



Board of County Commissioners

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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lewis County launching paperless permitting process Dec. 1

Chehalis, WA – Lewis County is preparing to launch a new paperless permitting system designed to improve efficiency, accessibility and transparency in how residents apply for and track permits.

Beginning Dec. 1, the public will be able to submit permit applications and monitor their status through a new online portal. The system is intended to streamline the permitting process, reduce paperwork and make services more convenient for customers.

To support the transition, staff from Community Development, Public Works and Public Health & Social Services will undergo training on the new platform. As a result, Community Development's Permit Center (125 N.W. Chehalis Ave., Chehalis) will be closed from 8 a.m. to noon Nov. 19, and no building inspections or site visits will occur that morning.

"While we have to pause some services to train staff – and that will cause disruptions for people – training is critical to a smooth transition," said Community Development Director Mindy Brooks. "Even with training, getting proficient with the new software will take some time. We hope everyone will be kind and patient as we learn together."

The county's new permitting system, SmartGov, is funded by a "Paper to Digital" grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce. SmartGov is widely used by counties and cities across Washington and offers a more intuitive and efficient customer experience.

"SmartGov is a significant improvement over the old software," said Brad Clark, Community Development's lead on the transition. "Instead of driving to Chehalis to submit a permit application for a new home or even a deck, customers will be able to do it online from anywhere. This should save people a lot of time."

Starting Dec. 1, Lewis County will no longer accept paper permit materials. The application portal will be available at <https://lewiscountywa.gov/departments/community-development/>. Applicants will need to create an online account before submitting permit requests.

The Permit Center will remain open for in-person assistance, and Permit Technicians will be available to help customers navigate the new system. For questions, contact the Permit Center at 360-740-1146 or permitcenter@lewiscountywa.gov.

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