

THE *Confluence*



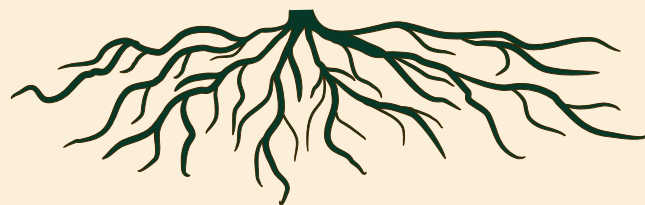
PULSES ON THE PRAIRIE

Port of **LEWISTON**

OCTOBER
2026

Herman Farms, Genesee. Photo by
Etched in Stone Media.

Pulses-



Crops with Deep Roots

Across the rolling hills of the Palouse and Camas Prairie, some of the region's smallest crops are making a significant impact on local agriculture, trade, and economy.

In a region known for golden wheat fields and grain-laden ports, chickpeas, dry peas, lentils, and dry beans – collectively known as pulses – are an integral part of the agricultural backbone. From boosting the economy to enriching the soils, pulses are the lesser known commodity that pays dividends to farmers.

"We export pulses to 40 different countries and across the United States," said Shawn O'Connell, CEO of Pacific Northwest Farmers Cooperative, a 1,200-member collective of growers. "We have the right soil, the right conditions."

Chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, are the most common pulse crop grown in the region, followed by lentils. While much of the area's crop is sent overseas, those who enjoy hummus can take satisfaction in knowing that Sabra hummus, sold in grocery stores nationwide, sources 100% of its chickpeas from the Pacific Northwest.

"There's definitely a strong overseas market," said O'Connell. "But with a growing vegetarian population, there is more call for plant-based meat-substitutes, and pulses are the basis for most of those."

Pulses are more than just an additional crop and avenue for revenue; one of their greatest advantages lies beneath the ground. An important part of farming is crop rotation—growing different types of crops in a planned sequence. Pulses are vital because their roots help to bring more nitrogen into the soil, enriching it naturally.

"It also breaks up the disease cycle," added O'Connell. "Mother Nature is a big help. We just take advantage of the benefits offered."

Still, harvesting is the ultimate goal for any crop, and bringing pulses in from the fields is a crucial step in their journey to market. In the Palouse region, the process from harvest to export involves a complex interplay of logistics, capacity, workforce, and market price.

"I've seen a lot of changes over the years," said O'Connell, who has been involved in PNW farming since 1992. "Our focus is creating the most reliable market access for our members." Prior to 2015 when labor issues halted container traffic on the rivers, barging was the most



A combine harvests chickpeas for Herman Farms in Genesee. Photo by Christopher Stone, Etched in Stone Media.

efficient way to get pulses to market. Now, farmers use a combination of rail and truck.

"Rail is complicated, and truck has completely different challenges," said O'Connell. "It's constantly changing, and we have to consider all avenues to get the most efficient method for our members."

Rail is preferred due to cost efficiency. To convert one rail car headed to Richmond, Virginia (home to Sabra's headquarters) would require five semitrucks, at a cost difference of \$13,000 on rail to nearly \$35,000 for truck. Rail's relative efficiency makes it worth the effort of managing relationships with Class 1 rail companies (Union Pacific and BNSF), limited capacity at elevators and ports, and an ever-changing market. Trucks are still a key component, largely used to bridge the gap between farms, short-line rail, and coastal ports.

It sounds complicated because it is, but to O'Connell, it's just farming.

"We are used to change, juggling everything from planting through harvest," he said. "You start with a healthy seed, and see it through to export. It's all part of producing the best product, and getting the best return for our members."

If Barging Goes Away, the Freight Remains

"Barging is first, and it's not even close."

- For O'Connell, there's no question which mode works best for moving large volumes of agricultural commodities. Rail comes second. Trucking comes third. Before container traffic stopped due to labor issues in 2015, it was the preferred way for pulses as well. And if the Lower Snake River Dams are breached and barging disappears, the freight won't disappear with it.

Trucking: Already Stretched

- Driver shortages already limit trucking capacity—even with barges carrying a large share of the region's wheat. Swift Transportation operates a truck-driving school at the Port, while PNW Co-op has purchased its own fleet to address trucking availability and costs. But trucks are only

useful if someone can drive them. "The easy part is buying the trucks," O'Connell says.

Rail: More than Adding Cars

- Absorbing significantly more agricultural freight would require more than additional railcars, expanded track capacity, infrastructure improvements and a larger workforce.

Three Modes Become Two

- Today, barge, rail and truck provide competing options for moving agricultural products. Eliminating one would place more pressure on the remaining two and reduce competition for shippers, potentially driving transportation costs higher. For O'Connell, replacing the capacity provided by barging comes down to one conclusion: "It's just not feasible."

LIGHTS, CAMERA ... ACTION!



Recently the Port of Lewiston turned into a TV set as a film crew recorded segments for the educational series "Now We Know!" airing on CNBC.

Now We Know! isn't your average TV show, it's educational programming that aims to inform about fascinating industries and organizations around the country. The show is aired on CNBC and is hosted by movie star Steve Guttenberg.

The Port called out its "A Team" to serve as interview subjects, including staff, Port Commission President Joe Anderson (pictured left), Kristin Meira from American Cruise Lines, and Jessi McLean from G&E Spa Essentials, a Port incubator program success story.

The film crew included local photographer Christopher Stone of Etched in Stone Media, and filmed spots at Lewis-Clark Terminal, the main dock, and the cruise boat dock. The Port episode of Now We Know! will air in the new season, which starts in January.



Thank you!

A Fond Farewell to Mike Thomason

At the Port of Lewiston, we express our sincere gratitude to Commissioner Mike Thomason, who retired on July 31.

During his remarkable 30-year career at Avista Utilities, Mike contributed to numerous boards that benefited his community, a commitment he maintained even after his retirement in 2012.

In 2013, he was appointed to the Port of Lewiston Commission, where he represented the Port on the boards of Valley Vision and the LC Valley Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, he served as the Port Commission President for several years.

We honor Mike for his unwavering dedication, not only to the Port but also to the many committees and groups he has been involved with. As his Port team, we will truly miss his grace and kindness. Wishing you all the best in your next chapter, Mike.

The Eddy



Scott Corbitt
Port of Lewiston
Executive Director

When someone from out of town walks into a room full of locals and calls their community an "arm pit," the expectations for meaningful discussion are low. Yet a representative of Idaho Rivers United – a leading proponent of breaching our Lower Snake River dams – did just that, insulting a room full of Valley residents without offering any relevant facts to support their claim that breaching would improve the LC Valley's economy.

The old lawyer's adage says you can find an expert to say whatever you want; all you have to do is pay them. This certainly applies to the

Idaho Rivers United report, drafted by a paid consultant from out of state. The problem for this consultant? The data does not support the customer's desired conclusion. So, what then? You find creative ways to make the numbers look better. These creative ways are almost laughable if the issue was not so serious.

- **Statement:** The LC Valley is not growing as fast as other parts of Idaho. **Comparison:** They compared Lewiston to Boise area and Coeur d'Alene, two of the fastest growing communities in the Nation.
- **Statement:** The dams only impact 7% of the jobs/companies in the region. **Omission:** The report states the following industries have no connection to the rivers: manufacturing, government, hospitality, real estate, retail, airport, etc.
- **Statement:** Other dam removal projects prove that economies improve after dam removal. **Comparison:** The study used dams that were obsolete, shut down, without purpose, and tiny. They cited the removal of Dillon Diversion Dam as similar to removing an LSRD despite that tiny dam having no similarities at all.
- **Statement:** Solar and wind can make up the difference with power needs. **Omission:** The fact that the region will need 9 gigawatts of power by 2030 and solar/wind development will come nowhere near that number, even with emergency production.

So why does an advocacy group come to the Valley so wildly unprepared to answer these tough questions?

- **The facts do not actually matter to them.** Their job is to raise money on the backs of reports like this. They target donors in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles who don't care about facts or this community. They rely on emotion, not facts.
- **The issue for them is not the people of LC Valley, Ground Zero for this breaching issue.** Their focus is to secure more water for rafting and guiding. While I enjoy riding the river as much as anyone, to say that getting new recreational opportunities is the equal of our livelihoods, our economy, our jobs, our lives is both selfish and immature.

We cannot stop groups like this from drafting a factually corrupt report like this. What we can do is speak out and spread the facts and data that counter it. Please do not be complacent in thinking "breaching will never happen" as the breachers pour millions of dollars into their misinformation campaign to sway both the public and Congress. Dig a little deeper and then let your voice be heard. This Valley may be an arm pit to Idaho Rivers United, but to us this is our glorious home.



Family First

From Home Shop to Building a Legacy

This family-centric approach aligns perfectly with their business model, catering to their skills while being family-friendly. For a couple with five children aged ten and under—one born this month—this arrangement is a true blessing.

"This allows my wife to pursue something she enjoys while being a mom," Braeden explained. "If she needs to attend to one of the kids, I can look after the others here."

Beyond custom apparel, War Buffalo offers laser engraving on insulated tumblers and other items and proudly serves as a local HydroJug dealer. Through screen printing, embroidery and laser engraving, the company helps customers personalize products for their businesses, special events and everyday use.

Recognizing a need for cowboy hat services in the valley, Braeden traveled to Colorado to become certified in cowboy hat shaping. He brought that traditional craft back to the community, offering custom shaping, cleaning and reshaping.

"If we don't have it, we can find it," Hammon said. "We will take care of you and treat you like family."

Hammon and his wife believe every customer deserves the same personal attention, regardless of order size or budget. With no minimum order requirement, customers can purchase a single custom item or place a bulk order and receive the same care and service. That flexibility is especially helpful for small businesses that may not need—or have the budget for—a dozen items at a time.

"We give our customers gear they're proud to wear, what they will use, and what they need," he said, noting his deep appreciation for the support of other local businesses and organizations. "It's great to go to events in town and see shirts and hats we've created."

The ultimate goal is for Hammon to dedicate himself full-time to this venture and witness its continued growth, both as a sole income and a legacy for his family. "I want to focus on this business and expand it further," he said. "I want to leave something meaningful for my kids."

Braeden Hammon thrives in the spacious suite at the Port's Seaport Business Center. There's ample room for his inventory, screen printing machine, workbenches, and laser engraving materials, with just enough space left for a bit of karate practice or a quick nap for his children.

"We began in our home shop, and before long, we were filling our garage, then a bedroom, and even spilling out onto the driveway," shared Hammon, who co-owns War Buffalo & Co. with his wife, Julianne.

Launched in April 2022, their business had humble beginnings driven by Hammon's passion as a United States Marine Corps veteran who loves hats. The couple started crafting them themselves, adding custom, laser-engraved leather patches to each. There was some trial and error, but soon they were creating products they were proud of.

"At first, we made them for ourselves and then for family," said Hammon. "Before we knew it, we were overflowing from our shop into our garage and an extra bedroom."

As War Buffalo expanded its offerings to include a full range of apparel, including hats, t-shirts and sweatshirts, they knew a move was needed. Running a business out of a private home was not a long-term plan. When he heard of the open spot at the Port, he knew it was meant to be.

"I love the open space - there's even enough room for my kids to practice karate," he quipped, gesturing to a corner. "Having a store front, a place on Google Maps, was something we needed."

Check out War Buffalo's
Website for more at
warbuffalocompany.com



War Buffalo
& Co.

Port of LEWISTON

IDAHO'S SEAPORT

OUR VISION

The Port of Lewiston is a respected leader contributing to the region's economic growth and vitality: a model of excellence for transportation, international trade, and job creation.

COMMISSIONERS



Pictured left to right are: **Joseph Anderson**, President; **Denise Metz**, Secretary/Treasurer; and **Michelle Bly**

OUR TEAM

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Welcome Commissioner Michelle Bly!

The Port of Lewiston is pleased to announce the appointment of Michelle Bly to fill the remaining term of former Commissioner Mike Thomason, who retired at the end of July.

At special Commission meeting on August 19, Commissioners Joseph Anderson and Denise Metz both voted to appoint Bly to the District 1 Commission seat.

"Michelle will be a fantastic asset to the Commission as we navigate this time of significant growth and expansion," said Anderson. "Her background in community development, coupled with her evident passion for the Lewis-Clark Valley, makes her the perfect partner as we serve the citizens of Nez Perce County."

Bly has a master's degree in Community and Economic Development and is both a Certified Professional Community and Economic Developer and a Certified Planner. She has more than 30 years of experience working with rural communities on infrastructure projects, and has served on the boards of several community organizations including Valley Vision, the Lewis-Clark Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Lewis-Clark Valley.

"I am so honored to have been chosen from a very qualified group of candidates," said Bly. "With my background in community development, I am passionate about fostering the success and growth of communities. I am excited about how the Port is expanding its reach, and I look forward to contributing to that growth and enthusiasm."

Bly has lived in the Valley with her husband, Mike, for more than 30 years. In her spare time, she enjoys feeding the animals that visit her home, driving around town in her 1928 Model A pickup, and baking her famous Blue Ribbon chocolate chip cookies.



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