

# Snohomish County and Lynnwood celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, honoring Latino leaders and decades of significant cultural contributions



Snohomish County Council members along with community members recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month on September 10, honoring Latino leaders for their cultural contributions and community impact. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By MARIO LOTMORE

**EVERETT**—Snohomish County recognized Hispanic Heritage Month starting with the City of Lynnwood on September 8, followed by Snohomish County on September 10.

Dr. Julieta Altamirano-Crosby join by the Deputy Consul Gerardo Javier Guiza Vargas from the Consulate of Mexico in Seattle and Honorary Consul of Spain, Luis Fernando Esteban, along

with dozens on members of the Latin descent were presented with a Resolution by the Snohomish County Council recognizing September 15 through October 15 as Hispanic Heritage Month.

“As an immigrant myself, I carry a story of resilience and hope, a story shared by many of you,” said Dr. Altamirano-Crosby who is also the first Latina elected as Snohomish PUD Commissioner. “I also carry the love and sacrifices of my parents, grand-

parents, and ancestors, whose values of family, hard work, and service continue to guide me. This celebration is not only about remembering where we come from, but also about honoring what we are building together: a future that is inclusive, equitable, and full of opportunities for the next generation.”

Paula Madrigal (cello) and Theo Benson (violin) of Orquesta Northwest

Continued **PAGE 12**

## WA State Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu to retire

**OLYMPIA**—Washington State Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu announced her retirement, effective December 31, 2025, concluding a judicial career spanning over 25 years.

“Throughout her time on the bench, Justice Yu has demonstrated her commitment to respect, dignity and fairness for all,” Governor Bob Ferguson released in a statement. “As the first in

her family to go to college — and as the first LGBTQ+ justice, the first Asian-American justice and the first Latina-American justice on the high court — she brought her perspective to bear in seeking to make our court system more accessible, equitable and effective. She understands and appreciates the value of diverse perspectives in our state courts, and she is an excellent mentor and

role model for newer attorneys. Her legacy is in bending Washington state further toward justice.”

Born and raised in Chicago’s Bridgeport neighborhood by immigrant parents from Mexico and China, Justice Yu was the first in her family to graduate from college. She earned a B.A. from Dominican University, an M.A. in Religious Studies from Mundelein College



Washington State Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu. Source: Retain Justice Mary Yu campaign website.

of Loyola University, and a J.D. from the

Continued **PAGE 5**

## Federal Reserve Board approves 0.25-point rate cut

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—The Federal Reserve Board on Wednesday, September 17, cut its benchmark overnight lending rate by 0.25 percentage points to a range of 4%-4.25%, in an 11-1 vote. The move, driven by growing U.S. labor market concerns, also signals two additional cuts before year-end.

“The Committee decided to lower the target range for the federal funds rate by 1/4 percentage point to 4 to 4-1/4 percent,” the Fed released in a statement.

The Federal Reserve notes that U.S. economic growth slowed in the first half of 2025, with job gains moderating, unemployment ticking up, and inflation rising to elevated levels. Amid heightened uncertainty and increased downside risks to employment, the Board lowered the rate to support maximum employment and 2% inflation goals.

Voting for the monetary policy action were Jerome H. Powell, Chair; John C. Williams, Vice Chair; Michael S. Barr; Michelle W. Bowman; Susan M. Collins; Lisa D. Cook; Austan D. Goolsbee; Philip N. Jefferson; Alberto G. Musalem; Jeffrey R. Schmid; and Christopher J. Waller. Voting against the 0.25 percent rate cut was Stephen I. Miran, who preferred to lower the target range for the federal funds rate by 1/2 percentage point at this meeting.

Today’s vote comes a day after a split three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled the firing of Lisa Cook, a Federal Reserve Governor, by President Donald J Trump in August 2025, illegal, affirming a lower court’s decision. The majority held that Cook was entitled to due process before removal, rejecting Trump’s claims of incompetence. The Trump administration can appeal their decision to the Supreme Court.

Cook was fired By Trump citing an investigation into pre-nomination mortgage fraud. Critics called the move politically motivated, as Cook was a President Joe Biden appointee and dovish on rates. Cook did participate in today’s vote.

How does a Fed cut impact me?

Continued **PAGE 2**

# DOJ requests sensitive information on WA voters from Secretary of State but Steve Hobbs refuses

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**OLYMPIA**—On Monday, September 8, the Washington State Secretary of State’s Office received a letter from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) requesting a full copy of the Washington state voter registration data within 14 days. Washington Secretary of State Steve Hobbs, and his office, assessed the request and ultimately decided they would not release the information until the DOJ specified what they plan to do with the data.

This request, which was signed by Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon, specified that the copy must include sensitive information including: the registrant’s full name, date of birth, residential address, and state driver’s license number or the last four digits of the registrant’s Social Security number.

Under Washington state law, full date of birth, driver’s license number, and the last four digits of an individual’s Social Security number are protected information. These are not included in the publicly available voter registration database.

Similar requests went out to at least 22 other states across the U.S. including Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, and Wisconsin.

It’s unclear whether other states not listed also received requests or, if not, why some states were addressed, and others were not.

SOS Hobbs said he will respond to the DOJ officially once he’s had the opportunity to fully assess the information while working with stakeholders, and ensuring his response meets both state and federal requirements.

“As Washington’s chief election official, it is my responsibility to ensure the elec-

tion process is safe, secure, and transparent,” Secretary of State Steve Hobbs said. “This includes protecting Washingtonians’ voter information and privacy. I will work with all stakeholders to ensure we maintain both.

Hobbs added that his office prioritizes the integrity of Washington’s elections while ensuring the security and privacy of voter information.

Washington State Republican Party Chair Jim Walsch stood in support of the request Wednesday, September 10, taking to X (formerly Twitter) to say the letter has Hobbs, and Washington State Governor Bob Ferguson “lawyering up faster than a Hilltop gangbanger with a stolen Glock.”

“You’ve got less than 14 days, guys. I believe Justice will prevail,” wrote Walsh.

On March 25, 2025, President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order titled “Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections.” Several provisions of this order aim to enhance existing laws prohibiting foreign nationals from participating in elections.

Also, withing that executive order it called for a comprehensive review of state voter registration rolls, to verify eligibility and U.S. citizenship.

The executive order also seeks to stop the counting of mail-in and absentee ballots as well as strengthen the enforcement of election laws and prosecution for election-related crimes.

Trump’s executive order effectively revoked a similar executive order signed by President Joe Biden in 2021 which promoted access to voting.

You must be a U.S. citizen to be eligible to vote in Washington state voters are required to be a U.S. citizen by law.

Washington’s voter registration process requires proof of identity such as a valid Washington driver’s license number, permit, state identification card number,

or the last four digits of a Social Security number. This information is verified against records from the Washington Department of Licensing (DOL) and the Social Security Administration (SSA).

If a voter’s registration information does not match the records on file with DOL or SSA, they may be provisionally registered. However, their ballot will not be counted until they provide valid identification, according to the Secretary of State.

Trump’s executive order was met with legal challenges from 19 different states including Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

Additionally, the states of Washington and Oregon filed separate lawsuits which was heard in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington in

June. Currently litigation is still ongoing.

“American democracy has given agency to the oppressed, hope to the weary, and belief that our society can work for everyone,” said Washington Attorney General Nick Brown. “These truths appeal to most people, but not to a bully and an authoritarian. Donald Trump fears what he can’t control. He only feels safe when he has our rights under his thumb.”

These lawsuits argued that Trump’s executive order is an unconstitutional overreach of presidential power and that the authority to regulate state-run elections rests with Congress and the states themselves.

Multiple federal courts have already issued preliminary injunctions blocking key parts of the executive order, siding with these challenging states that claim the order violates the U.S. Constitution and federal laws, including the National Voter Registration Act and the Help America Vote Act.

## from page 1 RATE CUT

A Federal Reserve rate cut lowers the benchmark interest rate for financial institutions. The everyday person can expect relief on variable-rate debts like credit cards, auto loans, and adjustable-rate mortgages, as lenders pass along the lower rates. Fixed-rate loans (e.g., existing mortgages) won’t change, but new ones could become more affordable.

If you are looking to purchase or refinance a home, 30-year fixed mortgage rates, already hovering around 6.5%,

might dip slightly in the coming weeks, making homebuying or refinancing easier for first-timers or those upgrading.

However, savings accounts, CDs, and money market funds will yield less returns—potentially dropping from 4-5% to closer to 3-4% soon. If you’re relying on interest income, this could squeeze your budget.

For the broader economy, businesses may be encouraged to borrow and invest, which would lead to more hiring and wage growth, helping if you’re job hunting or want a better paying career.



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# The Hidden Economy of Homelessness: A Year Inside Washington State’s Homeless Complex

COMMENTARY



*Joe Wankelman is an accomplished leader merging military precision with corporate innovation, excelling in data analytics, machine learning, and large-scale operations. He has honed analytics at Amazon via TLG, audited start-ups at Keiretsu, championed mental health at KIKO during COVID-19, and advanced community leadership as Snohomish County Commissioner.*

*Pursuing a Master of Science in Data Analytics and Policy at Johns Hopkins University, Joe enhances data-strategy-policy intersections for impact. He seeks collaborations to leverage data for efficiency and growth in our resilient era. Let’s achieve new heights together.*

*At hour 30 in the emergency room, Daniel, Navy veteran, former submarine engineer, asks through his psychosis, “Am I a good person?” When crisis responders finally call his name, I already know what happens next. Thirty-day stay. Insurance runs out. Discharge to street. No plan.*

*I know because I’ve spent a year conducting 598 interviews throughout King and Snohomish homelessness ecosystem. What I discovered: a \$200 million machine that counts bodies, not souls. A system so fragmented that emergency services, treatment facilities, and housing programs operate in total isolation from each other.*

*This isn’t about homelessness. It’s about how we built a machine that manufactures human misery, then profits from managing it.*

THE BLACK BOX

*Fifty agencies. Fifty databases that don’t communicate. All scrambling for 128 funding sources while four organizations swallow most of the pie. Emily, 23, arrives at the ER in psychosis. That information stays trapped. HIPAA, meant to protect her, becomes the wall that kills her. Her father can’t access information that could save her life. “The privacy laws protected her right to die alone,” he tells me.*

*Three miles away, a treatment bed sits empty. The facility doesn’t know she exists. She doesn’t know it exists. The databases don’t talk.*

*She’s found naked, murdered in Seattle the next day. “HIPAA was her death sentence,” her father said.*

*“They gave her the privacy to die but not the family to live.”*

WAREHOUSE DEATHS

*“They’re mixing fentanyl with oven cleaner now,” Mike Kersey tells me. After three decades in addiction recovery, first saving his own life, then countless others, he co-founded Courage to Change with Christina Anderson to combat an epidemic that keeps finding deadlier forms.*

*Walk past any “Housing First” building and look up. See the photos taped to windows. “Ten ODs, five deaths in one week,” reports one resident of East Lake, Seattle’s flagship Housing First complex. We imported the Housing First model from New York, celebrated by Finland’s success, but stripped away the wraparound services that made it work. What remains are warehouses of neglect, where people die alone behind doors that staff rarely check, their only memorial a photograph pressed against glass.*

*At 2:47 AM, Leslie’s phone rings. Another overdose. As former DESC Building case manager, she fought for real solutions, demanded medical interventions, pushed for mental health assessments. She had to leave because DESC demanded paperwork for funding rather than connection. “You care too much,” they said. “You’re not following protocol.” The*

*protocol: document occupancy for funding, not outcomes. Dead or alive, they’re “housed,” funding secured.*

*Now she answers crisis calls on her personal phone, prohibited to enter, her clients in desperation. DESC considers her care as a threat to their model. Leslie counts them as murdered by indifference. Funding secured, the machine grinds on.*

THE MISSING MILLIONS

*In 2008, Snohomish County instituted the chemical dependency and mental health sales tax to help solve these problems. The Human Services report to County Council for last quarter shows that they allocated \$1.378 million for “contract managers,” \$638,774 for “1.9 FTE evaluators” despite there not being an unbiased evaluation report done on any of the programs since 2016. The evaluator reports directly to the person controlling all Human Services funding, a textbook conflict of interest that ensures positive reviews regardless of actual outcomes. When the person grading your performance signs your paycheck, failure becomes impossible to document. For the 25/26 fiscal year, how does the County account for \$638,774 being spent in tax dollars on less than two evaluation*

Continued PAGE 8

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# Five years ago, Lynnwood’s the House of Wisdom began in a garage with a \$300 loan

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**LYNNWOOD**—When Ahmad Hilal Abid was just 17-years old he fled his worn-torn country of Afghanistan to Edmonds, Washington, seeking a better life. Once there, he faced several challenges from language barriers, to adapting to a new culture, to learning how to navigate the U.S. systems to set himself up for a path towards success.

Abid enrolled himself in a program to learn English through Edmonds College where he met many people in a similar boat; those who had been displaced from their home countries, now struggling to know where, and how, to access resources in America.

It was then when he got the idea to form a community gathering space in his parent’s garage in 2020, inviting fellow immigrants and refugees to congregate, share resources, and assist each other in navigating the world of academics, government and nonprofit services, and the simple necessities of life. This assembly eventually became known as the House of Wisdom, now a certified nonprofit which serves 200 individuals annually in learning English, tutoring academic programs, leading workshops in programming and computer science, and even helping individuals update their resumes and apply for jobs.

“These were things I was learning at the same time. For example, I would learn how to write a resume then turn around and help them learn how to write a resume, I would learn something in school then turn around and help others learn that lesson,” Abid told the Lynnwood Times. “At that time, it was also COVID so I was faced with a lot of challenges such as social distancing and many places being shut down.”

Abid was ultimately inspired by the African proverb: “If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go further, go together.”

The House of Wisdom gets its name from the Grand Library of Baghdad in Iraq (also known as the House of Wisdom) which was the world’s largest public library during the Islamic Golden Age. It was here where scholars and scribes would gather to translate historic texts, preserve rare books and poetry, and hold intellectual discourse that eventually led to significant contributions to mathematics, philosophy, medicine, and astronomy.

The House of Wisdom was destroyed in the 13th century by a Mongol-led siege.

Nonprofits run in Abid’s blood. While still living in Afghanistan his father worked for a U.S. nonprofit to build schools after his home city of Kabul was decimated by bombing raids. Knowing the importance of nonprofit initiatives, Abid’s father granted him a \$300 loan – the starting funds used to get the project up and running.

In just five years the House of Wisdom grew from operating out of a garage with a \$300 budget to housing several



The House of Wisdom Founder and CEO Ahmad Abid standing with a faculty member during a community resource event. Photo courtesy of the House of Wisdom

facilities (at Edmonds College, Alderwood Middle School, in Lake City, and Casino Road in Everett) throughout South Snohomish County totaling 70 full-time staff members. It was certified as a 501(c)(3) in 2022.

The House of Wisdom is primarily supported by grants and donors, as well as through its many partners including the Hazel Miller Foundation, Foundation for Edmonds School District, University of Washington, Shoreline Community College, and Edmonds College.

“This is no longer just about immigrant students; it’s about all students now because we know mentorship and tutoring is not just needed for one group. All people need tutoring and many people in Lynnwood suffer from low income, so we are focusing on those underserved people,” said Abid.

Abid, just 24 years old, completed his associate’s degree from Edmonds College, focused on English and Paralegal services, and is now in his last year at the University of Washington where he studies Political Science and Law.

Through his work at the House of Wisdom, he received the Governor’s Student Civic Leadership Award (2022) and was named one of the Top Three Emerging Leaders in 2024 from Snohomish County. He has also spoken about his success in a TEDx talk.

“I was young, and I’m still young, but this has truly been a journey of transformation,” Abid told the Lynnwood Times.

Abid added that he does not want the community to depend upon the House of Wisdom, he wants to ensure they flourish independently. A proof of their success, he said, is seeing them begin as students but then go on to become tutors themselves or give back to their community in other ways.

In fact, many of Abid’s former students return to the House of Wisdom

after obtaining their degrees – to give back and become tutors themselves, he shared.

The House of Wisdom offers K-12 tutoring services in math, and K-12, all the way up to adults, in English language classes. According to Abid, students of the House of Wisdom currently have a 80-90% success rate with raising their test scores and academic performance in general.

Beyond academics, the nonprofit also prioritizes mentoring and emotional support, with mentors working closely with students to provide guidance, build self-confidence, and help them navigate challenges in both their academic and personal lives.

The House of Wisdom’s staff represent a diverse pool of different ethnic backgrounds, from Latino, to Eastern European (Ukraine, for example), to African, to Asian, to meet the community where their needs are.

“If someone comes in and they don’t speak any English, for example, and we have a staff member that speaks their language, great, but if not, we reach out to our many community part-

ners that can help them,” said Abid.

All the House of Wisdom’s services are offered free-of-charge to students and community members alike.

“One hour of tutoring usually costs \$50 to \$100. Many people, even middle class, can’t provide that much money [for tutoring for their kids], due to inflation and other challenges. This is where the House of Wisdom is stepping up and providing this service for free,” said Abid.

Those interested in enrolling in the House of Wisdom’s services, or becoming a tutor, can contact Abid by emailing: laith@houseofwisdomwa.org







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# Seattle Mariners’ Korean Heritage Night Out

By **GEORGE FTIKAS, JR.**

Korean Heritage Night was held during the Sept. 13 Seattle Mariners game versus the Los Angeles Angels. The evening was organized by the Mariners, the Greater Seattle Korean Association (GSKA), The Korea Times, and the Korean Community Service Center of Seattle. Tickets for the Korean Heritage sections completely sold out.

This Korean Heritage Night was unique in that it featured a Mariners-themed T-shirt written in “Hangul” — the Korean written language. The event was such a success that GSKA Vice President Sam Sim said that there are talks

of having a Mariners jersey in Hangul for the next heritage night.

“Seattle Mariners Korean Heritage Night was more than just a celebration of Korean culture — it was a vibrant reminder of the cultural diversity that makes our region so special,” Sim said. “It served as a unifying bridge, bringing together people of all backgrounds to share in joy, community and fun beyond any differences. Events like this show the power of sports and culture to connect us all.”

The Mariners defeated the Angels 5-3, with a standout performance from pitcher Bryan Woo, setting a new career-high of 13 strikeouts in

six innings. This win put the Mariners on an eight game win streak and made Woo the first pitcher since Félix Hernández in 2015 to reach 10 wins at T-Mobile Park. While it may happen after other Mariner home games, the crowd was heard consistently yelling “WOOOOO” as they dispersed into the streets of Seattle.

“It’s one of those things you don’t shoot for; it’s the result of doing things the right way, consistently over time,” Woo said. “These types of games just kind of develop themselves after you do it enough. But it was nice to get over the hump after sitting at nine for so long.”

With bases loaded in the fifth inning and after seven consecutive foul balls, Mariners first baseman Josh Naylor blasted a ground ball past both the A’s first and second basemen to bring home two. This hit was the 11th pitch thrown to Naylor and solidified the M’s win, though the Angels put up a fight in the 9th inning.

The evening was also Fan Appreciation Night, with the first 30,000 fans getting a \$5 Starbucks gift card. Round-trip tickets to South Korea as well as jerseys and various merchandise — many of it signed — were given out to fans based on randomly-selected seat numbers in-between innings.



Korean Heritage Night was held during the Sept. 13 Seattle Mariners game versus the Los Angeles Angels. Photos by Sam Sim

from page 2 **YU RETIREMENT**

University of Notre Dame Law School.

Before her judicial career, Yu worked in the Peace and Justice Office for the Archdiocese of Chicago, eventually becoming its director under Cardinal Joseph Bernardin. She later served as Deputy Chief of Staff to King County Prosecutor Norm Maleng and as a deputy in the Criminal and Civil Divisions.

Yu’s judicial journey began in 2000 as a trial court judge in King County Superior Court, where she presided over criminal, civil, juvenile, and family law cases, including hundreds of adoptions.

She was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2014 and elected in 2014, then successfully re-elected in 2016 and 2022.

On the Supreme Court, Justice Yu co-chaired the Minority and Justice Commission, chaired the Public Trust and Confidence Committee, and mentored countless young attorneys and students. Her dedication to mentorship extended to her 17-year role as a judge for the

Seattle Girls’ School Mock Trials and her service as Jurist in Residence at Seattle University School of Law.

Justice Yu’s commitment to public service earned her numerous accolades, including the 2025 Anshei Ma’aseh Award of Distinction, the 2024 “Woman of Influence” Award from the Puget Sound Business Journal, and the 2022 Loren Miller Bar Association Lifetime Achievement Award, among others.

In 2021, Seattle University School of Law established the Justice Mary I. Yu Endowed Scholarship Fund in her honor, recognizing her contributions to legal education and diversity.

Yu officiated Washington’s first same-sex marriages in 2012, a move that earned her an appearance on the Jimmy Kimmel Show.

On December 9, 2012, by then-King County Superior Court Judge Mary Yu, Sarah and Emily Cofer were the first gay couple to be legally married in Washington state at the King County Courthouse in Seattle at 12:01 a.m.

“The success of the marriage equality

movement stunned even its advocates at the time,” Secretary of State Steve Hobbs said. “The transformation from ‘outlaws to in-laws’ was one of the swiftest turnarounds in U.S. civil rights history. I am honored to have voted in support of marriage equality as a State Senator in 2012, and I am proud our state was a trailblazer in the national movement toward same-sex marriage recognition.”

As Yu prepares to step down, Governor Ferguson has begun the process to

appoint a successor by December 1, 2025.



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# Niko Battle booted from ballot, Luis Burbano takes his place

By MARIO LOTMORE

**EVERETT**—Snohomish County Superior Court Judge Richard Okrent ruled on Tuesday, September 9, that Everett City Council District 4 candidate Niko Battle, who won the Primary Election, did not provide sufficient evidence to prove he is a resident of District 4. Battle’s name will now be removed from the General Election ballot in favor of third place finisher Luis Burbano. Battle was informed of his right to appeal.

“I don’t see any evidence here that supports the claim that you are living in District 4, city of Everett,” said Judge Okrent. “Therefore, I’m rendering judgment in favor of Mr. Demas.”

John Dimas, a resident of South Everett and President of the SPEEA Union, on August 18, filed with the Snohomish County Superior Court contesting the eligibility of Battle’s name to be on the General Election ballot in accordance with RCW 29A.68.013 petitioning the court to determine whether Battle met the residency requirements to run for office.

Battle told the Lynnwood Times that he plans to appeal Judge Okrent’s decision calling it “a vast miscarriage of justice and of democracy.”

“It’s ignoring the will of 42% of the people of District 4 who chose me to represent them on city council, ignores the fact that none of the evidence submitted here today rises to the standard of any sort of evidentiary procedure that I’ve seen in any other court across this country,” Battle told the Lynnwood Times. “We will not stop fighting until the lady sings and she has not even taken the stage yet.”

Battle said he expects Judge Okrent’s ruling to be overturned on appeal because he feels Dimas did not meet the standard of proof in contesting his residency.

“State law is very clear that the burden of proof in this matter is not on the respondent [Battle], it is on the plaintiff [Dimas],” Battle said. “The burden of proof I do not feel has been met, I do not feel it has even been close to met. I believe this case should have been similarly dismissed with prejudice.”

He further stated that Judge Okrent did not respect the “administrative process” of the pending voter residency challenge case with Snohomish County Auditor Garth Fell which took place the previous date. Fell stated during Monday’s hearing that he will render a decision “later in the week.”

“This is an administrative process that the Washington State Legislature has put their faith in, that the people of Washington have put their faith in before, and that should have been respected in this case, and it’s a shame that it wasn’t,” Battle said criticizing Tuesday’s ruling by Judge Okrent.

When asked in the court room after the hearing by the Lynnwood Times if he had a driver’s license and could show it to all the members of the press, Battle replied he has a driver’s license which was issued before his candidacy but that he doesn’t have his wallet on him to show reporters. When asked by Michael Whitney of the Snohomish Tribune the address on his driver’s license, Battle replied, “the same ad-



The Hon. Superior Court Judge Richard Okrent (left) presiding over Tuesday’s case on the eligibility of Niko Battle’s (right) name to be on the General Election ballot brought forward by Everett resident John Dimas (center). Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

dress.”

Dimas was very pleased with Tuesday’s decision and humbly stated that he simply “presented the evidence he had” and that now “it is up to the voters and citizens.”

In addressing allegations of a mass conspiracy against Battle to remove him from the ballot, Dimas shared that he initiated the challenge after concerns raised during a candidate forum at his union (SPEEA) in combination of news articles from the Lynnwood Times, My Everett News, and other publications (e.g. Everett Post) related to Battle’s claimed Everett residence.

“I decided, you know, under my own accord, my own funds and everything, to start the challenge process,” Dimas told the Lynnwood Times. “And no assistance from anybody. I had to do everything on my own, including figuring out what to file and how to file. It was hard. It was not easy. I’m not an attorney. I’m here pro se. I don’t have \$15,000, \$20,000 to hire an attorney to do this. So, it is a right of Washington voters to bring these challenges forward.”

Dimas shared that he supports Luis Burbano, who will now replace Battle on the District 4 ballot. Burbano will now face frontrunner, Alan Rubio who advanced to the General Election following the August Primary.

### JOHN DIMAS TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE CONTESTING BATTLE’S DISTRICT 4 RESIDENCY

Dimas argued that Battle did not meet the residency requirements under Washington state law and the City of Everett Charter, Article II, Section 2.2 which mandate that an eligible candidate be a resident of the city for at least one year prior to the general election (from at least November 4, 2024) and a resident of District 4 for six months prior to the primary election (from at least February 5, 2025).

Dimas’ primary evidence was a public records request from the state of Georgia, fulfilled on August 22, 2025, showing Battle’s voter registration in Fulton County’s municipal district SC32 remained active, with a “last contact date” of December 9, 2024. Voter records show that Battle voted in the March 2024 Georgia Primary Election.

According to Dimas, this date—defined by Georgia’s Secretary of State Elections Division as the last interaction with their office, such as updating voter registration or responding to correspondence—indicated Battle was a Georgia resident 10 months prior, conflicting with the required Washington residency timeline. Dimas submitted four exhibits to support this claim:

1. An email confirming his public records request to Georgia Secretary of State.
2. A summary of the voter data, highlighting Battle’s registration date of October 18, 2023, and the December 9, 2024, last contact date.
3. An email from Tyrell D. Golden, a Georgia Elections Division official, defining “last contact date.”
4. A summary of Fulton County’s voter registration data for Battle.

Dimas considered the Georgia voter data the “most relevant” evidence, arguing that Battle’s active registration and recent interaction with Georgia’s Election Office just 10 months ago placed his residency outside Everett during the required residency period.

“And for me, again, it is going back to the state of Georgia, to that last state of contact,” Dimas told Judge Okrent. “Because the voter registration there is still active. And if that last state of contact this past December, 10 months ago, if that was to say, hey, I’m moving or I’m deactivating my registration for the state of Georgia, if his current status in the state of Georgia would have been not active or de-active voter registration in the state of Georgia. But it is not. It is still active. That means on that date when he made that request that he was a resident of the state of Georgia on that date.”

He further supported his case with additional declarations, including a signed letter by Patty Adams, community manager at Sage Apartments in Everett—the residential address listed in the voter registration database for Battle and the address he claims as his primary residence—who stated on August 15, 2025, that she had “no record of anyone by the name of Niko Battle living at Sage Apartments.”

The letter from Adams detailed her conversation with Battle raising concerns about unauthorized occupancy, noting his refusal to disclose his unit number, who he was staying with on

the property, and his alleged response of “not really” when asked if he received mail to the property.

On August 27, a legal courier, under penalty of perjury, provided a statement to court that he was unable to deliver court documents to Battle on that day as the Sage Apartments address listed for Battle is a main sitewide address and does not list a unit number. He then confirmed with the manager of Sage Apartments that “Nikolas Battle is not on a lease at his complex, he does not receive mail at this address, and they do not have a record of him residing here.”

Other exhibits included public records from USAPhoneBook.com and Spokeo.com, dated August 17 and August 8, 2025, respectively, listing Battle’s addresses outside District 4, including one in unincorporated Snohomish County (1111 132nd Street Southwest) and another in Atlanta, Georgia (290 Cascade Rise Court Southwest), matching his Georgia voter registration address. A Snohomish County PUD records request showed no utility accounts under Battle’s name, and a county assessor search found no property owned by Battle in Snohomish County.

Dimas argued these collectively demonstrated Battle’s lack of residency in District 4.

### NIKO BATTLE DEFENSE OF HIS ALLEGED DISTRICT 4 RESIDENCY

Battle, representing himself, did not submit written materials but argued that Dimas’ evidence was insufficient to meet the high burden of proof required to disqualify a candidate.

Prior to his defense, Battle requested Judge Okrent to dismiss the case or at least postpone the hearing pending a decision from Snohomish County Auditor Garth Fell related to a voter registration challenge case, filed by Dimas on August 18 and heard the previous day on September 8. Battle argued that Fell’s decision would be “entered into evidence in this matter.”

“Washington law gives the auditor primary jurisdiction over voter registration disputes under RCW 29A.08.810 through 850. That process has not yet been completed,” Battle told Judge

from page 6 **NIKO BATTLE**

Okrent adding, “A brief delay will cause no prejudice to the petitioner but moving forward now before the administrative process runs its course would undermine both judicial economy as I mentioned earlier and the statutory framework while causing significant prejudice to the respondent in this case myself.”

Judge Okrent denied Battle’s request to postpone the hearing stating he has jurisdiction as this is a matter of urgency as ballots are scheduled to print on Wednesday, September 10.

“I understand the Supreme Court’s already ruled on this issue, vesting me with jurisdiction in a case called Frey v. High State, 13 Washington Pellett 731, 1975, which basically vesting jurisdiction in me regardless of the merits of the issue because of the fact that there’s urgency here,” said Judge Okrent.

During his defense, Battle contested Dimas’ allegation of him being a Georgia resident that was based on correspondence notes listed on Battle’s voter registration information as of December 2024, just 10 months earlier. Battle stated he moved to Washington in September 2024 from Germany and has “no recollection of any outreach” to the Georgia Election Office in December of 2024 and that there is no evidence of any “communications from myself to the state of Georgia or to the county of Fulton.”

“What is most likely is that the state of Georgia or the county of Fulton County in some capacity tried to communicate with me regarding the fact that I did not participate in the November election in Georgia and to see if I still wish to be registered to vote there,” Battle argued. “Unfortunately, that communication is unknown to me as I was not living in Georgia at the time.”

Battle further argued that Washington law protects voters like him in non-traditional housing situations under RCW 29A.08.112, stating that a lease or traditional address is not required for voter registration or candidacy.

He described his living arrangement as staying with undisclosed friends at the Sage Apartments and declined to provide a specific unit number when asked due to harassment concerns.

Battle maintained that he had resided in District 4 since September 2024, after returning from Germany and travels frequently for work, which he said was permissible under Washington law. He provided no declarations from others to corroborate his residency, relying instead on his testimony and Washington voter data showing his registration at the Sage Apartments since May 7, 2025, with a vote cast in the August 2025 Primary Election.

Battle also accused Dimas of weaponizing the legal process to overturn his primary election win of 42% of votes and argued that the evidence, including online records like USAPhoneBook and Spokeo, was unreliable due to inaccuracies and outdated information.

**CITY OF EVERETT CROSS-EXAMINATION OF NIKO BATTLE**

On August 27, Judge Okrent, approved a motion by the City of Everett to intervene in the case. A motion to intervene is a formal legal request filed by a non-party to join an existing lawsuit or administrative proceeding.



**Snohomish Tribune reporter Michael Whitney interviewing Niko Battle after Tuesday’s hearing on his the eligibility to be on the General Election ballot brought forward by Everett resident John Dimas. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.**

The City requested this action stating, “it is in the best interests of the City, its citizens, and the rule of law, for this Court to resolve this action with a process that is straightforward, practical, and consistent with our State’s governing election contest statute (Chapter 29A.68 RCW).”

Representing the City of Everett was attorney Tom Ahearne with the firm Foster Garvey. Ahearne has been practicing law since 1986 and specializes in election, constitutional, and insurance cases. He was the lead council for the plaintiffs who won the multi-billion dollar McCleary school funding litigation and he was involved in lawsuits related to the Rossi/Gregoire Governor’s race which ended with Christine Gregoire’s being declared the winner.

Ahearne made it very clear to Judge Okrent at Tuesday’s hearing that the City of Everett took no position on whether Battle or Dimas should prevail but emphasized the need for a timely ruling to avoid election disruptions and voter confusion—e.g. ballot print deadline was September 10, the next day after the hearing.

Judge Okrent granted Ahearne’s request to question Battle under oath to establish a clear record of Battle’s residency addressing the dispute over his eligibility to run for Everett City Council District 4. Below is a summary of Battle’s sworn testimony to Ahearne’s cross-examination:

Where do you currently live?

*Battle responded that he lived with friends and family, with his primary residence at the Sage Apartments.*

Is there a particular unit you live in at the Sage Apartments?

*Battle declined to provide a specific unit number, citing harassment concerns from Dimas and his colleagues, and noted there was no legal requirement to disclose this.*

In the six months before the August 5, 2025 primary, how many nights did you sleep in District 4?

*Battle said it was a nebulous question and he didn’t have an exact number, estimating he spent “many” or the “majority” of nights there but traveled extensively for work.*

Can you tell us how many days you were physically in District 4 in the six months before the primary?

*Battle reiterated that he was in District 4 “nearly every day” but couldn’t provide an exact number due to extensive travel, particularly before filing for office.*

Where do you receive your mail?

*Battle stated he had multiple mailing addresses depending on the mail’s nature, with the one listed for voter registration being his father’s address.*

Is your father’s address in District 4?

*Battle confirmed it was not in District 4.*  
Do you file federal tax returns?

*Battle answered yes.*

What’s the residence you put on your federal tax returns?

*Battle said he was unsure of the most recent address, as his family’s tax preparer handled his returns, and he would need to confirm with them.*

Did you file on April 15th, and is it your testimony that you don’t recall what residence you put down on your April 15th tax return?

*Battle confirmed he filed around April 15, 2025, and did not recall the specific residence listed, as his tax preparer managed those details.*

How long have you been a registered voter of the city of Everett?

*Battle noted his most recent registration was in May 2025 but said he had been a registered voter in Everett for multiple years over his lifetime.*

How long have you been a resident of the city of Everett?

*Battle gave the same answer, stating “multiple years over the course of my lifetime,” most recently since moving back to Washington in September 2024.*

Is it your testimony you’ve consistently lived in District 4 since September?

*Battle affirmed he had resided in District 4 since September 2024, despite extensive travel for work.*

What do you mean when you say the word residency?

*Battle defined residency as where his home and community are, where he spends most of his time, and where he intends to continue making his life,*

*consistent with Washington State law.*

**SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE RICHARD OKRENT’S RULING AGAINST BATTLE**

Okrent concluded that the totality of evidence against Battle demonstrated that he did not meet the residency requirements for District 4. He ruled in favor of Dimas, removing Battle’s name from the General Election ballot.

In his ruling, Judge Okrent found Dimas’ evidence credible, particularly the Georgia voter registration data indicating Battle’s correspondence with the Georgia Election’s Office on December 9, 2024, and the lack of records tying Battle to the Sage Apartments.

“The Georgia tracking demonstrates that at least as of December 2004, you were a voter in the state of Georgia,” Okrent told Battle. “You claim to have come to the state of Washington in September of 2004. That’s serious. You have not registered within the prior time. I don’t see any evidence here that supports the claim that you are living in District 4, city of Everett.”

Judge Okrent was very pointed in his ruling around Sage Apartment Manager Patty Adams’ declaration, stating she has no record of Battle living at the claimed address, which went unrefuted by Battle, who subsequently provided no documentation—such as a lease, utility bill, or third-party declarations from those he is allegedly living with—to confirm his residency in District 4.


“Once that declaration was put in play, you had the obligation at least to refute that,” Judge Okrent said in his ruling. “Maybe there was a photograph of you. Maybe there was a piece of mail that you got there. Anything. You did none of that. There is no evidence, no lease agreement, and I understand you don’t have to have one, but that’s a factor. No utility bill. That’s a factor. No phone bill. No, not any single record that links you to 1731 12th Street, Southwest Everett, Washington.”

Okrent stressed to Battle that the motives of Dimas bringing his challenge forward are irrelevant. He stated that “it is the policy of the state of Washington that our candidates live in the area from which they will represent their constituency” in his ruling and that “non-traditional housing has nothing to do with that.”

“The constituency of Everett City Council District 4 requires a member of that district to represent them properly,” said Judge Okrent. “That’s what the statute says. And any elector who believes that the person who is a candidate is not a proper candidate has the right to challenge that so that the process is clear, so that the elections are fair, so that the elections are not overturned because of issues of residency, which clearly under the case law means you must demonstrate that you’ve lived there.”

Battle’s listed mailing address—his father’s, in Granite Falls—and the absence of a clear tax return address further weakened his case, Judge Okrent added.

“You list your father’s address as your mailing address, and he does not live in Everett,” said Okrent. “You will not reveal the address, or you don’t recall the address on your tax return. A simple reveal of the address on your tax return would have put some of this information in refutation. You didn’t do that.”

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**CITY COUNCIL POSITION 5**

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Robert Leutwyler, PO Box 3343, Lynnwood WA 98046

from page 3 **HOMELESSNESS**

positions especially when no reports or evaluation of the CDMH funded programs is happening? How does the County account for over \$2,000,000 for Human Services overhead?

The Carnegie Center, which has no documented outcomes at all, received \$2.9 million of this sales tax last year. The Human Services director at the June CDMH board meeting claimed 7,000 people served by the Carnegie Center but when pressed whether these were unduplicated individuals or repeat visits, the real number emerged: 500. Nobody was able to say exactly what outcomes were achieved for these people or what services they had received. Meanwhile, HopeN-Wellness, where people actually recover, faces closure over zoning violations and lack of funding. Despite millions of CDMH dollars being spent on administrative tasks at the County, agencies trying to help the community are often going without.

At LEAD, an employee who feared retribution whispered the truth: “We’ve had the same data-sharing meeting every quarter for 14 years with the county. Same PowerPoints. Same promises. We burn \$50,000 annually on software contracts that can’t communicate across data silos. Fourteen years of meetings about connecting systems while people die in the gaps between them. Nothing changes except the body count.”

The system captures every arrest, overdose, ER visit, documenting how trauma screams through broken bodies while the person disappears into databases that protect budgets, not people. We’ve built a machine that ignores trauma, recognizes people only by their symptoms, feeds on failures while treatment beds sit empty.

**THE TRAUMA NOBODY SEES**

92% of homeless women in Everett report sexual abuse histories. When trafficking survivor Luz arrives at 3 AM, bruised, holding her daughter, the nurse documents injuries into a void. The trafficking program down the road has beds available. They’ll never know she exists, and she is too afraid to call.

“The brain built in violence becomes condition to chaos, addicted to tension that inhibits the human from any real connection” Frank Grijalva MSCC, MSPH reveals. “When your neural pathways were carved by fear instead of love, you don’t just struggle to recognize healthy relationships, you’re magnetically drawn to what destroys you. Your capacity for connection has been hijacked. Your survival instincts remain intact but operate in isolation. What should signal alarm feels familiar.”

This is the predator’s blueprint: They don’t hunt the strong. They hunt the wounded whose nervous systems

broadcast vulnerability and interpret exploitation as intimacy. Whose bodies learned that love comes with a price, whose minds were trained that care always carries threat. They find those whose internal warning systems were disabled in childhood, those who run toward the very thing that will devour them because destruction is the only touch they’ve ever known.”

Dave, five years clean: “They handed out Oxycontin like candy after surgery. When prescriptions stopped, the pain didn’t.” His journey from Boeing employee to street addict illuminates what the system ignores: addiction isn’t moral failing, it’s survival strategy for unbearable pain.

Yet we offer 28-day detox for lifetime trauma. Discharge people to corners where dealers wait, pimps circle. Call it “treatment resistance” when someone relapses the ninth time, ignoring we returned them to the environment that created the addiction.

**WHAT WORKS AND WHY WE KILL IT**

We know coordination saves lives. Everett’s CHART program proved it in 2016. The Chronic High Utilizer Alternative Response Team program was created specifically to address in a compassionate way the needs of those most vulnerable in our community. After just one year, they found that for six chronic utilizers there were not only improvements for the people in the program but also for the taxpayers as a whole. Results: 80.6% reduction in EMS contacts, 92% reduction in jail days, \$143,450 saved in hospital charges.

If you watch the YouTube video below on the Everett Safe Streets, you get more detail from the people who created the program.

Learn about the Everett Safe Streets plan and how we’re working with our community partners to address homelessness, addiction and mental illness on our streets. Source: City of Everett. “Homelessness affects the entire community” says Julie Zarn, the former director of emergency services for Providence, Everett. People are coming into the emergency department since they have nowhere else to go. “At the jail, we were seeing an influx of people on specialty housing, people coming in on Oxy, people coming in with mental health issues. They were there on minor charges. My issues coincided with CHART issues and that was, we needed to find a solution,” says Anthony Aston, former Bureau Chief of Corrections for the Snohomish County Jail. “We definitely want people to get the help that they need,” said Dr. Robin Fenn, former research manager for Snohomish County Human Services. “But while we are doing that, we need to take a look at the impacts to the system. When we start just pushing the money back and forth across the systems, we aren’t doing anybody any favors.”

I tried finding out what happened to the CHART program. CHART died. Not from failure, from success. Staff turnover and “lack of institutional mandate” killed a program transforming lives. The machine doesn’t want solutions. It wants problems to manage. CHART was breaking down silos, forging unprecedented partnerships, like the Lynnwood Jail and Community Health Center building a clinic inside the jail. Months of collaboration. Tax dollars saved. Healthcare access expanded. They even built out the space during remodel. Then malpractice insurance and federal bureaucracy killed it. A fully constructed clinic sits empty while inmates go without care and taxpayers’ foot bigger bills.

This is how innovation dies, not in flames, but drowning in paperwork. CHART didn’t just coordinate services; it exposed the lie that our institutions want coordination. They want their fiefdoms. They want their budgets. They want problems that justify next year’s funding, not solutions that might reduce it.

**THE CHOICE**

Tomorrow, Daniel wakes on concrete, his brilliant mind cataloging his dissolution. Fairfax Psychiatric Hospital just released him after 30 days, stabilized him enough to remember what he’s lost, then discharged him to the street with a garbage bag of prescriptions. “Take these three times daily,” some doctor wrote, signing what amounts to a death sentence. The pills will last two weeks. His psychosis will return in three.

His DOC officer doesn’t know where he is. The databases don’t talk, remember? Daniel shuffles back to Courage to Change’s door, clutching discharge papers no one will read. Mike looks at him with knowing despair, CTC runs on donations and recovered addicts’ sweat equity. They’re not equipped for acute psychosis, for the nuclear engineer whose mind splits between submarine calculations and CIA conspiracies. They’ll give him coffee, not the intensive psychiatric intervention he needs. can’t take him,” Mike tells me quietly. “He needs 24/7 medical supervision, trauma therapy, medication management. We’re addicts helping addicts. This is beyond us.” But where else can Daniel go? The system offers no middle ground between psychiatric lockdown and street abandonment.

So, we’ll spend \$100,000 cycling him through emergency rooms, police interventions, brief hospitalizations that end the same way, discharge to nowhere with pills that run out before the next appointment he’ll never make. We could house him with wraparound psychiatric care for roughly \$30,000 yearly. Instead, we’ve signed his death warrant with prescriptions and indifference.

Cities spend more than \$87,000 annually jailing someone when \$12,000

could provide the trauma inform support needed. 771,480 Americans experienced the trauma of homelessness in 2024, highest ever recorded. Five deaths happened last week in single Housing First buildings in Seattle. Photos multiplying on windows. Daniel’s will join them soon.

The path forward: Connect databases so emergency rooms know who to contact to support the next homeless patient, so case managers can find their clients before they overdose, families can advocate before it’s too late, and treatment facilities can reach people while they’re still alive. End the black box that turns humans into scattered data points no one can piece together until the autopsy.

Track real outcomes beyond “discharged stable,” or “housed successfully.” Fund intensive interventions, not pharmaceutical Band-Aids. Treat trauma, not just symptoms. But in a system where Fairfax gets paid per admission, not per life saved, where failure is profitable and success threatens funding streams, competence becomes revolutionary.

“I just want to be good again,” Daniel told me between explanations of submarine engineering, clutching his two-week supply of sanity.

The machine has signed his death warrant. Daniel dies from our compliance. Every activist screaming “choice” while watching him shoot poison into his veins is complicit. Every policy that prioritizes his “right” to die in the street over his chance to heal is murder disguised as compassion.

We’ve given the addiction a voice. We’ve given the psychosis autonomy. We’ve given the trauma voting rights. And they all vote for death.

Daniel, the engineer, the father, the human being, hasn’t had a voice in years. His disease speaks for him now, and we nod along, calling it “dignity” while he rots on concrete. This isn’t harm reduction. It’s harm worship.

Stop giving trauma a voice. Start giving humans treatment. Stop documenting deaths in the name of choice. Start preventing them in the name of life.

The system is corrupt and broken, and we know it. Daniel knows it too, in his rare moments of clarity when the real him surfaces, gasping: “I just want to be good again.”

We can honor that voice, the human one, or keep listening to his disease tell us what it wants.

Choose now. He can’t.

**COMMENTARY DISCLAIMER:** The views and comments expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lynnwood Times nor any of its affiliates.



# LPD to host upcoming ‘Women Empowered’ self-defense classes

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**LYNNWOOD**—The Lynnwood Police Department will be continuing its Women Empowered self-defense class next Saturday, September 20, with plenty of more classes scheduled through 2025. Next week’s class comes just in time for National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, which begins October 1.

Though the Lynnwood PD has partnered with the Bellevue PD in hosting women’s self-defense classes in the past, this is the first year the class is independently instructed by Lynnwood PD, led by instructor Officer Maryam McDonald.

In the past, Officer McDonald assisted Bellevue Police Officer Craig Hanaumi but after obtaining her instructor certification last July, now she’s leading her own program up in Lynnwood.

McDonald, who responds to many domestic violence calls while on patrol, was inspired to start a program like this in Lynnwood due to her conversations with DV survivors and them saying they didn’t know what to do. This broke her heart, as a 15-year Jiu-jitsu practitioner herself, knowing self-defense techniques were accessible for her community.

She reached out to Lynnwood PD Chief Cole Langdon about setting up a program in Lynnwood, who enthusiastically agreed. As it happened, Officer Hanaumi down in Bellevue was already teaching a similar class every Sunday. She quickly joined as assistant instructor in 2022 leading up into launching her own course this year.

Several Bellevue PD Officers still attended the first class of the year, which took place on Saturday, August 23, to show their support to Officer McDonald in carrying on a program in Lyn-



The Lynnwood PD’s Women Empowered Self Defense Class. Photo courtesy of the Lynnwood PD.

nwood.

“I think that every woman should have some sort of delf defense experience so that if you ever encounter something like this, at least you have some tools, so you know what to resort to,” said Officer McDonald.

McDonald shared with the Lynnwood Times the instructor certification was “pretty intense,” and involved her getting her pink belt, mastering the program – and its various techniques – to be able to pass the exam at 95% or above. After that she entered the instruction certification program which spanned from January through July 2025. The instruction certification program only takes place twice a year and brings students from all over the world including Germany, Netherlands, and Australia.

Throughout the program, MacDonald was required to submit five teaching proficiency videos online – which

were graded by a panel of evaluators and then was flown down to Grace University in California to demonstrate those teaching proficiencies live to adjudicators.

McDonald teaches 40 women at a time, aged 12 and over, over the course of 15 lessons. Her curriculum is based on the 20 most common physical threats and areas against women, which she teaches self-defense techniques to deal with each of these.

She focuses on the four basic phases of an assault for strangers. McDonald added techniques differ for acquaintances because individuals are typically less likely to engage in, say, eye gouging techniques with people that they know. Her class does, however, cover techniques for people students may know as well.

The four phases of assault are: 1.) to identify an unsuspecting target, 2.) to subdue and isolate a target, to 3.)

control and exhaust a target, and 4.) to carry out the assault.

McDonald breaks these down, one-by-one, to teach women how to be a not ideal target (being aware of surroundings, for example), wrist release (phase 2) defenses, ground fighting (phase 3), and various techniques for phase four including a “false surrender.” All of the taught techniques emphasize getting to safety.

“It’s all leverage-based techniques, focusing on smaller people being able to defend themselves against a much larger, big, heavier, stronger, opponent,” said Officer McDonald. “So all of the techniques you learn do not require any strength or physical athleticism, it’s all just timing, technique, and leverage.”

McDonald’s course does not require any previous martial arts experience or even requires students to attend previous classes before jumping into the next.

The curriculum is standardized by Grace University.

Officer McDonald hopes to continue the class every other Saturday, but this schedule could change due to holidays and other events. For example, last Saturday’s class was postponed due to the Fair on 44th.

Classes are taught at PandaWorld Jiu-jitsu in Lynnwood, located at 19031 33rd Ave W Suite 103. The classes are free to attend but require reservations by clicking here, just to ensure classes do not top capacity limits.

Separate to taking her class, Officer McDonald recommends any and every women pick up the art of jiu-jitsu to learn basic self-defense.

# Evergreen Goodwill makes Sustainability Spooktacular

By GERTI KATRO

**LYNNWOOD**—Halloween is creeping up, and while goblins and ghouls prepare to haunt the streets, Evergreen Goodwill is offering a more sustainable—and surprisingly stylish—way to celebrate the season.

From gothic candle holders to DIY cobwebs crafted from repurposed tights, the nonprofit thrift retailer is helping families across Northwest Washington decorate affordably, creatively, and with a conscience. But behind the cobwebs and cauldrons is a deeper mission: supporting education, job training, and economic opportunity in the region.

## A Halloween That Doesn’t Haunt the Planet

Every year, an estimated 35 million single-use costumes are tossed into landfills across the country. Evergreen Goodwill is turning that frightening statistic into a community opportunity by encouraging reuse and supporting a circular economy.

“We’re giving items a second life,” says Kwabena Milton, Assistant Manager of Retail at the Lynnwood Goodwill store. “Nothing goes to waste. If

a costume doesn’t sell this year, it’ll come back next year—we’re always thinking long-term.”

Kwabena recently gave us a behind-the-scenes tour of the Lynnwood location, guiding us from the donation drop-off gate in the back of the building to the sortation area where staff diligently categorize donations—costumes, decor, toys, and more. Quality-checked and neatly organized, items then make their way to the sales floor, priced affordably for items often worn or used only once a year.

And there’s no shortage of variety. “It’s all about timing,” Kwabena says, gesturing toward a rack of kids’ costumes. “The sooner you come in, the better your chances of finding that perfect piece.”

## Every Purchase Powers a Purpose

While Halloween is all about dressing up, Evergreen Goodwill’s impact is as real as it gets. Every sale helps fund free job training programs, career coaching, and essential support services offered by the organization.

“The story doesn’t end at the donation bin,” Kwabena reminds us. “Every

ghost, superhero, and princess costume purchased here directly supports individuals in our community who are seeking opportunity and economic stability.”

This mission was amplified over Labor Day weekend, when all donation locations across the Evergreen Goodwill network hosted a Halloween Costume Donation Drive, resulting in a noticeable boost in spooky inventory throughout the stores.

## A Win-Win-Win Halloween

Shopping for Halloween at Goodwill isn’t just good for your wallet, it’s good for the planet and good for the community. Whether you’re hunting for a vintage vampire cape or crafting your own costume from upcycled pieces, each purchase supports a cleaner environment and a stronger local workforce.

So, before heading to a big-box store this Halloween, consider stopping by your local Goodwill. Who knows? You might find the perfect potion bottle prop—or even your next favorite costume.

And as Kwabena puts it: “If one person doesn’t want it, someone else will love

it. That’s the magic of this place.”

## Looking to get spooky sustainably?

Visit your nearest Evergreen Goodwill location for Halloween deals or donate your gently used costumes and decor today. Learn more at <https://evergreengoodwill.org/locations/lynnwood-goodwill/>



Inside Lynnwood Goodwill. Lynnwood Times | Gerti Katro.

# Snohomish County cuts ribbon on 36th/35th Ave Corridor Improvement Project in Lynnwood

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**LYNNWOOD**—The Snohomish County Public Works Department cut the ribbon on its 36th Avenue/35th Avenue West Improvement Project in Lynnwood Tuesday, September 9, after 13-years of planning and 18-months of construction. With the completion of the project, drivers, cyclists and pedestrians will now be able to move more freely from 164th Street Southwest to State Route 99 north of Lynnwood.

The mile-long stretch – which crosses Lynnwood city limits and is managed by the City of Lynnwood on the southern side and Snohomish County to the north — allows easier, and safer, access to Everett and beyond, as well as an alternative route to Interstate 5 and State Route 99.

For years many Snohomish County residents used the critical north-south corridor to gain access to the highway/freeway and commercial centers in North Lynnwood.

Prior to construction, the corridor featured one lane in each direction and would routinely see traffic back-ups from vehicles waiting to make left turns into one of the many neighborhoods, businesses or multi-family complexes. There were also stretches of roadway without sidewalks, resulting in people walking on concrete or dirt shoulders.

The newly completed corridor project adds sidewalks, curbs, gutters, bike lanes, and a retention pond, as well as replacing aging stormwater systems, and brand-new paving along 164th Street Southwest to SR99. These improvements were designed to reduce travel delays from left-turning traffic, while increasing mobility for pedestrians and cyclists.

“Residents can now walk or roll on sidewalks or bike lanes continuously from the central part of Lynnwood to 148th Street Southwest,” said Public Works Director Kelly Snyder. “These improvements are expected to provide improved mobility and safety for years to come as population continues to grow in this area.”

The improvement project’s price tag ring in at \$11.7 million – which included \$2.8 million of utility work. The Public Works Department received most of this through a \$4.5 million service transportation program grant, \$3.5 million grant from the State Transportation Improvement Board, \$3 million assistance from the Public Works Board (from its assistance account), and from mitigation fees which the developers paid for.

The remaining funds came from taxpayers’ property taxes via the county’s



Snohomish County staff, Rep. Sam Low, State partners, Alderwood Water and Wastewater staff, and residents of the area cut the ribbon on the 35/36th Avenue West Improvement project Tuesday. Photo: Kienan Briscoe, Lynnwood Times



36th/35th Avenue Corridor after construction. Photo courtesy of Snohomish County Public Works

road levy.

This project connects to the City of Lynnwood’s existing 36th Avenue West, from 179th Street Southwest to 165th Place Southwest, corridor project which was completed in 2020.

The ribbon cutting ceremony commenced Tuesday afternoon with a few words from Kelly Snyder, Public Works Director, who thanked the Snohomish County Public Works staff, and Alderwood Water and Wastewater District for their continued partnership and support.

Doug McCormick, Snohomish County Public Works Deputy Director, then took the mic to add to Snyder’s list of appreciation, roping in the program planning team, traffic operations, de-

sign team, the funding team, right away group, and Geotech survey.

“It takes a whole village within the county and with our consultants to put a project like this together and we can’t be more proud of the whole team to get this whole project out here,” said McCormick.

McCormick also thanked the residents and commuters who use the corridor daily and their tolerance for putting up with the growing pains of construction.

A couple of those residents attended Tuesday’s ribbon cutting including Vivian Greenwood, over 40-year resident of the area, who told the Lynnwood Times she could never predict how wonderful the improvements would be while watching the construc-

tion from her window over the last year-and-a-half.

“It’s just really nice to have the road really wide and the four lanes at one point. I think it’s a vast improvement. It also feels a lot cleaner,” said Greenwood.

Greenwood, who rode her bike to the ribbon cutting Tuesday, added that she’s mostly looking forward to the added sidewalks and bike lanes.

Snohomish County Executive Director Ken Klein spoke after McCormick, on behalf of Executive Dave Somers who was unable to attend Tuesday’s ceremony, calling the project “money and time well spent.”

Continued **PAGE 12**



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from page 1 **HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**

performed several classical Mexican pieces for attendees during the recognition celebration.

According to the United States Census Bureau, Hispanics comprise 68 million or roughly 20% of the nation’s population of which an estimated 1.14 million persons of Latin descent living in Washington state. Approximately 100,000 Latinos call Snohomish County home.

Congress first established the National Hispanic Heritage Week on September 17 in 1968. Two decades later, President Ronald Reagan expanded the recognition to a full month. Then, a year later, President H.W. Bush proclaimed National Hispanic Heritage Month and in 2020, President Donald J Trump set the dates to be September 15 to October 15.

September 15 is chosen as the start of Hispanic Heritage Month to honor the anniversary of the 1812 independence declarations of five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua—and Mexico, Chile, and Belize celebrating their independence on September 16, 18, and 21 respectively.

“However, amid this celebration, our community also faces real fears; the fear of deportation, family separation, and restrictions on essential services,” Gerardo Javier Guiza Vargas, Deputy Consul of the Consulate of Mexico in Seattle, told council members. “These concerns have had a chilling effect on community participation, eroding trust in public institutions and heightening concerns about racial discrimination. Even so, the Hispanic and Latino community shows admirable resilience every day; we enrich the culture and the economy with vision, conviction, and determination.”

He encouraged member civic participation by persons of Latin decent to get involve and run for political office and be active participants in this political process, because only then, he said, “can we guarantee the rights of your families and the rights of future generations.”



**Lynnwood City Council members along with community members recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month on September 8, honoring Latino leaders for their cultural contributions and community impact. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.**

Honorary Consul of Spain, Luis Fernando Esteban, reflected on his 54-year journey since working for Iberia Airlines and visiting Everett, expressing enthusiasm for Snohomish County’s business potential.

Initially focused on Seattle, Bellevue, and Redmond, he said the Spain now see Snohomish County as a prime business hub.

“Just to give you an idea, in the last two months, together with my son, is the one developing all the business between Washington State and Spain,” he said. “I visited Snohomish County six times in two months. I’ve been here six months. We meet the county executive, with the developer... I paid a visit to the Port of Everett, and it’s a beauty. Everything you develop here is like you learn from the mistakes in the South [of Washington state], and you fix it, and now you are taking off like a rocket!”

Esteban also shared a major Boeing order for 50 737 MAX planes by Iberia, shifting away from Airbus. His son Nigo is currently leading efforts to bring Washington state companies, including those from Snohomish County to trade fairs in Madrid and Leon to further strengthen business ties between the two regions.

During Tuesday’s event, several community leaders were recognized for their contributions to cultural preservation and community building in

Snohomish County:

- Maria Casey, founder of Fat Roach Art Workshop, was recognized for inspiring creativity and cultural expression through art, particularly for special needs communities.
- Micaela “Mika” Sarmiento, a Bolivian activist, expressed gratitude for her heritage and daughter, emphasizing her commitment to social, cultural, and environmental causes. She quoted Cesar Chavez on cultural respect, advocating for diversity as a strength against racism and intolerance.
- Zita Paulino, founder of Folklore Oaxaqueño Senteo, was honored for preserving Oaxaca’s cultural heritage through traditional dance, expressing pride in sharing her culture.
- Tony Hernandez, representing the Hernandez family and Los Gavilanes Mexican store, was acknowledged as a community pillar since 2006, noting the strong support from Snohomish County for the growing Hispanic community.
- Estela Carrera-Infante, founder of Familias Fuertes Comunidades Prósperas, was celebrated for her 35 years of work with migrant and Latino families, providing parent education to foster self-esteem and stronger family bonds.
- Jorge Enrique Gonzalez Pacheco,

co, a Cuban American poet and founder of the Seattle Latino Film Festival, was recognized for promoting Latin American cinema. The festival, in its 17th edition (October 10-18), represents over 20 Spanish-speaking countries and plans to expand to Spokane.

“I appreciate the recognition to do Hispanic Heritage Month,” Snohomish County Councilman Sam Low told recipients. “We all have a heritage or roots, as we heard earlier today.”

“Gracias por todo,” Councilman Strom Peterson said. “It is so great to be part of the, as Council Member Low said, the greater family of Snohomish County. But what you bring to the community is invaluable. The work that you do to support each other, to support everybody, I think, especially in this time. It is a very scary time for many in your community. And I think this shows that Snohomish County is standing with you. So, we will stand together and protect each other and care for each other and appreciate what we all bring to each other.”

On Monday, September 8, the City of Lynnwood recognized 2022 Lynnwood Times’ Person of the Year Karina Gasperin, who was representing the Snohomish County Latino Coalition, Mujeres con Actitud Latina and Wellbeing Community Center, Lynnwood City Council candidate Dio Boucsiequez, and other members of Latin and Hispanic heritage.

“This proclamation is more than a symbolic gesture — it is a recognition of generations of contributions, hard work, and cultural richness that our communities bring to the city of lynnwood every single day,” Gasperin shared with council members. “From the fields to the classrooms, to local businesses to public service, Hispanic and Latino individuals have played—and continue to play — a vital role in shaping the Washington state we know and love. As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, let’s reflect on the deep roots and traditions that connect us all to our ancestors and guide our future.”

from page 11 **ROAD IMPROVEMENT**

“This project was the result of listening to community feedback about where there would be challenges, where residents had the opportunity to learn about the project and offer feedback about the design during a large public meeting a few years ago,” said Klein. “I want to thank Snohomish County Public Works, and their contractors, for helping make this project a reality and solve problems that have a profound effect on the numerous residents of this area.”

Kathryn Gardow, Chair of the Washington State Public Works Board, followed Klein with a few words of her own, sharing that she has a friend who lives along the corridor who is excited to walk her dog along the sidewalk improvements and have easier access turning out of her driveway.

“We are thrilled here at the Public Works Board for being part of this project,” said Gardow.

The last speaker Tuesday, before the ribbon was ceremoniously cut in front of the Alderwood Water and Wastewater’s upcoming, brand-new, facility, was Ashley Probart, Executive Director at the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board.

“The County was spot on as far as everything they promised they would deliver,” said Probart. “For every project we award I would say about two of our silver medalists come back next year. Over the past 25 years or so the County has been a gold medalist 64 times, representing nearly 70 lane miles of projects representing \$130 million. They’re already telling us their next best projects for this year and I’m excited to see what it’s all about.”

Approximately 3% of the State gas tax goes toward the TIB which is then flipped into grants (upward of about \$20 million) statewide. It is those funds in which the TIB used to issue its approx-

imately \$3 million toward this project.

Also in attendance Tuesday was Snohomish County Councilman and Washington State Representative Sam Low, as well as Alderwood Water and Wastewater Commissioners Patrick Peck and Paul McIntyre with Alderwood Water and Wastewater staff.

“This has been a really long project but a great partnership with the City of Lynnwood, Snohomish County, our state partners at TIB, the Public Works Board, and the federal grant which was approved by the Puget Sound Regional Council,” Rep. Low told the Lynnwood Times. “It’s great for commuters, it’s great for our community. I’m just excited to see people already using it.”

Low serves on the aforementioned Puget Sound Regional Council and is the Assistant Ranking Minority Member of the State Transportation Committee.

Staff from David Evans and Associates, the engineering firm contracted to design the project, were also in attendance during Tuesday’s processions.

According to Project Engineer Todd Nielsen, for the most part construction on the new corridor improvements was smooth sailing, save for unpredicted contaminated soil (from petroleum years ago) and having to acquire about an acre of land from a resident which is now being used as a detention pond – which will be used to store stormwater.

The biggest issue, Nielsen added, was keeping the road open while construction continued and everything that brings with it; i.e. keeping traffic flowing and navigating cars exiting and entering their driveways. The other big challenge was dealing with all of the utilities underground, he continued.

“It’s a big improvement overall,” Nielsen told the Lynnwood Times.