



Board of County Commissioners

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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lewis County, Washington – Dec. 1, 2025

County plans lunch-and-learn events for new paperless permit process

CHEHALIS, WASH. – Starting today (Dec. 1) the public can apply for development permits, request building inspections and check the status of permits online through the county's new SmartGov portal at <https://lewiscountywa.gov/departments/community-development/>.

In an effort to help the public learn how to use the new software, Community Development staff has posted how-to guides and video tutorials on the permit webpage and will host two live “lunch-and-learn” training sessions, during which participants are invited to bring a snack or sack lunch and learn the basics about the new paperless permitting process. Participants can attend the live “lunch-and-learn” training in person or virtually via Teams, and they can choose between two dates: noon to 1 p.m. Dec. 17, 2025, or noon to 1 p.m. Jan. 14, 2026.

The “lunch-and-learn” training events will take place in the Community Development Hearings Room at 125 NW Chehalis Ave. in Chehalis. To receive the Teams link for virtual attendance, please email Bradley Clark, software transition lead, at bradley.clark@lewiscountywa.gov. The link will be sent two days before the meeting.

“This is a big change for the public and staff. It will take a little while for everyone to become comfortable using the new software,” said Mindy Brooks, Director of Community Development. “But overall, the online portal will save our customers a lot of time because they won’t have to come to Chehalis to apply for permits.”

The new software is funded by a Paper-to-Digital grant from the Department of Commerce. The long-term goal is to go completely paperless.

“We understand that may not work for all our customers right away. If you come into the Permit Center, we will help you set up an account and apply for a permit. We will scan your application materials to upload with the application,” Brooks said. “Going paperless helps the County with records retention because all materials associated with a permit are saved together in a cloud-based database. An added benefit is that anyone will be able to look up permit history on a property through the online portal.”

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County Manager

Sean Swope
First District

Lindsey R. Pollock, DVM
Second District

Scott Brummer
Third District

Rieva Lester
Clerk of the Board

In 2025, Lewis County processed 2,778 development permits, ranging from adding a deck to an existing house to building a new home to creating new subdivisions. Prior to the new software, all permit applicants had to visit the Permit Center in Chehalis in person. Lewis County measures 90 miles in length, which means applicants from East County could spend more than two hours driving to apply for those development permits.

With today's launch, 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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