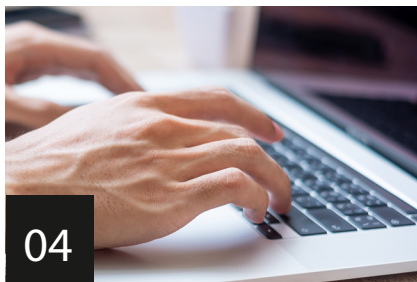


# VALLEY BUSINESS NEWS



Chamber news and member happenings!



## CEO COLUMN IN UNION BULLETIN

Arlen Alen, CEO & President starts new bi-weekly column in the Union Bulletin



## NATIONAL CIVICS BEE

Submission window is now open for the National Civics Bee





December

## MEMBER OF THE MONTH

### Blue Mountain Land Trust

In 1999, a group of visionary local leaders took action to preserve fish and wildlife habitat, forests, grasslands, and agricultural land in the Blue Mountain region. They were concerned about residential development sprawl, commercial encroachment, and natural resource degradation. To meet these threats, the Blue Mountain Land Trust (BMLT) was formed.

“

Connecting people with the land and its abundant natural resources”



# BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

## Sotheby's International Realty

Tuesday, December 12  
5:30 pm- 7:00 pm

3 E Main St  
Walla Walla

Join us for our final Business After Hours of 2023 at Walla Walla Sotheby's International Realty. This is an informal open house style event open to anyone who would like to connect with other professionals in the Walla Walla Valley.

You do not need to be a Chamber member and it is free to attend. Come enjoy Sotheby's downtown office for a fun holiday themed event.

To assist our host with a headcount for food and beverage, please RSVP: BAH RSVP



# RIBBON CUTTINGS

## Hope Heals

Wednesday, December 13  
1:00 pm

1200 SE 12th St.  
College Place, WA

Join us for a ribbon cutting to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Hope Heals at SonBridge!

Hope Heals will also be hosting an anniversary party from 1-3 pm with updates, social hour, food, cake, raffles and door prizes.

## DID YOU KNOW?

You can host a ribbon cutting for more than just a grand opening!

A Ribbon Cutting is a great way to celebrate a significant milestone in the life of a business. Whether it be a grand opening, new ownership, new location, or anniversary, each is a unique opportunity to share your story. Ribbon Cuttings offer you an opportunity to maximize your visibility and share your products and services with potential customers, partners, and the community at-large.

Ribbon cuttings are typically celebrated for the following reasons:

- Grand Openings & Re-Openings
- New Locations
- New Ownership or Directorship
- Significant Anniversary (1 year, 5 years, 10 years, 25 years etc.)
- Significant Name Change
- New Member

If your business has something to celebrate reach out to us and find out how to schedule your ribbon cutting!

Enable Art Ribbon Cutting 11/3



# CONNECTIONS THAT MATTER

## Sometimes You Need to Kiss a Lot of Frogs

Article Courtesy of the Union Bulletin  
Arlene Alen | President & CEO  
Walla Walla Valley Chamber

It's been a journey and now an exciting new adventure.

How these first months in Walla Walla have flown by. I'm excited to begin this new relationship with the U-B, writing a column about all the exciting changes and programs at the Chamber for 2024 and beyond.

My journey began in the classical halls of architecture, only to swerve into the unpredictable worlds of television and film as a production designer. The plot thickened as I ventured into the realm of technology, law, government and marketing then eventually found myself in Arizona after bidding farewell to California, leaving friends, activities, history and colleagues behind. This family-driven leap prompted me to reconsider my



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Arizona marked the career crossroads for me as I established a consultancy utilizing all my aggregated skill sets, designed to be a guiding light for nonprofits, associations and small businesses. The mission? To craft better business models, elevate professionalism, and construct resilient boards for a sustainable future.

While I've left behind my Arabian mare, Jaz, in Arizona, I still dream of bringing her here and into this so welcoming community. Boo, my 8-year-old rescue border collie/Australian cattle dog who has shared the journey and transitions with me from AZ to Western and now Eastern Washington, is having a great time with new trails to explore. Having spent some time adjusting to the world of business and government here, I'm about to begin an exciting part of this journey, finding a new life as well as embracing the joy of working with my board, staff colleagues and engaged community leaders.

Now, as we stand on the brink of 2024, the stage is set for "Chamber 2024" to unfold. My task, as provided by the Chamber board, was to take their well-functioning business and more than 450 members on a journey to the future. To infuse the organization with programs and practices that enhance our member experiences and critically serve our mission to grow the future of business and workforce in the Walla Walla Valley.





## Dunham Cellars

John Blair  
150 E Boeing Ave  
Walla Walla, WA  
dunhamcellars.com

According to John Blair, General Manager of Dunham Cellars: “This year was the first full year without any type of COVID business restrictions, so it felt good to have a pre-pandemic feel to things again. Many of the supply chain challenges also eased this year which made for fewer headaches. And finally, we had a very smooth harvest this fall after several years of challenge from smoke and/or frost. Knock on wood but everything started to feel ‘normal’ again this year!”

John, a graduate of Whitman College, began managing Dunham Cellars 10 years ago after he earned an MBA from the University of Washington. John’s parents, David and Cheryl Blair, are managing partners along with Joanne Dunham, a founder and managing partner.

The winery has been producing wine for more than 25 years in the remodeled World War II-era airport hangar in the Airport District of Walla Walla. Its wines are being distributed throughout Washington state, as well as in 31 other states, Ontario, Canada, and Japan. When you visit their tasting room, you would never know it used to be a wartime bomber hangar. Now it’s a lovely experience with fabulous décor and a caring knowledgeable team.

# QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Every month, we pose a new question to several local businesses, and this month, we’re starting the conversation with the following question:

**What will you most remember about this past year, in terms of your business/organization?**

## Atomic 2 Dermatology & Med Spa



Lauren Berg  
105 S 3rd Ave,  
Walla Walla, WA  
atomicderm.com/walla-walla-dermatology/



When Atomic 2 Dermatology @ Walla 2 opened its doors in Walla Walla two years ago, Lauren Berg, an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP), became its provider of medical dermatology care. The med/spa joined the Chamber in Fall of 2023. Lauren and the team is eager to engage and participate in the community.

“Our services make an impact on the patients and provide them with more options,” Lauren said. “We’re making a difference in our patients’ lives by addressing and treating lifelong issues of their skin diseases. By helping patients that would otherwise not be able to receive the help or treatment they need – sometimes due to their economic status – we meet new people and create lifelong relationships for entire families from babies to grandparents.”

Lauren grew up in the Tri-Cities and studied at Washington State University. She can also be found cheering on the Walla Walla High School basketball team. Her husband, Adam Berg, became the head coach in 2019 and took the Blue Devils to State last year.



## VINTAGE PHOTO FRIDAY

When a French soldier brought sweet onion seeds to Walla Walla in the late 1800s, he discovered that this valley's abundance of water and rich vegetation was the perfect environment for cultivating this crop. Ever since then, sweet onions have been produced here as a specialty vegetable crop, loved by both locals and visitors alike.

If you have any photos you would like to share with the chamber or have information about any of the photos we share, email Tawni Gama, [tgama@wwvchamber.com](mailto:tgama@wwvchamber.com).

### Sometimes You Need to Kiss a Lot of Frogs

#### Continued from Page 4

The National Civics Bee is just one act in our new playbook, promising to unite the community in a celebration of learning and civic pride. As one of only five Chambers in Washington state chosen by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and the Association of Washington Businesses to host a regional Bee, we are excited that our first submissions have been received with many more promised on the way.

The National Civics Bee takes center stage, showcasing middle school students' solutions to community problems. The 20 top essayists, locally chosen by community leaders as judge, go to a live event we will host at WWCC in early spring. The top three winners will be provided with an opportunity to compete for the state championship. There are cash prizes and trophies along all these paths. This year, for the first time, the state winners will go, all expenses paid by the U.S. Chamber Foundation, to the National Civics Bee in Washington, D.C., where they will compete for more than \$50,000 in prizes. To learn more about this opportunity visit the Chamber website at [wwvchamber.com](http://wwvchamber.com) or watch this bi-weekly column for more information about exciting opportunities. You may also follow us in First Friday, our digital publication, or the chamber website.

2024 marks the 125th anniversary of the Walla Walla Valley Chamber and the 25th anniversary of the Chamber Foundation. Join our team in the celebration of history, business and our community leaders' legacies and let's work together to enhance the quality of life for all in our communities.

Cheers to our future filled with prosperity, camaraderie and the joy of discovering our true home. No more frogs for us, we are home.



# NATIONAL CIVICS BEE

## Submission Window Open

The Walla Walla Valley Chamber is excited to announce that the National Civics Bee live event is set to take place on April 13, 2024 at the Walla Walla Community College.

To enter the National Civics Bee, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students (public, private, homeschool or charter) from around Washington State will submit a 500 word essay to "Identify a problem facing your community. How might a citizen solve the problem?" The application window opened earlier this month and is accepting submissions. Twenty finalists will be selected to move on to the live round held at Walla Walla Community College.

Participants will compete for cash prizes with the top three finalists moving on to the state competition. The top finalist from the state competition will be invited to attend the national competition in Washington D.C.

For additional details and sponsorship opportunities visit our website <https://www.wvwchamber.com/civicsbee>



## NEW YEAR NEW SPACE

Need to elevate your work environment to a quiet, friendly downtown setting?

Think about a rare upcoming opening for a private lockable office space for 1-2 in the Chamber of Commerce. You will enjoy uninterrupted Wi-Fi connectivity, off-street shaded parking, 24/7 access with facility security, copier usage, kitchen & Keurig, board room with AV available for meetings. Walk to your favorite shops and restaurants. \$850 a month/annual lease.

Call the Chamber Office for additional details 509.525.0850.

## 2024 CITY MAP

The Walla Walla Valley Chamber is partnering with E&M Consulting for the 2024 City Map.

If you have any questions about E&M or the Chambers annual map, please contact the Chamber office at 509.525.0850.

## CHAMBER BLOG

You can find the "Kiss a Frog" post on our updated blog where members may submit a blog post!

For additional details on submitting a blog please contact Tawni Gama at [tgama@wvwchamber.com](mailto:tgama@wvwchamber.com).



## BACCHUS & BARLEY

### Tours and Transportation: Your Key to Safe and Festive Celebrations

Ensure a night of merriment without compromising on safety.

Book a shuttle service to transport your employees safely home from your holiday party venue.

Let the good times roll and we'll take care of the ride!

Contact us for more information and to reserve your holiday shuttle:  
509-956-5560  
[info@bacchusandbarleyww.com](mailto:info@bacchusandbarleyww.com)



## AMERICAN 35

### Launch of New Winter Menu

All new cocktails, appetizers, sides & more!

Don't forget to check out the event calendar with upcoming events such as:

12/8 Bluegrass Jam  
12/13 Pizza Class  
12/14 Bingo

Check out our website for a full list of upcoming events and registration info.



## FORT WALLA WALLA

### Santa Party

December 16  
12- 4 pm

Save Saturday afternoon to sit upon Pioneer Santa's knee at the Fort Walla Walla Museum as it hosts the jolly old elf. Revel in the pioneers' traditional holiday decorations while posing for your own modern-day snapshots with Saint Nick for holiday cards and keepsakes. Join us for this admission-free event in the museum's Grand Hall.





## Hope Heals

Annett Bovent  
hopehealsyou.com



According to Annett Bovent, director and founder of Hope Heals Walla Walla, “This year has been an amazing year of growth. When I started Hope Heals to help people with their basic needs, I had no idea that our community would be interested in getting involved with this cause – I have had people coming out in waves with donations, volunteering and supporting my nonprofit organization. I love the support from others to help make my dream come true. Thank you for everything. Dreams do come true.”

Hope Heals Walla Walla was founded ten years ago to assist people in transition from homelessness to housing by providing customized care packages of basic home goods, clothing, and if necessary, food.

Annett, a mother of three who experienced homelessness three times, envisions her next dream: A “donation-station warehouse” – 12,000 square-foot (or larger) of space for furniture and housewares to be displayed. Recipients could choose what they most needed and then the items would be delivered. Maybe next year...



## Baker Boyer Bank

Joe Burlingame  
7 W Main St  
Walla Walla, WA 99362  
bakerboyer.com



“What stands out most is our unwavering commitment to our local businesses. At Baker Boyer, we’ve been able to support our clients’ growth through tailored business lending solutions, all while remaining deeply rooted in our communities,” said Joe Burlingame, Vice President | Regional Business Banking Manager. “It’s not just about business; it’s about fostering relationships and nurturing our community’s prosperity,” According to the company’s website, Baker Boyer Bank was established on November 10, 1869. It is the oldest independently operated bank in the state. Baker Boyer Bank joined the Walla Walla Valley Chamber in 1936 making this their 89th year of membership.

Joe, a fifth generation WW Valley resident, has a long history with Baker Boyer Bank beyond his 12-year career there. When Joe was a kid, his father would take him to the bank when he had business there. Joe was introduced to everyone his father knew, from the tellers to the bank president (at the time, Steve Kimball). Joe recalled, “Every single person shook my hand and treated me like family. That experience left an impression I never forgot.”



## The Marcus Whitman

David Gavaldon  
6 W Rose St  
Walla Walla, WA  
marcuswhitmanhotel.com



On September 14, 2023, The Marcus Whitman was evacuated and abruptly closed due to a gasoline-tainted basement sump caused by an underground gasoline leak at the Chevron gas station across the street.

"If I had to narrow it down to just one memory, it would be when we held the all-team meeting for our staff, and members of the Walla Walla Fire Department, Department of Ecology and Clean Harbors organizations," said David Gavaldon, Interim General Manager for The Marcus Whitman. "It had been a long four weeks. As I spoke to the team, a rush of emotions overcame me. I was excited, nervous, happy, but most of all, filled with pride to see our team reunited and ready to get back to work. As our new General Manager prepares to lead this hotel into its bright future, I will always remember that feeling of unity and pride."



## The Soda Stop

Ken & Barb Rice  
1705 SE Meadowbrook St #1  
College Place, WA  
thesodastopww.com



"Since our business is new this year, this is an easy question," said Ken and Barb Rice, owners of The Soda Stop in College Place. "They say it takes a village to raise a child, but it also takes a village to start a business. We will always remember all the amazing contractors, vendors, and others that we worked with who helped get us started and answered our countless questions!"

Ken and Barb Rice moved to Walla Walla ten years ago from Idaho Falls, Idaho. They noticed there were no places to buy a soda. With the encouragement and support of their children, The Soda Shop opened on May 17, 2023, offering sodas, energy drinks, teas, popcorn and cookies. Torani Syrups, fruit purees and fresh fruit can also be added. There's a convenient drive-through window and plenty of seating inside or outside.

"We cannot forget the support and encouragement from our awesome customers. We have met so many people that we are now happy to call friends," added Barb. And, where else can you get a 'Speeding Ticket' for less than \$5?





## Goodwill College Place Employment Connection Center

Zoe Lindsay  
1017 NE C St  
College Place, WA  
[goodwillotc.org/employment-services/](http://goodwillotc.org/employment-services/)



Goodwill does more than sell used clothing and household items, the organization's mission is to change lives through the power of work.

"2023 has been a huge success with the opening of our Goodwill Employment Connection Center (ECC) in College Place," said Zoe Lindsay, Recruitment & Talent Specialist. "We are excited to offer FREE walk-in job search assistance programs. Job seekers, as well as local businesses, can receive help to fulfill their employment needs. Individuals receive help creating resumes, preparing for interviews and providing access to community resources and information. Local businesses can utilize our services by posting open positions or having Goodwill host hiring events."

The Goodwill store opened its doors in College Place in August 2022. The ECC opened in April 2023. In the last eight months, more than 100 participants have been served. Zoe and her colleague, Mariana Enriquez Diaz, another Recruitment & Talent Specialist, are both fluent in Spanish, as is the rest of the staff in the ECC. Zoe said, "I just want to empower the participants in Goodwill's Employment Connection Center services."



## Rack & Maintenance Source

Bob Smith  
400 W Whitman Dr  
College Place, WA  
[rackandmaintenance.com](http://rackandmaintenance.com)



With a background in health care and newspapers, Robert "Bob" Smith, founder and owner of Rack & Maintenance Source in College Place, Washington, knows how a business should be run. "We've had a good year, the second best to date," Bob said. "The year's not over so this could be the most profitable year ever."

Bob opened RMS in April 2000 to provide wine barrel racks in steel and stainless steel. He moved to a "grocery store model" in 2016 when the company was behind in production. They now have product in stock to fulfill orders as they come in. He added wine barrels and pallet racking (think of rack systems in Costco and Amazon warehouses) to his product offering in the last few years.

In addition, RMS also does custom work. Bob's team is busy creating concrete testing equipment to be used in Pakistan where a Chinese company was commissioned to build one of the world's largest dams.

Like Bob's employment history, diversification can add value.

# December Anniversaries

Thank you for your continued support of the Chamber!

Postal Annex +  
 Country Estates  
 Golden West Estates  
 Pepper Bridge Winery  
 CI Information Management  
 L & G Ranch Supply  
 Jacobs  
 Maple Counter Cafe  
 Palouse Management  
 Walla Walla Chamber Music Festival  
 Thompson Family Acupuncture Clinic  
 Winterbourne Construction LLC  
 Armstrong Family Winery  
 Cordoba Technologies, Inc.  
 Chevrolet Nissan of Walla Walla  
 Stearns Home Loans  
 USACE Walla Walla District  
 Walkers Towing & Recovery  
 Accessible Walla Walla Tours, LLC  
 Greene Coaching & Consulting  
 Elementum Movement  
 Charter Communications  
 Destination Crossfit Walla Walla

## Look Who's Celebrating 25 Years or More!

YMCA	74
US Bank	65
TKCPA, PLLC	38

## SAVE THE DATE

**2024 Annual Meeting**  
 Wednesday, January 17  
 9:00 am-10:00 am

Chamber 2024 is going to be the start of amazing things! Celebrating its 125th anniversary, Chamber 2024 will bring a fresh new perspective and ideas.



29 E Sumach St • Walla Walla, WA  
 509.525.0850  
[www.wwwchamber.com](http://www.wwwchamber.com)  
[marketing@wwwchamber.com](mailto:marketing@wwwchamber.com)



# 2023 VISIONARY MEMBERS

