



ENERGIZING INNOVATION

Building Our Economic Development Toolbox to Grow Jobs for the Future

WEDA 2026 Summer Conference Agenda

August 4-6, 2026 – Tri-Cities, WA

Tuesday, August 4

2:00-4:00 pm

Arrive by **1:45 pm**

ENERGIZING INNOVATION Highlights Tours – *pre-registration required through WEDA’s online conference platform, Swapcard – choose 1*:

- **ATI, Inc.**
3101 Kingsgate Way, Richland WA 99354

ATI is \$4.6B global leader in high-performance materials and solutions for aerospace & defense and other demanding markets. During this exclusive tour of ATI’s Richland facility, participants will see how premium titanium products are manufactured for some of the world’s most critical applications. Richland is a key part of ATI’s vertically integrated supply chain, combining advanced manufacturing, skilled talent and proprietary processes to produce materials that perform in the most demanding environments. The ATI Specialty Metals Expansion, Richland Campus project and the City of Richland were honored with WEDA’s 2025 Economic Development Project of the Year Award for Business Retention/Expansion.

Hosts & Speakers:

- Tony Harris, Senior Director, Operations - Primary Titanium Operations, ATI Inc.
- Kyle Lucas, Plant Manager, ATI Richland
- Merritt Osborn, Director of Commercial, Specialty Alloys & Components, ATI Inc.
- Brandon Baughman, Director of Operational Excellence – Primary Titanium Operations, ATI Inc.

Important Notes for those participating: Tour has multiple stairs so please advise WEDA regarding mobility concerns. Please minimize jewelry; no loose-fitting clothes like wavy dresses or baggy shirts, please. Participants are required to view a safety video (emailed in advance and on Swapcard) and will be required to sign a safety waiver. PPE will be provided to join the tour, including metatarsal boots. **After you have signed up for this tour in Swapcard, please send an email to info@wedaonline.org with your full name, country of citizenship and shoe size (M/W and size) and any mobility concerns.**

- **City of Pasco Process Water Reuse Facility, An Industrial Symbiosis Showcase**
957 East Foster Wells Road, Pasco, WA*

Arrive **Port of Pasco**
by **1:45 pm**

*** *Important Notes for those participating:*** Please meet at the Port of Pasco headquarters at 1110 Osprey Point Ave, Pasco, WA to start this tour. Participants will park and load a Port of Pasco van, with a few carpools following the van.

Host & Speaker:

- Michael Henao, Environmental Compliance Manager, City of Pasco

Important Notes for those participating: The tour will start with an indoor briefing then outdoor walking tour. PPE including safety vests and hard hats will be provided to join the tour. Closed toe shoes are required; please wear light clothing. Sunscreen is encouraged. Participants must be able to walk on uneven surfaces. Participants will be required to sign a safety waiver.

The City of Pasco's Process Water Reuse Facility (PWRF) is an innovative, award-winning industrial wastewater and resource recovery center. This facility is helping food processors transform food industry wastewater more sustainably into a resource for community growth. Using a circular approach of anaerobic digestion, nutrient recovery and renewable natural gas production, the system improves environmental performance while delivering reliable, year-round service. By converting industrial wastewater into Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) and algae-based fertilizer, this circular economy model turns a traditional environmental liability into a municipal revenue stream while helping partner industries meet corporate sustainability goals.

In 1995, Pasco took a major investment risk by building what was at the time a state-of-the-art process water reuse facility. Through a recent \$180 million expansion, the facility is unlocking over \$800 million in regional investment by enabling existing food processors to scale operations and attracting major new employers. Today, the process facility treats approximately 1.6 billion gallons of high-strength effluent annually from local fruit, vegetable and dairy processors, and the businesses that use the facility employ 1,200 to 1,500 and support countless more jobs. The Pasco Resource Recovery Center (PRRC), an expansion of the Process Water Reuse Facility, will expand the capacity up to two billions of gallons annually. It has already added 400 jobs and allowed Darigold to open their \$650 million dairy plant in North Pasco. The City of Pasco owns and operates the facility and entered into a 30-year public-private partnership with Burnham RNG, which is constructing and will operate the PRRC on behalf of the City.

Dinner is on your own. Enjoy exploring all that the Tri-Cities region has to offer! Check out Visit Tri-Cities'

Food & Drink Guide: <https://www.visittri-cities.com/food-drink/>

Connecting & Energizing for Action: Informal Social Welcome Gatherings (*non-hosted; light hors d'oeuvres served at Taverna Tagaris*) – **Richland Wineries Cluster and/or Tri-City Dust Devils Baseball Game, Pasco**

Meet new colleagues from across the state and reengage with old friends.

4:00-7:00 pm

Visit to Richland Wineries "Cluster" – pre-registration requested through Swapcard

Conference attendees are invited to explore three outstanding local destinations at their leisure. These locations are close together and walkable.

- J. Bookwalter Winery & Richland Tasting Room (*open 1:00-7:00 pm – stop offering tastings at 6:00 pm*)
1695 Malibu Pr NE, Richland, WA 99352

- Barnard Griffin Winery (*open 12:00-6:00 pm – final pour at 6:00 pm*)
878 Tulip Lane D, Richland, WA 99352
- Taverna Tagaris (*open 11:30 am-8:00 pm*)
844 Tulip Lane, Richland, WA 99352

Tastings and additional food and beverages are non-hosted. Light hors d'oeuvres will be served at approximately 5:30 pm at Taverna Tagaris. Your safety is our top priority. We strongly encourage responsible drinking and the use of designated drivers or local rideshare services.

The Tri-Cities region is a cornerstone of Washington's wine industry and plays a significant role in the state's agricultural economy. Located near the renowned Red Mountain, Horse Heaven Hills, and Wahluke Slope American Viticultural Areas (AVAs), the region benefits from ideal growing conditions, including abundant sunshine, well-drained soils and a long growing season. The area's warm climate and fertile soils produce high-quality grapes, particularly Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and Riesling, which are sought after by wineries throughout the state.

The wine industry is a major economic driver for the Tri-Cities, supporting thousands of jobs in vineyard management, winemaking, distribution, hospitality and tourism. Wineries attract visitors year-round, generating revenue for local hotels, restaurants, retailers and event venues while contributing to Washington's multibillion-dollar wine economy. Wine tourism has become an essential component of the region's economic development, helping diversify an economy historically centered on agriculture and energy.

Statewide, with nearly 1,000 wineries, 300 grape growers, and 35,000+ acres of wine grapes, Washington State is the second largest wine producing state in the US. Washington produces over 80 varieties from our 21 AVAs, and each year, we have a total in-state economic impact of more than \$10.56 billion and produce over 9 million cases of wine. However, the Washington State Wine Commission's annual Grape Production Report showed only 108,000 tons of wine grapes were harvested in 2025, down 28% from the previous year. Washington's wine industry is facing one of its toughest years on record due to rising costs, shifting consumer habits and a drop in tourism. Producers across the state are continuously looking for new ways to adapt.

6:05 pm

Pre-Game All-You-Can-Eat BBQ at the Stadium

Important Notes: Please buy your ticket (includes BBQ & game) through [this BBQ + Game link](#). WEDA's tickets are in a group in the Upper Section 101 which has some shading (\$31 + fees – includes BBQ dinner, sodas & water and special pricing on beer/seltzer).

7:05 pm

Tri-City Dust Devils Baseball Game vs. Hillsboro Hops – pre-registration requested through Swapcard & you must buy your own ticket.

Gesa Stadium, 6200 Burden Blvd., Pasco, WA 99301

Important Notes: You can also purchase game-only tickets (Upper Box Section 102, where additional WEDA attendees will be) are \$12 + fees and General Admission is \$9 + fees) through [this Game-Only link](#).

Gesa Stadium is a Minor League Baseball park located in Pasco, WA. Opened 31 years ago in 1995, it is the home field of the Tri-City Dust Devils of the Northwest League, who serve as a

High-A affiliate of the Los Angeles Angels. In October 2023, the Pasco City Council approved a 10-year lease extension with the Tri-City Dust Devils baseball team, owned by Northwest Baseball Ventures I LLC, to use the Pasco facility. With the City of Pasco's help, the renewed lease brought about \$5 million in improvements at the stadium to comply with Major League Baseball requirements.

The Dust Devils have significantly contributed to the Tri-Cities region "with over \$12.4 million in total economic impact annually, including direct and indirect spending. The team supports 111 full-time equivalent jobs, and close to \$7 million in direct community spending from various team-related activities, and an estimated \$796,000 in tax revenues annually for the state, county and city (October 2023 data, Tri-Cities Herald)." In April 2023, the Washington state ballpark bonding budget was passed unanimously by both the Washington State House and Senate. It involved \$24 million to be spread out among 11 state communities that have minor league teams — including Tacoma, Spokane, Everett and Pasco — and a smaller group of teams that have franchises in the summer West Coast Baseball League, including Walla Walla. For Pasco — and Gesa Stadium — that meant \$3 million for improvements that are needed for the Dust Devils to be compliant with Major League Baseball's requirements.

Wednesday, August 5

Red Lion Hotel Kennewick Columbia Center
1101 N Columbia Center Blvd, Kennewick, WA 99336

Note: *The WEDA Registration/Information Table will be outside of the Ballroom, with WEDA support available throughout the conference. The Nomad Dining Room is available for networking and work needs throughout the conference (quiet, please when a session is underway). Please be sure to check out all of our exhibitors starting at 11:00 am!*

9:30-11:15 am **WEDA Q3 Board Meeting – WEDA Board Members & WEDA Staff only**
Clearwater C

10:00-11:00 am **Building Our Economic Development Toolbox: Pre-Conference Professional Development Workshops – choose 1:**

Pre-Conference Professional Development Workshop: Retail as Economic Development - Leveraging Retail Recruitment to Build Stronger Washington Communities

Lion's Den

Sponsor: Pacific Power

Host: Jim Hagar, Economic Development Project Manager, Port of Vancouver USA

Workshop Leader: Caroline Harrelson, Strategy Director, TheRetailCoach

Retail recruitment is no longer just about filling vacant storefronts—it is one of the most visible and impactful economic development strategies available to communities. Every successful retail project creates jobs, expands the tax base, supports small businesses, attracts private investment and enhances quality of life for residents.

This interactive session will explore how Washington communities can use retail recruitment as a catalyst for long-term economic development. Attendees will learn how retailers evaluate markets, what national and regional brands are looking for in today's environment and how local governments and communities can proactively position themselves for investment. Using examples from communities across Washington and around the country, the session will examine current retail market trends, changing consumer behaviors, mixed-use development, downtown revitalization, adaptive reuse and the growing importance of placemaking. Participants will leave with practical strategies for working with developers, brokers, property owners and retailers to transform recruitment efforts into measurable economic development success.

- **Pre-Conference Professional Development Workshop:
Fostering Innovative Partnerships, Strong Ecosystems & Regional
Collaboration to Grow Jobs**

Nomad Dining Room

Sponsor: Avista

Host: Lorie Fazio, Director of Operations, Clallam Economic Development Council

**Workshop Leader: Joe Morrison, Executive Director, Kitsap Economic
Development Alliance (KEDA)**

Join this preconference workshop to discuss how to coordinate, collaborate, and work across various partners to get results, impact and ultimately grow jobs and facilitate investment. Come share best practices and gain insights!

11:30 am

Registration, Buffet Lunch & Networking

Buffet in Clearwater C, Dining in Ballroom

Sponsor: Benton-Franklin Council of Governments

11:45 am-2:00 pm

Opening General Session

Ballroom

Sponsor: Clallam Economic Development Council

Led by: Michael Cade, Executive Director, Thurston Economic Development Council & WEDA Board Incoming Chair

WEDA Land Acknowledgment & Tribal Welcome: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Chair Kathryn Brigham

Local Government Welcome:

City of Kennewick Mayor Jason McShane

City of West Richland Mayor Fred Brink

City of Pasco Mayor Charles Grimm

City of Richland Mayor Theresa Richardson

Opening Remarks from WEDA Leadership & Sponsors

ENERGIZING INNOVATION: *How Can We Grow Jobs for the Future?*

Keynote Speaker: Danny Bernstein, CEO, Reservoir

Sponsor: Pierce County

Host: Stephen McFadden, Deputy Executive Director-Economic Development, Port of Pasco & WEDA Board Vice Chair

Brief Response and Project Updates:

- Karl Dye, President/CEO, Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC) & WEDA Board Member
- Dr. Ines Hanrahan, Executive Director, Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission
- Dr. Naidu Rayapati, Director, WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center

Fireside Chat: *Growing Jobs for the Future*

Sponsor: Thurston Economic Development Council

Moderator: Mandy Wallner, Economic Development Manager, City of Richland & WEDA Board Vice Chair

Featured Panelists:

- Nick Bumpaous, Business Manager, UA Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 598
- Dr. Sandra Haynes, Executive Vice President for Washington State University Statewide Campuses
- Christina Lomasney-Mattis, Chief Commercialization Officer, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), operated by Battelle for the US Department of Energy (DOE)
- Paul Randall, Director, Tri-Tech Skills Center, Kennewick School District

2:00-2:15 pm

Networking Break

2:15-3:15 pm

Breakouts 1: *Building Our Economic Development Toolbox to Grow Jobs* (choose 1):

Innovative Investments in Transportation & Infrastructure as a Catalyst to Grow Jobs

Ballroom

Sponsor: Port of Pasco

Moderator: Betty Baublits, Director of Investor Relations, Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County & WEDA Board Immediate Past Chair

Panelists:

- Steve Balaski, Director of Business Development, Northwest Seaport Alliance
- Michelle Holt, Executive Director, Benton-Franklin Council of Governments
- Hon. Julie Meredith, Secretary, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Pat Reay, Executive Director, Port of Walla Walla

Innovative Rural Economic Development & Tourism Strategies

Nomad Dining Room

Sponsor: Yakima County Development Association

Presenter & Moderator: Lynn Longan, Rural & Small Business Manager,
Washington State Department of Commerce

Panelists:

- Jennie Dickinson, Executive Director, Port of Columbia & WEDA Board Member
- Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director, Economic Alliance (Okanogan County)
- Kevin Lewis, CEO, Visit Tri-Cities
- Maressa Valliant, Eat Local First Director, Sustainable Connections

The Art of Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) – Designing a Playbook & Developing a Deal Flow

Lion's Den

Sponsor: Greater Spokane, Inc.

Moderator: Maddie Merton, Account Executive, Southwest Washington &
Peninsula Region, Impact Washington

Panelists:

- Lynnette Buffington, Chief of Staff, Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
- Yani Cisneros, Business Development Manager, Yakima County Development Association
- James Davis, Economic Development Manager, Kitsap Economic Development Alliance
- Richard Hanover, Director of Business Development, Port of Moses Lake
- Daniel Tappana, Director of Economic Development, Economic Alliance Snohomish County

3:15-3:30 pm

Networking & Snack Break

Snacks in Clearwater C

3:30-4:30 pm

Breakouts 2: ENERGIZING INNOVATION to Grow Jobs for the Future (choose 1):

Energizing Cutting-Edge Clean Economy Strategies

Ballroom

Sponsor: Port of Benton

Moderator: Brant Mayo, Executive Director, Grant County Economic Development Council & WEDA Board Treasurer

Panelists:

- Hon. Stephanie Barnard, State House Technology, Economic Development & Veterans Committee Ranking Member (8th District-Benton/Franklin Cos.)
- Robert Schuetz, CEO, Energy Northwest
- Vincent Valentino, Energy Economy Lead, Washington Dept. of Commerce
- Brian Young, Deputy Director, Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Association (PNWH2)

“Emerging Leaders, Emerging Insights” - Imagining Economic Development for the Future

Featuring: Reflections from WEDA’s Emerging Leaders & Open Discussion

Nomad Dining Room

Sponsor: Washington State Department of Enterprise Services

Hosts & Speakers: Joey Gunning, Director of Economic Development, Greater Spokane, Inc. & Co-Chair, WEDA Emerging Leaders Group; Jill Essency, Economic Development Specialist, City of Renton & Co-Chair, WEDA Emerging Leaders Group

Panelists:

- Ryan Burkey, Economic Developer, Tri-County Economic Development District (TEDD)
- Gigi Harker-Olguin, Economic Development Specialist, Port of Vancouver
- Lauren Lundberg, Deputy Director, SODO Business Improvement Area
- Kyle Niehenke, Executive Director, Adams County Economic Development Council

Economic development is changing—and so are the expectations of the professionals leading it. Building on IEDC's 2025 State of the Field report, this session will explore the trends, challenges and opportunities shaping economic development in Washington State through the eyes of WEDA's Emerging Leaders.

Drawing on national research and Washington-specific insights, the panel will reflect on what these findings mean for our communities, our organizations and the future of the profession. Join us for a forward-looking conversation about what's changing, what's working and where economic development in Washington is headed next.

Energizing Innovative Tools & Resources to Meet Workforce Needs

Lion’s Den

Sponsor: Kitsap Economic Development Alliance

Moderator: Katie Condit, CEO, WorkForce Central & WEDA Board Member

Panelists:

- Jonathan Herrera, Washington Saves Program Manager, Washington State Department of Financial Institutions
- Ingrid Stegemoeller, Industry Engagement Director, Washington Roundtable/Partnership for Learning
- Kristin Wiggins, Washington Project Director, Mission: Readiness and ReadyNation
- Dr. Rebekah Woods, President, Columbia Basin College

Meet in the Red Lion Lobby at 5:10 pm for informal carpools with WEDA leaders. Columbia Gardens is about a 15 minute drive from the hotel.

5:30-7:30 pm

Energizing Our Connections - Networking Reception – pre-registration requested through Swapcard

Columbia Gardens Artisan Village

313 East Columbia Gardens Drive, Kennewick, WA 99336

Sponsor: TRIDEC

Join us for a special reception at Columbia Gardens Artisan Village. Dress code: casual -- WEDA conference registrants must wear their nametag for a drink ticket and food truck food ticket good for a dish at one of the onsite food trucks. Come to the WEDA check in table for your tickets. Reception attendees will receive food truck tickets for delicious food at Frida's Mexican Grill, Nana's Kitchen, Botanas Culichi, The Local Bite and La Bahia Mexican Food and beverages from Wheat Head on the Water and Monarcha Winery – plus we'll have great music from *Calico Bones* and lots of fun!

There will be a brief speaking program at 6:15 pm. Thank you to our hosts at the Port of Kennewick for supporting this unique and special event!

6:15-6:35 approx.

Brief Speaking Program

Local Government Welcome:

- Port of Kennewick Commission Vice President Skip Novakovich
- Port of Pasco Commission President/Chair Hans Engelke
- Audrey Burney, Director of Economic Development, Port of Benton

The redevelopment of Columbia Gardens Artisan Village marked a turning point for Kennewick's Historic Waterfront District, which received WEDA's 2025 Economic Development Award for Economic Response & Recovery. The Port of Kennewick's thoughtful reinvestment has transformed the once forgotten waterfront into a growing destination neighborhood with locally-loved food and beverage places, recreational amenities and creative spaces.

The Port of Kennewick partnered with Benton County and City of Kennewick on this redevelopment, changing the zoning to Urban Mixed Use, constructing buildings, parking, a loop roadway, food truck plaza and other amenities, as well as preparing shovel-ready parcels for additional private development to help activate the area. After years of revitalization, Columbia Gardens is bringing new life to the waterfront with increased tourism spending, renewed vitality, new businesses and jobs.

8:00-9:30 pm

Energizing Our Pipeline: Emerging Leaders Gathering – pre-registration requested through Swapcard

Solar Spirits Distillery & Cocktail Lounge

702 The Park Way, Suite B, Richland, WA 99352

All emerging leaders and their supporters are welcomed! Light hors d'oeuvres will be served; beverages are non hosted. Your safety is our top priority. We strongly encourage responsible drinking and the use of designated drivers or local rideshare services.

Settle into the warm, intimate atmosphere of the Solar Spirits tasting room. Solar Spirits Distillery's mission is to create best in class craft spirits that are developed using innovative and sustainable technologies. Starting in 2018, the spirits are produced with 100% renewable energy

provided by a mix of onsite solar and purchased Green-e Energy Certified Renewable Energy Certificates. Solar Spirits Distillery is "farm-to-bottle", and the award-winning spirits are fermented and distilled in-house with an emphasis on Washington grain and fruit.

9:00 – 10:30 pm

Continuing to Energize Our Connections: After Hours Get Together

Nomad Lounge, Red Lion Hotel Kennewick Columbia Center

1101 N Columbia Center Blvd, Kennewick, WA 99336

Sponsor: Port of Benton

Enjoy beverages kindly donated by the Port of Benton and a few light bites as you wrap up a great day with Team WEDA!

Thursday, August 6

Red Lion Hotel Kennewick Columbia Center

1101 N Columbia Center Blvd, Kennewick, WA 99336

8:00-8:30 am

Breakfast & Networking Activities (Affinity Groupings)

Buffet in Clearwater C, Dining in Ballroom

Host: Gary Ballew, Assistant City Manager, City of Yakima & WEDA Board Member

Start the day with breakfast and informal networking by interest area. Please "mix it up" and pick a table based on the table tent on the table – whether it's Rural Economic Development, Aerospace/Manufacturing, Ports or Workforce Development, we have a group for you! You can also play musical chairs and move to different tables through Closing Session.

8:30-9:45 am

Morning General Session: *Innovative Approaches to Building Our Economic Development Toolbox*

Ballroom

Sponsor: Washington State Microenterprise Association

Host: Colleen McAleer, Executive Director, Clallam County Economic

Development Council; Commissioner, Port of Port Angeles & WEDA Board

Secretary

Local Government Welcome

TIF for Jobs Update: *Energizing Job Growth through Tax Increment Financing (TIF)*

Sponsor: Port of Vancouver, USA

Speakers:

- Stephen McFadden, Deputy Executive Director - Economic Development, Port of Pasco & WEDA Board Vice Chair
- Preston Frederickson, Deputy City Manager, City of Walla Walla

Keynote Speaker: Toby Rittner, President & CEO, Council of Development Finance Agencies

Sponsor: Grow America

9:45-10:00 am

Networking Break

Sponsor: Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Hub (PNWH2)

10:00-11:00 am

Breakouts 3: *Energizing Innovative Partnerships in Economic Development* (choose 1):

Energizing Transformative Leadership Workshop

Nomad Dining Room

Sponsor: Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County

Host: John Sternlicht, CEO, Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County &

WEDA Board Member

Facilitator & Speaker:

- Dr. Michael Novakovich, Managing Partner, NovaWerx, LLC Consulting; President & CEO, Columbia Ability Alliance

Innovation does not begin with ideas . . . it begins with leaders who create the conditions for ideas to flourish. In today's rapidly changing economic landscape, transformative leadership is essential to building resilient organizations, fostering collaboration and creating communities where innovation and opportunity thrive. Drawing from doctoral research on strategic leadership, executive leadership experience, and leading innovation research, this engaging and interactive session introduces the REAL Strategic Leadership FrameworkTM and practical strategies for developing people, strengthening partnerships and leading change. Participants will leave with actionable tools they can immediately apply to energize their teams, advance innovation and drive lasting impact in their organizations and communities.

ENERGIZING INNOVATION for Workforce & Attainable Housing Solutions

Ballroom

Sponsor: Evergreen Business Capital

Moderator: Lynnette Buffington, Chief of Staff, Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce & WEDA Board Member

Panelists:

- Hon. April Connors, State House Republican Floor Leader (8th District-Benton/Franklin Counties)
- Marty Kooistra, Interim Director, Washington Starter Home Plan
- Tina Vlasaty, Deputy Director, LISC Puget Sound

Energizing Partnerships to Support the Creative Economy

Lion's Den

Sponsor: Washington Center for Employee Ownership

Moderator: Nate Daum, Economic Development Manager, City of Shoreline & WEDA Board Member

Panelists:

- Stephanie Button, Executive Director, Historic Downtown Kennewick Partnership & the South Columbia Creative District
- Davin Diaz, Executive Director, Richland Public Facilities District and IMPACT Advisor & Curator, ArtsWA

- Shannon Halberstadt, Creative Economy Sector Lead, WA State Commerce
- Dr. Rebekah Tabah Percival, Executive Director, ArtsWA
- Justin Raffa, Artistic Director, Mid-Columbia Mastersingers

11:00-11:15 am **Networking Break**

11:15 am-12:00 pm **General Session: ENERGIZING INNOVATION as We Grow Jobs – Assessing Our Economic Progress & Forecasting Our Future**

Ballroom

Sponsor: Impact Washington

Host: Michael Cade, Executive Director, Thurston Economic Development Council & WEDA Incoming Board Chair

Featured Speakers:

- **Anneliese Vance-Sherman, PhD, Chief Labor Economist, Washington State Employment Security Department**
- **Matthew Gardner, Principal & Chief Economist, Gardner Economics**

Gain insights about statewide, national and global economic trends that could affect your community and region from these leading economists. They will highlight labor market trends, statewide economic indicators, inflation, housing and more. This data-driven look at our economy, focusing on Washington state will leave you better prepared to navigate our ever-evolving economic landscape with actionable insights.

12:00-1:00 pm **Lunch**

Buffet in Clearwater C, Dining in Ballroom

Sponsor: Port of Seattle

12:15-1:30 pm **Closing General Session: Moving Forward to ENERGIZE INNOVATION**

Ballroom

Sponsor: Washington State Department of Commerce

Host: Sarah Cho, City Center Program Manager, City of Lynnwood & WEDA Board Member

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Bill Pike, Deputy Director for Science & Technology, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), operated by Battelle for the US Department of Energy (DOE)

SBA Update: US Small Business Administration Pacific Northwest Regional Administrator Kelly Chambers

Sponsor: Washington Small Business Development Center

1:15-1:30 pm **WEDA Annual Meeting, Board & Officer Elections, Action Items & Next Steps**

Led by: Michael Cade, Executive Director, Thurston Economic Development Council & WEDA Board Incoming Chair

All conference attendees are encouraged to stay for this brief but important Annual Meeting & Closing Session, including special Service Award presentations.

***Post-Conference
Extend Your Stay***

Optional Post-Conference ENERGIZING INNOVATION Highlights Tours – *pre-registration required for Lamb Weston through WEDA’s online conference platform, Swapcard:*

2:30-4:00 pm

Lamb Weston Innovation Center
2011 Saint Street, Richland, WA 99354

Hosts & Speakers:

- Candi Looney, Senior Manager, Commercialization
- Rachel Kronberg, Plant Manager
- Joshua Stancil, Quality Specialist
- Angela Krueger, Pilot Plant Lead
- Ilda Ramirez, Pilot Plant Lead

Lamb Weston Holdings, Inc. is an American food processing company that is one of the world's largest producers and processors of frozen French fries, waffle fries and other frozen potato products. It is headquartered in Eagle, Idaho, a suburb of Boise. The Lamb Weston Innovation Center in Richland is a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to product research, customer trials, and developing new potato products. It features a miniature processing plant, co-creation spaces, fully functioning kitchens, and a pilot line—in short, a place where ideas are imagined, tested and presented to customers.

Important Notes for those participating: Please wear closed toe shoes and minimize jewelry (as it will need to be removed before entering the plant); **no** loose-fitting clothes like wavy dresses or baggy shirts, please. PPE will be provided to enter the processing line. ***If you have any allergies, please send an email to info@wedaonline.org so we can advise Lamb Weston.***

Extend your stay opportunities in the Tri-Cities!

Columbia Point & Riverfront Trail – Enjoy a relaxing walk or bike ride along Richland's scenic [Riverfront Trail](#). Explore restaurants ([LuLu Craft Bar & Kitchen](#), [Perch Cantina](#), [Anthony's](#), and [Budd's Broiler](#)) and the [marina park](#), or simply unwind while taking in one of the Tri-Cities' most picturesque destinations.

[LIGO Hanford Observatory](#) – The LIGO Exploration Center is open for drop-in visits Tuesday – Friday from 9:30 am – 4 pm. Free public tours are also offered on the 2nd Saturday of the month.

[Manhattan Project National Historical Park](#) – The Manhattan Project is one of the most transformative events of the 20th century. It ushered in the nuclear age with the development of the world's first atomic bombs. Most of this development took place in three secret communities located Washington, New Mexico and Tennessee. In Richland, you can visit one of the three sites that make up this park. Currently, [free 4-hour public tours are the pre-WWII historic sites are being offered](#). [Atomic Explorations Sessions](#) are offered Monday – Saturday from 2-3 pm.

[Wheat Head Brewing Company's](#) – Original tasting room is family and leashed dog friendly. Open daily 11 am – 9 pm. This location offers the perfect location to enjoy a Tri-Cities sunset and sweeping hillside vistas.

[Fleet Feet Scavenger Hunt](#) – Join Fleet Feet Tri-Cities on the last Thursday of each month, May-August, for the Fleet Feet Summer Block Party, your favorite scavenger hunt run!

[Richland Parkway](#) – Discover a vibrant downtown in the heart of Richland. The Parkway is your go-to destination for local shopping, delicious dining, arts, entertainment and family-friendly events. Whether you're a local or

visiting for the first time, you'll find something special here. (Solar Spirits – the location for the Emerging Leaders event is located within the Parkway, come back and explore!)

Middleton Farms – In 1979, Bill and Cinda Middleton purchased a patch of hilly sagebrush and developed it into a farm producing asparagus, hay, corn, wheat, alfalfa seed and green peas. Over the years the farm was expanded to 840 owned acres and 1700 rented acres.

Country Mercantile – Discover seasonal produce, shop for specialty foods, or enjoy a taste of our local offerings. With a warm, welcoming atmosphere, each visit is a celebration of local agriculture and community spirit. Two locations (Pasco & Richland).

CPCCo Planetarium – The CPCCo Planetarium at Columbia Basin College provides high-definition images and sound using the most state-of-the-art projection system in the Pacific Northwest. The 36-foot panoramic viewing dome can simulate a 3-D effect without the need for strange glasses!

Vintner's Village (Prosser Wine Village) – Vintner's Village is a signature wine destination in the heart of Washington wine country.

Walla Walla Wine Tasting – less than an hour east of Tri-Cities, Walla Walla boasts more than 120 wineries and tasting rooms. This on-line resource will help you explore the wine regions and find the best wineries that fit your tastes.

Tri-City Dust Devils (Baseball) – Catch the excitement of minor league baseball with affordable family fun, great ballpark food, and a lively game-day atmosphere all summer long. (If you couldn't make it for the evening social, come back and enjoy a game!)

Downtown Pasco – Immerse yourself in the vibrant spirit of Pasco as you step into our charming Downtown. The vibrant cultural and historic heart of Pasco. Home to a thriving Hispanic community, it features authentic dining, a bustling Saturday [Pasco Farmers Market](#) at Peanuts Park, and the [Pasco Specialty Kitchen](#) food incubator.

Downtown Kennewick – Visit this vibrant, pedestrian-friendly commercial district in Kennewick, recognized as a state-designated creative arts district. Located on the east side of the city near the Columbia River, the historic core blends nostalgic charm with an eclectic mix of independent boutiques, local eateries, craft breweries, and public art. The area is actively managed and revitalized by the [Historic Downtown Kennewick Partnership](#).

Farmer's Markets – [Pasco](#) (Saturdays 9 am – 1pm), [Richland](#) (Fridays 9 am – 1 pm)

USS Triton Sail Park – Step inside history at the iconic USS Triton Sail, the preserved sail and conning tower of the first submarine to circumnavigate the globe completely underwater. Self-guided exhibits are open year-round, with select opportunities to tour inside this one-of-a-kind Cold War landmark.

Sample Tri-Cities Itineraries – Including food & wine, history & science exploration, river & outdoor adventure and family-focused.

2027 WEDA WINTER CONFERENCE

Please save **March 10-11, 2027** for our annual Winter Conference in Olympia – Saint Martin's University, Legislative Reception at the Governor's Mansion!

Watch www.wedaonline.org for details

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