



Monroe BUSINESS

City of Monroe, Washington
Economic Development Newsletter

January 2024



New Employment-Related Laws Take Effect with the New Year

As we turn the page to the new year, a batch of new laws haven taken effect related to employment, workers' rights and safety.

The state minimum wage will increase to \$16.28 per hour, or \$13.84 for workers ages 14-15 as permitted. Overtime rules will also change, lowering the salary threshold for most professional workers to \$67,725 per year. Agricultural workers may now also benefit from overtime pay after 40 hours worked in a week, down from 55 hours in 2022 and 48 hours in 2023.

Improved conditions for gig workers and rideshare drivers will take effect in January. Rideshare drivers will now enjoy rate guarantees depending on their location. Hospital workers will also benefit from improved staffing requirements.

And more workers will be freed from non-compete agreements that limit their employment options after a separation. Only employees who earn more than \$120,560 or independent contractors earning more than \$301,340 may be held to a non-compete agreement.

[More Information](#)



Manufacturing Grants Available - Application Deadline January 10th

The Evergreen Manufacturing Growth Grants program is designed to increase the number of manufacturing and research and development jobs in Washington State.

\$2 million in grants will be awarded to eligible manufacturing and R&D businesses. Each grantee will be eligible for a grant between \$200,000 and \$400,000.

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate the availability of capital investment or matching funds to support a significant business expansion or proposed cutting-edge development work. Submissions will be evaluated according to their ability to generate manufacturing and R&D jobs as well as their strategic alignment with the state's key sectors: *aerospace, agriculture, advanced manufacturing, clean technology and renewable energy, creative economy, forest products, information and communications technology, life science, maritime, and defense.*

More Information



City Secures Property for Future Downtown Park

The City has completed the purchase of two adjacent properties located on the northwest corner of Main Street and Blakeley Street for a future park. The properties include the former Union Bank building, chiropractor's office, and parking lot. Combined, the properties create a half-acre site for a future community gathering space, parking, and public restrooms – a plan envisioned by the City since the 1970s.

Mayor Thomas expressed his appreciation for the City Council's actions to secure the site, stating, "the City and community have long desired to create a festival lot or park space in our downtown." He added, "I look forward to working with our Council, staff, and the community to activate this gathering space."

In the coming year, the City Council will consider near-term uses for the properties. Planning and community input for long-term uses on the site may begin as early as 2025, with development occurring as funding becomes available.

New Economic Development Coordinator Comes on Board

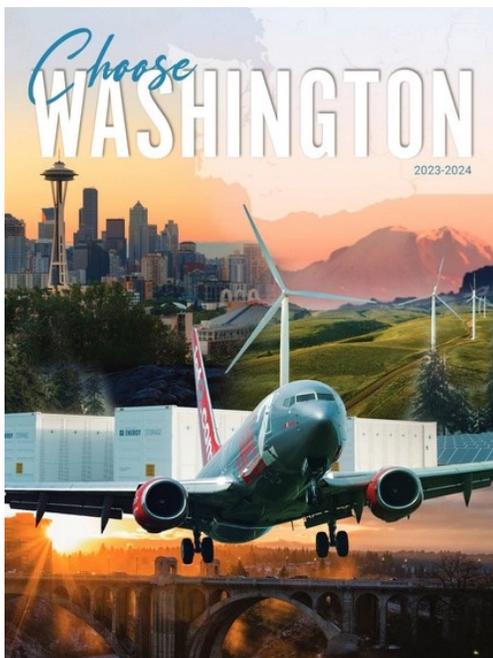
Starting the first week of 2024 Patrick Doherty has joined the City of Monroe as its new Economic Development Coordinator, following the retirement of James Palmer who served in that role for the last 5 years.



Patrick comes to us after over 40 years of public service in planning and economic development roles with various cities, most recently as the Economic Development and Community Services Director for the City of Edmonds.

As we welcome Patrick, let's not forget to thank James for all his dedicated service to Monroe, especially his hard work during the pandemic to keep Monroe businesses alive and thriving!

Patrick looks forward to meeting business owners throughout Monroe in the coming months and welcomes contact from the business community via email at pdoherty@monroewa.gov or by phone at 360-361-0050.



Hot off the Press - Washington State Business Guide

Just released at the end of 2023: the Washington State Guide, produced by Site Selection Magazine and the Washington State Department of Commerce, provides a detailed and holistic view of the Evergreen State's incredible business ecosystem. From quantum computing, semiconductors and robotics to cleantech, sustainable aviation, and new forms of green energy, you'll discover why this is the perfect place to work, to build your ideas, to live, and to change the world.

[View the online Guide](#)

Economic Development Advisory Board Seeks New Member

The Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) consists of seven local civic and business leaders who develop, discuss and promote ideas, policies, and programs to the Mayor, City Council and City staff that are intended to promote economic vitality in Monroe.

EDAB meets twice per month on 2nd and 4th Thursdays in a hybrid format: in-person at Fire Station #31 Conference Room, 163 Village Court and via [Zoom](#).

The EDAB consists of 7 voting members, representing a cross-section of the business community. Additionally, each EDAB member belongs to a subcommittee focusing on one of Monroe's commercial districts. The subcommittee members are the point of contact for the businesses in that commercial district.

The currently available position constitutes the remainder of a term ending 12/31/2026. If interested in applying for this position, click the link below and submit the application to the City Clerk's office at cityclerk@monroewa.gov.

You may email the EDAB members at EDAB@MonroeWA.gov.

[Application Form](#)



Monroe Chamber Offers Marketing Strategies Speaker at February 13th Luncheon

Come learn about marketing strategies including social media and gain tools to help you grow your business in 2024 with Kimberley

Lynn. She began her mortgage career in 1994. She has since maintained a successful business on Main Street in Monroe for 12+ years. Kimberley's business objective is to build a thriving referral network, prides herself on being customer-friendly and values earning their trust. Her experience includes over a decade of high-volume broker interactions giving her a wide array of involvement regarding marketing accomplishments and challenges.

[Register Here](#)

[Council Agendas/Minutes](#)

MAYOR



Geoffrey Thomas

Have a question or comment for Mayor Thomas?
Contact him at GThomas@MonroeWA.gov

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS



Councilmember
Kevin Hanford

Picture Pending

Councilmember
Jacob Walker



Councilmember
Jason Gamble



Councilmember
Kirk Scarboro



Councilmember
Heather Fulcher



Councilmember
Tami Beaumont



Councilmember
Kyle Fisher

Have a question or comment for your Councilmembers?
Contact them at Councilmembers@MonroeWA.gov



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