

Skamania County Chamber of Commerce Town Hall in Stevenson

Skamania businesses are spending more time and money finding skilled employees, and they are concerned about the future of Southwest Washington's economy without expanded transportation and child care options. Participants noted the importance of developing educational opportunities, particularly for jobs in green energy, technology and other trades.

Participants envisioned a future where rural communities have more representation in state policy and where Southwest Washington is a destination for tourism and outdoor recreation.

What We Heard

"We had a lot of people turn down positions because they couldn't afford to live as a single individual here."

"We have so many [training and education] options within an hour away [...] but it's a big struggle for those who don't have transportation."

"Running a business just gets more burdensome as time goes on. It's like everything is pushed off onto the businesses, as if they're adopting people as opposed to employing them."



Key Themes

- Workforce development
- Transportation
- Accessible child care

Local Concerns

- Child care drought area
- Bridge and road repairs
- Rural community representation



Top 3 Issues

- Inflation
- Affordable housing for employees
- Workforce talent and retention

Favorite Things in Your Community

- "The skills programs at Columbia Gorge Community College"
- "Our small, close community"
- "Organic gatherings of people"



Looking Forward

What do we need to solve by 2040?

- "Support for the coming economy, green jobs, and the trades"
- "Thriving year-round economy, not just during tourist season"
- "Increase employee infrastructure (housing, child care, roads, broadband)"

Aspirations for 2040

- "Create a southwest regional airport"
- "Multi-use buildings downtown"
- "Reduce regulation that slows down business growth"