Move \$30k from Non departmental, Social Justice Initiatives to the Auditor's Office for Spanish language voter pamphlets printing (Proposed by Vice Chair Nehring): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 14; Return funds from Special Revenue Fund 100 to General Fund to offset 1% property tax increase (Proposed by Vice Chair Nehring): Failed 2-3
- Amendment 15; : Remove Special Revenue Fund 100 expenditures and funding for Social Justice Initiatives; fund 2 two-year project positions in Prosecuting Attorney's Office for Hate Crime positions (Proposed by Vice Chair Nehring): Removed
- Amendment 16; Requirement for funding appropriated toward Social Justice Initiatives (Proposed by Vice Chair Nehring): Removed
- Amendment 17; Shift 0.5 FTE from ASR9809R to ASR1211R (Proposed by Chair Mead): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 18; Eliminate the additional \$100,000 increase to OPD Conflict Panel for Felony Adult cases (Proposed by Vice Chair Nehring): Passed 3-2 with Council members Meghan Dunn and Strom Peterson voting no
- Amendment 19; Remove the \$247,891 increase to OPD Contempt of Court line (Proposed by Vice Chair Nehring): Failed 2-3
- Amendment 20; Add funding for an Executive Assistant under the County's contract with the Public Defenders Association (Proposed by Councilwoman Meghan Dunn): Failed 2-3
- Amendment 21; Extend ARPA funding for 5.0 Attorney's, 1.5 Legal Assistant's, and 1.5 Investigator's until the end of 2024 under OPD's contract with the Public Defenders Association (Proposed by Councilwoman Dunn): Failed 2-3
- Amendment 22; Add \$150,000 to OPD Expert Services (Proposed by Councilman Strom Peterson): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 23; OPD Expert Services (Proposed by Councilman Peterson): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 24; OPD Expert Services (Proposed by Councilman Nehring): Removed by Councilman Nate Nehring since amendment 23 passed
- Amendment 25; Add a new 1.0 regular Human Resources FTE to District Court (Proposed by Councilwoman Dunn): Failed 2-3
- Amendment 26; The Exec Rec budget funds two half time and one full time project FTE for six months out of the year, through a grant from AOC. This amendment would add an additional six months' worth of funding to these project positions, funding them through the end of 2024 (Proposed by Councilwoman Dunn): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 27; Therapeutic Courts – Conditioning the additional six months of funding for grant funded project positions (Proposed by Vice Chair Nehring): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 28; Add 1.5 FTE Victim Witness Advocates, and associated funding, to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office (Proposed by Councilman Strom Peterson): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 29; Victim Witness Advocate Services (Proposed by Councilman Peterson): Passed unanimously

- Amendment 30; Add six months of personnel and startup costs for 3.0 Deputy Sheriff's which may be transferred to the Sheriff's Office upon completion and in accordance with the associated budget condition (Proposed by Councilman Low): Failed 2-3
- Amendment 31; Additional Deputy Sheriff Funding (Proposed by Councilman Low): Removed by Councilman Sam Low since amendment 30 failed
- Amendment 32; Funding for a feasibility study on creating a Secure Withdrawal Management facility at the Snohomish County Jail and startup construction funds. This will be funded by CDMH Fund Balance and the allocation of Opioid Settlement dollars the County will receive in 2024 (Proposed by Vice Chair Nehring): Passed 4-1 with Councilwoman Dunn voting no
- Amendment 33; Secure Withdrawal Management and Stabilization – Jail Feasibility Study (Proposed by Vice Chair Nehring): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 34; Merge the Small Capital Projects into the County/City Partnership projects (Proposed by Chair Mead): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 35; Return funds from Special Revenue Fund 100 to General Fund and program within non departmental Program 990 (Proposed by Chair Mead): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 36; Requirement for funding appropriated toward Social Justice Initiatives (Proposed by Chair Mead): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 37; Add FTE and associated funding for PA Hate Crime prosecutions. These will be two year project positions (Proposed by council members Nehring and Peterson): Passed unanimously
- Amendment 38; Prosecuting Attorney – Hate Crimes (Proposed by council members Nehring and Peterson): Passed unanimously

from page 5 TRAFFIC CAMERAS

thresholds to the police. The police cannot request information about any other vehicles without a search warrant just as they would for any other private video camera recordings.

(4) Some people fear the cameras may be intentionally or unintentionally adjusted to give tickets when people aren't actually speeding. The camera system will be calibrated annually to make sure it is accurate.

(5) There is a concern that traffic cameras increase accidents. The data that has led to this idea comes from the study of 531 traffic cameras installed in England some years ago. In 21 of these locations, accidents did increase. However, in the rest of the 510 locations where cameras were installed, accidents stayed the same or decreased.

(6) Residents may be concerned they can't protest a ticket. There is a simple online tool available for explaining extenuating circumstances.

(7) Some people object to traffic cameras because they consider them a government "money grab". Traffic fines will generate revenue to cover the costs of the third-party camera operator, and any remaining funds will be split between Washington State and Mukilteo. It will be up to the City and its Council to craft rules and direct the use of funds to align with the proposed intention of changing driver behavior.