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# FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

## FEDERAL POLICY — AND THE — LOCAL ECONOMY

2025

The Columbian

**E F** ECONOMIC  
FORECAST



# The Idea Behind Our Economic Forecast



**Will Campbell**  
Editor and Co-owner  
The Columbian

by **WILL CAMPBELL**

**B**y the time we hold this event, The Columbian's Economic Forecast, we'll be a few months into President Trump's new term, with new cabinet members and policies. We can use those first months as a springboard to predict the year ahead.

"Futurespective" is our theme this year, along with federal policy and local economics. What did the past tell us about what will happen in the future? What will happen with tariffs, job opportunities, growth or decline in certain industries? What will happen with our economy? Which indicators are key? They're all looming questions we aim to tackle at our event this year. This annual event is the fastest and most interesting way to

learn about our local economy.

In 2022, Matthew Gardner gave our keynote speech. Gardner is one of the most recognized real estate economists in the country and a member of the Washington State Governors Council of Economic Advisors. At our 2022 event, he talked a lot about a lack of housing supply – still a huge issue for our region. He noticed all the construction cranes in downtown Vancouver building housing and said it was a good sign. But now there are fewer cranes. What does that mean for Clark County?

Having Mike Wilkerson on the panel will help bring that issue into more light. When Columbian reporters have questions about local housing issues and how they affect our local workforce, Wilkerson is one of the first people they call. He is a partner and director of economic research at ECONorthwest, with more than 20 years of experience advising the public and private sectors. He is an expert in the economics of the local rental markets too.

I am delighted to have Emily Robertson join us this year in her new role. She is a regional labor economist for Washington's Employment Security Department, and she studies the labor market of Southwest Coastal Washington and helps local community partners find and use labor market information. Emily succeeds the state's long-time economist, Scott Bailey, who has agreed to speak at our event again.

Bailey began speaking at our Economic Forecast in the early 1990s. I like looking through The Columbian's digital archives and seeing his photo from when the Economic Forecast first began.

Bailey's thoughts on a recession are interesting. In summary, he says there's a widespread belief among many Americans that we're in a recession. He cited one CNN poll from November 2024 that found 75 percent of respondents thought our country was in a recession. But it isn't so.

"We're nowhere near a recession," he said.

I'm looking forward to hearing his thoughts about that.

## The Columbian

# E F ECONOMIC FORECAST

PRESENTED BY



### KEYNOTE SPEAKER



**Matthew Gardner**  
Economist & Founder of  
Gardner Economics

### PANEL DISCUSSION WITH



**Mike Wilkerson**  
Partner and Director of Economic  
Research, ECONorthwest



**Emily Robertson**  
Regional Labor Economist for  
Southwest Coastal Washington



**Scott Bailey**  
Clark College Economics Instructor and  
former Washington State Economist

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# Thoughts Regarding 2025

## Views From a "Glass Half Full" Economist



**Matthew Gardner**

Economist & Founder of Gardner Economics

by **MATTHEW GARDNER**

At this time of year, I am always reminded of the timeless quote from noted physicist Niels Bohr who famously stated that "Prediction is difficult, especially if it's about the future."

As forecasters, offering prognostications regarding the direction of the US economy has never been easy, even when things are going smoothly (as was seen at the end of 2024). Last year ended with resilient consumer spending and, while the labor market was slowly cooling, unemployment remained low, and jobs were being added at a relatively healthy pace which should give economists a certain level of comfort regarding their forecasts for 2025, but that is not the case.

As rare as it is, economists are almost united in their view that there is a greater degree of uncertainty regarding the direction of the US economy this year which is clouding our outlook rather significantly and the reason for our uncertainty entirely revolves around the incoming administration and their very ambitious agenda.

Last year we all saw the president-elect running on a platform that promised significant changes in U.S. economic policy, particularly as it pertains to trade that will, undoubtedly, play a critical role in shaping the

direction of our economy in the coming year and beyond.

As a result, economic forecasts must acknowledge the impact of those proposed policies – even if their implementation is far from assured.

Here, I am specifically talking about the President-elect's proposed trade policies – which include a 10% tariff on all global partners and a significant 60% tariff on Chinese goods – that I believe has the potential to push inflation higher and, therefore, slow economic growth.

I have never been a fan of tariffs, and I do not think that the voting members of the Fed are either. As such, if inflation does reignite, I would expect the Fed to react by slowing their easing of monetary policy; a consequence of which will be that borrowing costs will remain higher than previously expected and this would certainly hamper US economic growth.

My opinion is one that is supported by precedent, as tariffs applied at the start of the previous Trump administration led to a recession in the manufacturing sector in 2019, and I cannot see that the result would be different this time around.

In addition to the specter of tariffs, proposed changes to US immigration policy could also negatively impact growth as restrictive policy could slow labor force growth which could lead to lower production and, possibly, wages rising at a faster pace – which is also inflationary.

On a more positive note, the U.S. Congress, under Republican control, is expected to extend most of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which will prevent tax rates from

rising; however, that extension is unlikely to stimulate the economy significantly in 2025. That said, additional tax relief is anticipated – with a projected \$1 trillion in cuts over the next decade – and that could support stronger growth starting in 2026.

On a regional level, I do not anticipate the Pacific Northwest seeing its economic growth differ very much from that seen at the national level with the labor market normalizing and wage growth tapering somewhat from its current pace, but both being subject to the decisions that the new administration make.

Overall, while the economic impact of the COVID pandemic continues to dissipate, upcoming U.S. policy changes, particularly in trade, will be the dominant factor shaping our economic landscape in 2025 and beyond.

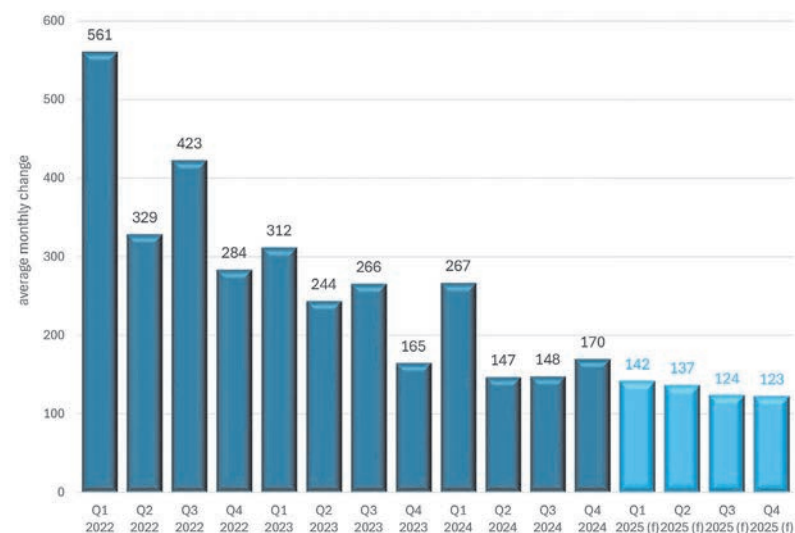
*Matthew Gardner is a nationally recognized economist who has been offering his opinions regarding economic and real estate conditions for over 28 years.*

*In addition to his writings, he is a noted public speaker, sits on the Washington State Governors Council of Economic Advisors, the Association of Washington Businesses Council of Economic Advisors, and is an Advisory Board Member at the Runstad Department of Real Estate at the University of Washington where he also lectures in real estate economics.*

*His economic forecasts are used by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, and his housing forecasts are used by Reuters in their U.S. Housing Market forecast and by Fannie Mae in their National Home Price Expectation Survey.*

*If you have any questions about this opinion piece, he can be reached at: [m.gardner@gardnereconomics.com](mailto:m.gardner@gardnereconomics.com)*

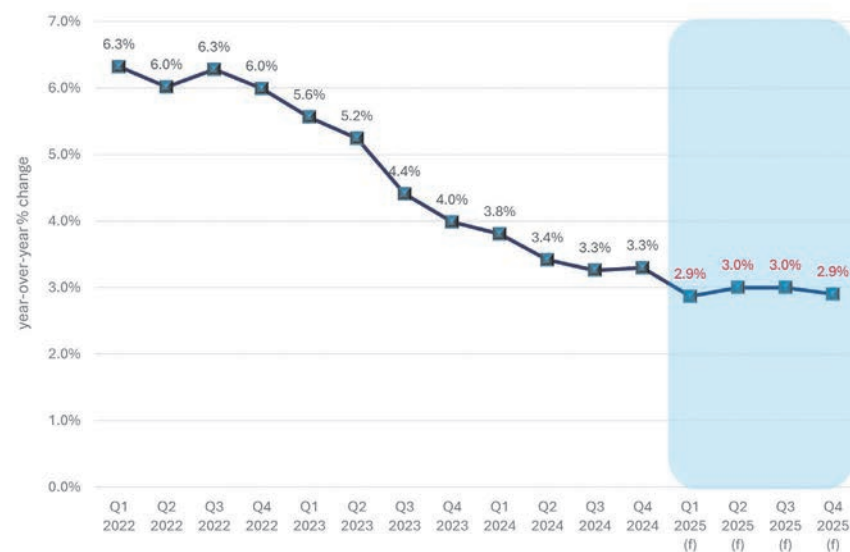
U.S. Non-farm Payroll Change



### Tepid Job Growth in 2025

The labor market has cooled following the "catch up" period seen after the pandemic. Going forward, proposed immigration reform could weigh on labor force growth which would hamper the pace of job creation.

Core U.S. Consumer Price Index (sa)



### Inflation has Been Trending Lower

But is proving to be "sticky". Going forward, the potential impact of proposed tariffs is a significant concern

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics with Gardner Economics' forecast

# A Look at Our Data from Last Year



by WILL CAMPBELL

Emily Robertson is coming up on her first-year mark in her new role as a Regional Labor Economist for Washington's Employment Security Department. She's constantly looking at the broader picture of how

Clark County unemployment compares to the rest of the state. Her data predictions rely on historical trends that don't account for policy. For instance, if a new executive order or bill passes, the state's economic data that Emily analyses won't begin changing forecasts until the effects of the policy show up in actual data.

"A few industries are doing well, and a few not," she said. She plans on expanding on that during her talk on the panel but mentioned that nursing and math-based, science-based occupations are doing well.

While speaking to a business-centered audience, she will discuss some job-postings data. It's interesting to see what the big employers are doing, she said. Here is some of the data that Robertson provided, and to which she'll speak at the Economic Forecast.

TOP EMPLOYERS		
Company	Total Postings	Rank
Fisher Investments	445	1
PeaceHealth	315	2
Kroger	151	3
Legacy Health	147	4
Safeway	122	5
The Vancouver Clinic	103	6
Sea Mar Community Health Centers	87	7
Clark County	72	8
Evergreen Public Schools	69	9
Albertsons	67	10
Molina Healthcare	59	11
Vancouver Public Schools	55	12
Clark College	55	13
Domino's Pizza	47	14
Starbucks	42	15
Fresenius	42	16
E Business Corp	41	17
Church & Dwight	41	18
HP	35	19
Iq Credit Union	35	20

TOP INDUSTRIES		
Industry	Total Postings	Rank
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	500	1
Miscellaneous Financial Investment Activities	452	2
Supermarkets and Other Grocery Retailers (except Convenience Retailers)	394	3
Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	176	4
Limited-Service Restaurants	162	5
Elementary and Secondary Schools	138	6
Offices of Dentists	112	7
Commercial Banking	109	8
Home Health Care Services	101	9
Full-Service Restaurants	94	10
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	78	11
Courts	72	12
Custom Computer Programming Services	70	13
Insurance Agencies and Brokerages	69	14
Kidney Dialysis Centers	65	15
Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	62	16
Engineering Services	61	17
Other Activities Related to Real Estate	56	18
New Single-Family Housing Construction (except For-Sale Builders)	47	19
Child Care Services	44	20

TOP JOB POSTINGS		
Occupation	Total Postings	Rank
Registered Nurses	351	1
Retail Salespersons	289	2
Medical and Health Services Managers	157	3
Customer Service Representatives	141	4
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	134	5
Fast Food and Counter Workers	128	6
Medical Assistants	124	7
Personal Financial Advisors	124	8
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	103	9
Sales Reps, Wholesale/Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	103	10
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	102	11
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	98	12
Nursing Assistants	95	13
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	90	14
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	84	15
Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	83	16
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	81	17
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	75	18
Sales Reps of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	75	19
Sales Managers	73	20

TOP QUALIFICATIONS		
Qualification	Total Postings	Rank
Valid Driver's License	303	1
Registered Nurse (RN)	126	2
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	108	3
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	102	4
First Aid Certification	72	5
Food Handler's Card	49	6
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	37	7
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	29	8
Nurse Practitioner (APRN-CNP)	24	9
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	22	10
Bachelor Of Science in Nursing (BSN)	20	11
Board Certified/Board Eligible	17	12
Forklift Certification	16	13
American Red Cross (ARC) Certification	16	14
CDL Class A License	15	15
Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification	14	16
Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)	12	17
Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Certification	11	18
ServSafe Certification	11	19
Certified Medical Assistant (CMA)	11	20

TOP SPECIALIZED SKILLS		
Top Specialized Skills	Unique Postings	Rank
Marketing	167	1
Nursing	137	2
Auditing	136	3
Merchandising	134	4
Project Management	131	5
Accounting	107	6
Office Equipment	95	7
Data Entry	89	8
Workflow Management	83	9
Warehousing	81	10
Selling Techniques	80	11
Construction	75	12
Billing	73	13
Effective Communication	72	14
Food Safety And Sanitation	70	15
Customer Relationship Management	68	16
General Mathematics	68	17
Medical Records	65	18
Sales Prospecting	65	19
Invoicing	63	20

## SPONSORED CONTENT

# Helping to Navigate the Financial Landscape



**Nicole Sherman**  
CEO/President  
Riverview Bank

by **NICOLE SHERMAN**

**R**iverview Bank is proud to be the presenting sponsor of the Economic Forecast. It is the premier event for financial services businesses each year. I want to ask if anyone has a crystal ball for the next year or so? Navigating the changing financial environment will keep all of us on our toes.

It's a privilege to spend an afternoon with you as we share vital information to better help clients navigate the financial landscape. Riverview Bank is in the

dream business, whether helping clients start a business, build wealth or purchase a home.

In the banking industry, making informed strategic decisions is vital to navigating an ever-changing financial landscape. Key economic indicators serve as essential tools that guide such decisions, enabling the bank to assess current conditions and forecast future trends. By staying attuned to interest rates, unemployment trends, inflation rates, housing markets, and consumer confidence, we can navigate challenges proactively, seize growth opportunities, and enhance our competitive position within the financial sector. This proactive approach not only safeguards the bank's assets but also supports the broader community's financial well-being.

**Interest Rates:** The prevailing interest rates, influenced by monetary policy decisions from the Federal Reserve, are pivotal for banks. These rates affect loan pricing, deposit rates, and ultimately the bank's net interest margin. A decline in interest rates may prompt increased borrowing, while rising rates could suppress loan demand. Monitoring these fluctuations helps banks adjust their lending strategies and manage interest rate risk effectively.

**Unemployment Rate:** The unemployment rate serves as a barometer for economic health. Higher employment levels often correlate with increased consumer spending and borrowing, which can boost loan growth for community banks. Conversely, rising unemployment may indicate economic distress, prompting banks to tighten lending standards and focus on asset quality. Analyzing labor market conditions helps banks anticipate changes in credit demand and adjust their risk assessment processes accordingly.

**Inflation Rates:** Tracking inflation is crucial for understanding purchasing power and cost pressures. Elevated inflation can erode consumer confidence, affecting spending and saving behavior. For community banks, it's important to consider how inflation impacts both



operational costs and the broader economic environment. If inflation continues to rise, banks might need to reassess lending practices and fee structures to continue assisting businesses to grow while maintaining profitability.

**Housing Trends:** As a significant indicator of economic stability, housing market trends directly affect mortgage lending. Factors such as home prices, sales volume, and construction activity can signal consumer confidence and economic recovery. A thriving housing market often leads to increased lending opportunities, while stagnation or decline necessitates a reassessment of the bank's mortgage strategy.

**Consumer Confidence:** This index reflects consumer sentiment regarding the economy's prospects. High consumer confidence usually results in increased spending and borrowing, while low confidence can signal a pullback in economic activity. Community banks monitor the CCI to gauge potential shifts in consumer behavior, allowing them to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies accordingly.

The economic indicators provide a nuanced perspective on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. As we navigate through challenges and opportunities, it is important for individuals and businesses alike to remain adaptable and anticipate trends. A proactive approach is essential in fostering resilience and ensuring sustained growth in an ever-changing economic landscape. At Riverview, we are here to partner with you through all of it. Much continued success to you in the new year and beyond.

## Riverview Bank's CEO Nicole Sherman is 'Focused on the People'

By **SARAH WOLF**, Columbian Staff Writer

Published January 23, 2025

**N**icole Sherman is new in town. But the new Riverview Bank CEO is already making waves.

Sherman took over as president and chief executive officer at Vancouver's Riverview Bank in July. The previous CEO was ousted a year prior.

"We needed somebody who could come in and really develop the staff," said Stacey Graham, a member of Riverview's board of directors. Graham led the nationwide search for a new chief executive for the community bank.

Once she jumped on board, Sherman dove headfirst into meeting with branch staff, attending community events and talking with clients, Graham said.

"She has not been here that long, but I think she's made a pretty significant splash," Graham said.

Sherman was born and raised, as she says, on the slopes of Salt Lake City. She started in banking at just 17 years old as a teller at Zions Bank.

"I was a baby banker," she said.

Sherman said the bank's CEO saw something in her — that she knew banking at its core is a people business.

Sherman never planned to go into banking, expecting instead to go into something like law.

She'd go to high school in the morning and then her work-study job in the afternoons at the bank. She liked the financial aspect of the job. But what really captivated her was the people.

Sherman went on to become an assistant vice president at 20 years old, a vice president, a senior vice president, executive vice president and so on.

"I just focused on being the best I could in the roles that I was in over the years," Sherman said.



Although she never aspired to be a CEO, she said holding that position at Riverview is the highlight of her career.

She's spent about a third of her 25-year career working in bank branches.

After she moved to the Pacific Northwest, she worked for AmericanWest Bank and Columbia Bank. She's been involved with 11 mergers and acquisitions, including AmericanWest's purchase by Banner Bank and Columbia's merger with Umpqua Bank.

After so many years, Sherman still sees banking as a people business.

"To be successful in banking and have the company be successful, you have to be focused on the people," she said. "That's really my philosophy here at Riverview."

Sherman said she believes employees will treat clients how they're treated. And when clients are successful, it makes a stronger community, she added.

"There's nothing more satisfying to me than deepening a

relationship with a business and seeing somebody's dream come true because they build their business as a result of us partnering with them," Sherman said.

Sherman said she's never lived in Vancouver before accepting the job at Riverview, but she's taken with the area and its beauty.

Sherman taught leadership at the Pacific Coast Banking School, a graduate-level banking program based in Bellevue. That appealed to Riverview's board.

"She was recognized as a leader," Graham said.

Graham said the board hopes Sherman will help grow the century-old company, conversations that are already in the works.

"It's been kind of a whirlwind," Graham said.

Banking has been a historically male-dominated industry, making Sherman's leadership at Riverview a rarity.

More than half of U.S. bank employees are now women, according to the American Bankers Association. But just 7.5 percent of banks are led by women CEOs.

Sherman said women in executive banking positions can have a nice balance of entrepreneurial spirit but also focus on people. (She emphasized that she knows male executives who are also very people-oriented.)

Sherman sees more women in executive banking positions now than she did early on in her career.

"But we still have work to do," she said.

Banking is an evolving industry, especially with the introduction of artificial intelligence. Sherman is especially excited about the evolution of open banking, which allows sharing of financial data between banks and third parties.

Sherman hopes leaders in her company mentor the future generation of the bank's leaders, just like how she was mentored in those early days in Utah.

"I know that results come through people," she said.

# Community Benefits Via the Port

by **PORT OF VANCOUVER USA**

**T**his community benefits profoundly from global trade via the Port of Vancouver USA.

For instance: did you know we're the continent's largest hub for Subarus, the U.S. West Coast's major entryway for wind energy components and a major gateway for America's wheat growers?

With 89% of our marine activity focused on exports, we're a vital hub for American producers.

Trade activities here generate more than \$87 million in taxes yearly that fund police protection, firefighters and schools. Port activity supports nearly 20,000 regional jobs.

Consequently, talk of trade disruptions gets our attention.

The past two presidential administrations veered sharply from many decades of "free trade" policies, and more protectionism is coming.

Here are major policy areas we're watching.

**Tariffs.** The president can levy these taxes on imports. In 2018, for example, tariffs were put on most steel imports – a commodity frequently moved on the Columbia River. These tariffs remain largely intact.

**Retaliatory tariffs.** China responded to U.S. tariffs on its goods by slapping retaliatory tariffs on American-grown



soybeans – another commodity handled here. However, the results weren't necessarily straightforward. While Chinese markets shrunk, others opened. Communities will always need food, meaning opportunities often shift rather than disappear.

**Quotas.** A president can permit a specific level of imports before imposing tariffs.

Industrial policy. Recent examples are the CHIPS Act that provided lucrative tax incentives for U.S.-based electronic chip

manufacturing, and a federal infrastructure law requiring U.S.-made materials in its projects.

While there's no doubt the port feels the impacts of such policies, we've shaped a proactive strategy with a goal of maintaining economic benefits for this region regardless of global trade fluctuations.

An example: from high quality wheat to copper concentrate, we pursue "building block" commodities that retain a steady demand. This provides some insulation from the sharpest trade disruptions.

We also diversify our lines of business. From maritime trade, to the port's 50 tenant businesses, to our Terminal 1 waterfront development, having a mix of businesses and commodities adds stability to the jobs and benefits we generate.

While trade impacts will certainly be felt here, I'm optimistic about our long-term future. The port will continue a forward-leaning posture in the coming year. The community will continue seeing vertical progress at Terminal 1, and we'll upgrade our marine terminals to add soda ash to our commodity mix in 2026.

This port has generated economic benefits for the Vancouver community for 113 years, and we'll continue to plan, adjust and act so these continue for generations to come.

## Port of Vancouver USA plays a key role in our local and regional economy.

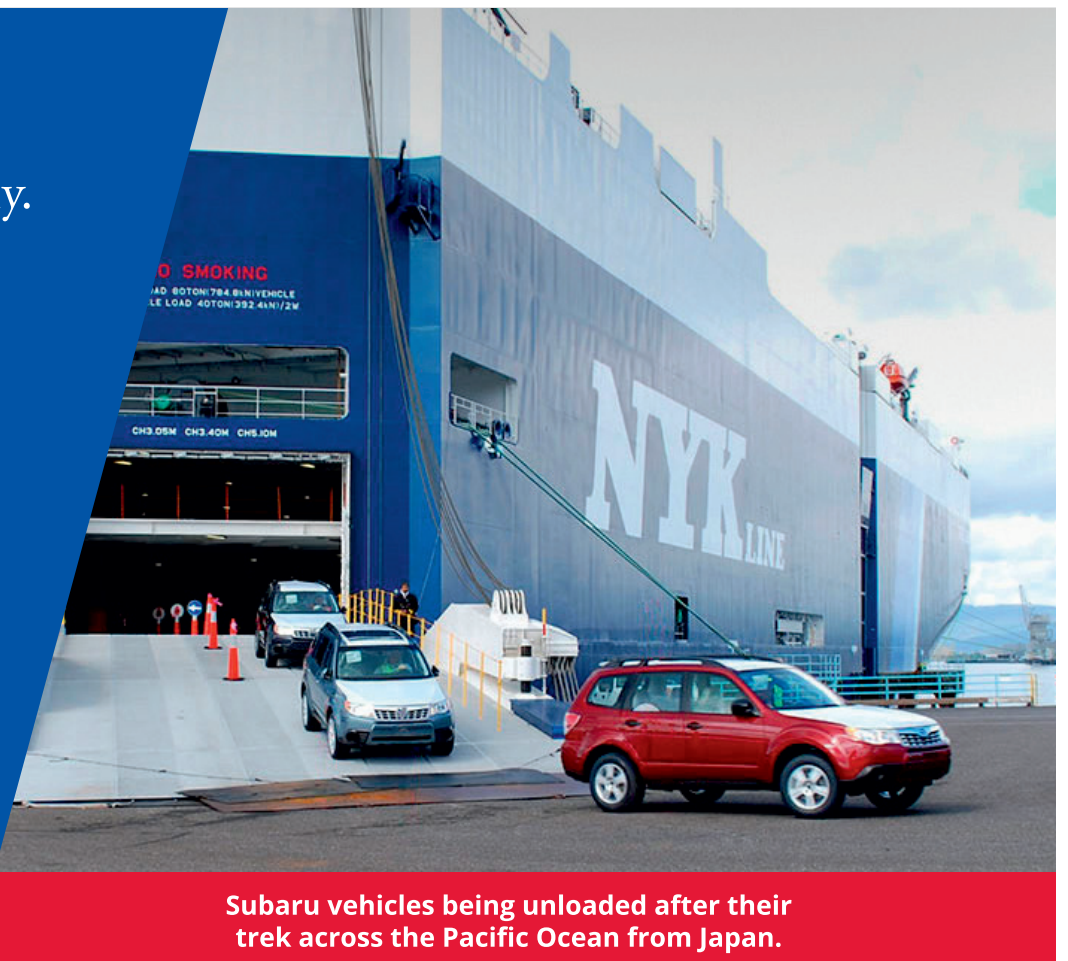
**By making targeted investments in our facilities we attract jobs and economic development opportunities.**

The port's marine and industrial activities support nearly 20,000 jobs and provide \$2.9 billion in economic benefits to the region. The positive impacts of these benefits ripple throughout Southwest Washington.

Find out why your business should land at the Port of Vancouver.

Contact Chrissy Lyons and Steve Mickelson at 360-693-3611 or [portvanusa.com](http://portvanusa.com)

 Port of Vancouver USA



Subaru vehicles being unloaded after their trek across the Pacific Ocean from Japan.

## SPONSORED CONTENT

# PeaceHealth Southwest Meeting Community Needs

by PEACEHEALTH

PeaceHealth has a deep history dating back to the pioneers who founded Clark County. Among them was a visionary nun, Mother Joseph, who established the first hospital in the Pacific Northwest in Vancouver. Since its founding as St. Joseph Hospital more than 160 years ago, PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center has continuously provided exceptional care. As the community has grown, so have we. Today, we are the county's largest employer and a key driver of the region's economy.

With the population expected to grow by as much as 20,000 in the next 20 years, we expect to not only continue being one of the largest employers attracting and retaining a quality workforce but also maintain our position as one of the key providers of healthcare in the county. In the past year alone, PeaceHealth has taken key actions to prepare for that growth.

## MORE CARE OPTIONS CLOSER TO HOME

In late 2024, we purchased four clinics from Providence, expanding our primary care, walk-in care, imaging and outpatient rehabilitation services. Around 100 clinicians and caregivers chose to stay at their clinics and join PeaceHealth. By transitioning these care sites to PeaceHealth, patients in Clark County gain increased access to a full spectrum of primary, specialty and hospital care services closer to home.

## EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ONE OF THE BUSIEST ON THE WEST COAST

To meet the growing demand of 80,000 patient visits yearly, PeaceHealth opened Phase I of our newly expanded Emergency Department, along with our Community Health Hub that provides patients direct access to essential social services. The new LEED-certified facility doubled the size of

the Emergency Department, which serves as the only Level II trauma center in Southwest Washington. Phase II of the project is expected to be completed in 2026.

## BABY BOOMER EXPANSION

In the next five years, we expect those ages 65 and older to grow by 24%. To meet this need, we are building, in partnership with LifePoint Rehabilitation, a 50-bed inpatient rehabilitation facility. The stand-alone facility will address market demand and more than triple the number of current rehabilitation patients we can care for, helping ensure that patients who must currently seek care out of the area can receive it locally.

The heart of our Mission is providing healthcare in our community to all who need it. We remain committed to providing world-class care locally while keeping our strategic eyes on the future and growing to meet changing demands.

# Here for healing

Committed to your health and well-being.

[peacehealth.org](https://peacehealth.org)



# Clark College Trains Workforce Today and for Tomorrow

by CLARK COLLEGE

For over 90 years, Clark College has prepared generations of skilled workers to meet the needs of Southwest Washington's industries. Through programs in automotive, healthcare, education, welding, and more, the College continues to play a vital role in strengthening the local economy and supporting a thriving community.

Education is the cornerstone of economic vitality, regardless of the state of the economy. An educated workforce elevates the economic prospects of individuals, communities, and the nation as a whole.

In a country where student loan debt ranks as the second-highest personal debt after mortgages, community colleges offer exceptional value and a practical alternative. With intentionally designed career-connected learning paths, students can earn an associate's degree in just two years — graduating with little to no student debt, and ready to step into a living-wage job in their chosen fields.

Clark College remains attuned to the needs of our community, offering programs for every type of student from adult basic education, Running Start classes for high schoolers, to continuing education, technical training, and workforce development. These are augmented with bachelor's degrees, seamless pathways to four-year universities, and certificates for those pursuing careers in the trades.

Clark is committed to collaborating with employers to create opportunities for our students to gain training in high-demand fields. In recent years, Clark has expanded its offerings to include Bachelor of Applied Science degrees in Management, Cybersecurity, Dental Hygiene, Teacher Education and Human Services. To further bolster access to education, Clark College Foundation has provided over \$89 million in support of the college over the past 50 years.

Starting this fall, the college will introduce a bachelor's degree in Computer Science. We will also offer an associate's degree in Surgical Technology, further enhancing Clark's

robust allied health programs which already include nursing, dental hygiene, pharmacy technician, phlebotomy, and more. Clark's new Boschma Farms campus in Ridgefield will 1933 Fort Vancouver Way | Vancouver, WA 98663-3598 | 360-699-6398 | [www.clark.edu](http://www.clark.edu) open this year, focusing on the new advanced manufacturing program currently under development.

Regardless of shifting federal policies or economic trends, we remain steadfast in our belief in the transformative power of education. At Clark, our mission is to meet individuals right where they are, and equipping them to develop the education, skills and tools to achieve their career and life goals — a mission that ultimately uplifts our entire community.

"The power of education is limited only by our willingness to invest and engage with it," said Dr. William 'Terry' Brown, Clark's Vice President of Instruction. "Believe in the power of education, both as our inheritance from those who came before us, and as our legacy to those who come after. It's our responsibility to preserve and protect it."



## There is Opportunity for You at Clark College!

### Engage

Join us for exciting cultural events, concerts, art exhibitions, and theater performances happening throughout the year.

### Discover

Our academic programs help you achieve your career goals with an associate or bachelor's degree, or a short-term certificate.

### Empower

From ESL courses to high school equivalency programs to a wide range of community education classes you can grow personally and professionally.

### Explore

Visit us at [www.clark.edu](http://www.clark.edu) or come to campus to learn more about events, programs, and how to get started as a student at Clark.





## ALLIANT IS THE NATION'S LEADING SPECIALTY BROKER

In the face of increasing complexity, our approach is simple: hire the best people and invest extensively in the industries and clients we serve. We operate through one national platform, so clients have access to our resources and expertise – regardless of where the resource is located – to capitalize on new opportunities to grow and protect their organizations.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US AT (360) 695-3301



The More Rewarding Way to Manage Risk

# Local Economist's View



**Mike Wilkerson**

Partner and Director of Economic Research, ECONorthwest

by **WILL CAMPBELL**

The morning before the Economic Forecast, Mike Wilkerson will have finished a presentation to Oregon Metro, the government agency that is "a regional government responsible for managing issues that cross city and county lines," according to the Oregon Secretary of State.

During his presentation to Metro, he will discuss a report that

highlights the Portland-metro area's state of the economy. In short, it's not as good as Clark County's

"The Oregon side is struggling on almost every single metric," he said, which includes population growth and jobs. "Clark County is doing better or exceptional on all them."

Multnomah and Washington counties both lost jobs in the past 12 months, and Clark County gained and has been gaining them.

Housing is also doing better here than in Portland. Wilkerson mentioned the mixed-use, seven-story apartment complex project on the downtown Vancouver block bordered by 12th and 13th streets and Main Street and Broadway, formerly occupied by Vancouver Funeral Chapel and two other commercial buildings.

"The thought of that happening in Portland right now is

laughable and nowhere plausible," he said.

There are more positives about our area he's watching. Population migration from Portland to Vancouver is also something he's watching. He notices strong growth in most industries in Clark County. He is working with the City of Vancouver on the county's Comprehensive Growth

Management Plan, which will affect where growth and density happens what it looks like.

Wilkerson also has thoughts on the rent control bills going through the state legislature right now, and he's heard that some form of it is likely to pass. That's a topic he may discuss at during the panel at the Economic Forecast.



AMANDA COWAN/The Columbian

**Pahlisch Commercial is building a seven-story building on 12th Street and Main Street in downtown Vancouver.**



## 50 Years of Service, Growth and Stability



Portland International Airport, Keene Studio

In 2025, Ferguson Wellman celebrates 50 years. Our journey has always been defined by our mission: investment excellence - lifelong relationships. The newly renovated main terminal of Portland International Airport was the perfect setting to capture this moment in our history. It reminds us that as we navigate the highs and lows of the capital markets we endeavor to create meaningful connections with clients and professional partners.

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