



Wild weather wallops region

NEWS A3



Volleyball off to state

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SPORTS B1

# STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2021 | \$1.50

## Demand high for kids shots

Health officials urge parents to keep looking for open slots

By EVAN CALDWELL  
ecaldwell@scnews.com

The supply of vaccines for children ages 5 to 11 remains far short of demand, local health officials said last week. "Trying to find an appointment can feel like kind of like trying to win the lottery, and we're certainly hearing these frustrations from people who are upset with what feels like zero availability," said Dr. Chris Spitters, Health Officer with the Snohomish Health District.

There are about 75,000 children ages 5-11 in the county, and only about 10,000 doses of the pediatric vaccine likely to be allocated here each week, Spitters said. At that rate, it may take at least 12 weeks for every child to complete the two-dose series. "I know that after waiting so long for this opportunity, many parents are frustrated at not being able to get their child vaccinated right away. Have faith and keep trying every couple of days," Spitters said. "We've all waited many months for this, and while it's going to be a bumpy few weeks, we'll soon get to a rhythm where everyone who wants a vaccine can get one."

In time, supply will more closely mirror demand as more appointments become available, he added. Officials also are working with pharmacies, school districts and other partners to increase opportunities for vaccinations.

■ SEE COVID, A8

### Exploring History

# Charting a path

Camano Island has been trying to find its way for decades



ISLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In 1925, ferry service began between Utsalady and Oak Harbor on the diesel-powered "Acorn." It proved a vital connection between Camano and Whidbey islands until the Deception Pass bridge was completed in 1936.

**CAMANO ISLAND RESIDENTS :**

What Is A Port District? Condemnation

\$\$\$ What Could A Port District Do For Camano Island?

\$\$\$ How Do Other Port Districts Compare?

\$\$\$ In Conclusion

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On ALL ISLAND PORT  
**DON'T BE MISLEAD**

**VOTE NO ON MAY 19th**

**VOTE "NO!"**  
On ALL ISLAND PORT

THIS MESSAGE SPONSORED BY THE FOLLOWING RESIDENTS:

A full-page advertisement in a 1981 Stanwood Camano News edition advocates a "no" vote on expanding the Port of Mabana.

By MARY JENNINGS  
For the Stanwood Camano News

Camano Island has been a political orphan for much of its history.

The island lies in the crook of the much larger Whidbey Island to the west, and the two make up Island County.

Though Camano has seen its population more than triple from around 5,000 in 1980 to about 17,300 today, it still lacks clout. It is overshadowed by Whidbey — almost twice as big, home to the county seat of Coupeville and boasting nearly five times the population as its little sibling.

Throughout the last century, different groups have made several attempts to separate Camano from the governmental jurisdiction of Island County to gain more political and economic sway.

Ideas have run the gamut — a ferry, incorporating as a city, expanding the Port

of Mabana on the south end of Camano, and even joining Snohomish County. So far, nothing has stuck.

### Early history

When Island County was established in 1853, it encompassed a sprawling area that, in addition to Whidbey and Camano islands, included what are now San Juan, Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom counties.

### Exploring History

The fifth installment of our "Exploring History" series, which takes a deeper look at the fabric of the Stanwood-Camano area, details efforts over the years to give Camano more clout.

In the 1850s, travel between cities in Island County involved sternwheelers and other vessels on the Salish Sea. When the county seat was eventually established in the waterfront town of Coupeville, it made sense, according to area historians and local history books.

As the area's population grew and roads allowed for settlement of the interior lands, the need for more manageably sized counties with more localized governments arose, local historians said.

■ SEE HISTORY, A9

# 30-acre annexation could pave way for 127 homes

City Council votes to advance request to county board

By PEGGY WENDEL  
pwendel@scnews.com

The Stanwood City Council raised questions about a possible 127-home development before ultimately voting to move a 30-acre annexation request forward.

The council discussed whether the city could slow development by holding off on expanding city limits, but voted 5 to 1 to forward the Kottsick annexation request to the Snohomish County Boundary Review Board, which is the next step in the process. Council

member Steve Shepro was the lone no vote.

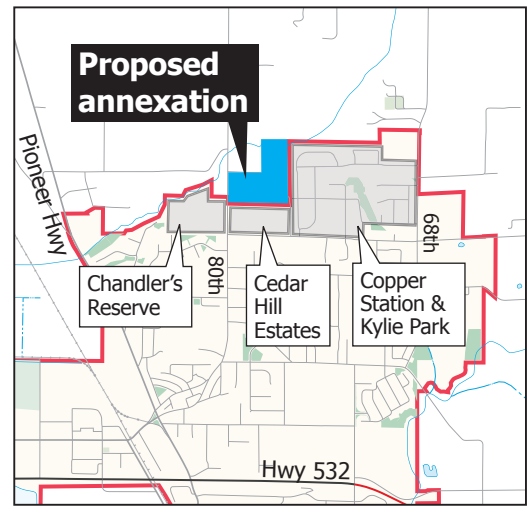
Edwards Development Group, on behalf of Marlyn Kottsick, has applied to annex 30 acres into the city. Kottsick owns 40 acres in two parcels at 7615 284th St. NW and 28801 80th Ave. NW, at the northern edge of the Urban Growth Area.

This land lies north of Cedar Hill Estates, the partially built 90-plus unit development on the northeast corner of 80th Avenue and 284th Street NW.

■ SEE STANWOOD, A5

### North Stanwood is growing

Proposed development would join several other neighboring housing projects.



Stanwood city limits is outlined in red.





History

FROM A1

By 1883, after Skagit County was founded, Island County was left with Camano, Whidbey and tiny Ben Ure Island in, what is today, Deception Pass State Park. There are also a handful of small, uninhabited islands that include Baby, Deception, Kalamut, Minor, Smith and Strawberry.

The county seat remained in Coupeville.

Over the next several decades, roads were refined and bridges were built to accommodate stagecoaches and eventually automobiles. By the 1890s, train travel became commonplace.

As fast as these modern transportation methods became available, people climbed aboard the local train or jumped into their cars instead of the much slower sternwheelers plying the area's waterways, according to local historian Dave Eldridge and the Stanwood Area Historical Society records.

However, well into the 20th century, the people of Camano Island still relied on water travel to get county business done in Coupeville.

A bridge between Camano and the mainland opened in 1909, but a bridge linking Whidbey to the mainland was still years away.

A big improvement happened in 1925 when ferry service began with several daily runs between Utsalady and a dock near Oak Harbor. The diesel-powered "Acorn" held 16 cars and made 12 trips a day and cost \$1.50 to \$2, depending on weight, for a one-way trip, according to ferry schedules published in Stanwood newspapers.

The ferry lasted until 1936 when the Deception Pass Bridge opened, finally joining Whidbey Island to Fidalgo Island, which had its own bridge connecting to the mainland.

Camano Islanders could at last drive to the county seat, but the roughly 120-mile, three-hour trip still left many feeling not only isolated from their county government but underrepresented and underserved, according to reports in Stanwood Camano News archives.

Island County governance

Like most counties in Washington, a Board of Commissioners oversees county operations and finances in addition to regulating growth, health, safety and welfare.

Three board members represent three districts proportioned by population. District 3 encompasses Camano Island and the north part of Whidbey Island.

Because Camano's district also includes part of Whidbey Island, there have been times when all three commissioners were residents of Whidbey Island.

This most recently was the case when Rick Hannon of Whidbey Island was commissioner until January 2019 when Janet St. Clair of Camano Island took office.

Many people over the years have contended the instances of not having a commissioner from Camano left residents out in the cold, according to articles and letters to the editor in newspaper archives.

Residents have argued that many policies affecting Camano Island are made by those who don't really know or understand the area's issues.

That perceived lack of representation proved to be a driver in several efforts over the years to



Candidates for proposed Camano city government give variety of views

STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS ARCHIVES

The January 1978 edition of the Stanwood Camano News is a story and photos about a proposed Camano city government.

change how Camano Island residents are governed in order to gain political and economic clout.

Annex into SnoCo? Or a new city?

Because Camano Island has been connected by a bridge to the mainland for 112 years, the idea of annexing the island to Snohomish County has been a topic of debate.

However, Washington does not have laws on the books that would allow for the transfer of territory from one existing county to another.

In 1981, a ballot was put before voters to expand the boundaries of the tiny Port of Mabana on the southwest side of the island to include all of Camano to give the island more political authority. Ports generally have more economic freedom than county commissions.

For example, ports can lure businesses, attract grants for infrastructure improvements and lobby for residents at higher levels of government than a commissioner. Voters soundly rejected the proposal.

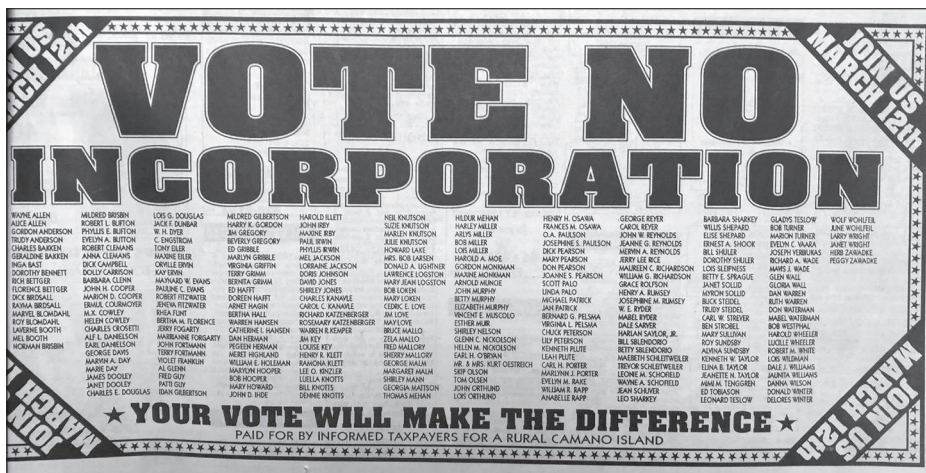
In 1978 and again in 1991, voters were asked to approve incorporating the island and creating "Camano City" — a municipality with its own governing body. Voters overwhelmingly said "no" on both occasions.

An island becoming a city is not unheard of — Bainbridge Island did it in 2009. A loosely formed group revived the idea of "Camano City" in 2013, but the push for a vote never gained traction.

Former longtime Democratic state Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen advocated for local governance for Camano Island residents for decades. "If Camano were to incorporate or if the boundaries of the Port of Mabana were enlarged to cover the whole Island, that would give the residents of Camano a bigger voice when it came to making important decisions about how we live here," she said. "Of course, there would be challenges along the way such as dealing with Urban Growth Area requirements under the Growth Management Act and determining how certain services, like public safety, are delivered."

Haugen said the issue is ultimately about self-governance. "The people of Camano Island deserve to be represented by those who live here and will do what is best for this Island," she said.

Beth Munson, who sits on the Island County Planning Commission and is president of the Camano Island Women's Republican Club, sees things differently. "The way Island County is structured works and with technology, those who wish to participate and can easily watch a live stream of county meetings held in Coupeville at the Annex, so



An advertisement in a March 1991 edition of the Stanwood Camano News advocates a "no" vote on incorporating the island as a city.

I don't see the distance of our county seat as an issue," she said.

Munson believes participation is key to equitable representation.

"Everyone needs to take an interest in the issues that affect life here on Camano Island," she said. "I strongly encourage residents to attend county meetings because we are the watchdogs of our government."

New building, administrator

Commissioner Janet St. Clair, who was elected to a four-year term starting in 2019, supports the way Island County government is structured.

"If a commissioner just represented Camano, that may decrease the relevance of Camano Islanders to the rest of Island County," she said. "Each commissioner represents their district, but the three of us work together to do what's best for Island County as a whole."

St. Clair is aware of other types of county governance but does not know of any current push for change. "There are other options such as a chartered or home-rule county with an appointed or elected executive to gain greater local authority," she said. "However, the recent decision by the commissioners to hire a county administrator who will work within our existing governmental structure and focus on the operations of Island County will be a great help in delivering services to all Island County residents."

County officials also point to the new Island County Administration building on Camano. It replaced the county office that opened almost 50 years ago as Camano's population began growing. In "Camano Island: Life and Times in Paradise" authors Art Kimball and John Dean described the office that opened in 1973 as a "Satellite Courthouse" that would provide building permits and assorted services.

In 2017, commissioners agreed to spend \$5 million on the new County Administration Building.

Larry Van Horn, director of Island County Facilities Management, said there have been some staffing changes in the new facility. "Staffing levels have not increased, but each department is flexing staff

between Coupeville and Camano to help cover the increased business the building is receiving at the public counters," he said.

The new Camano Administration Building allows people to access several county departments, including Planning and Community Development, Public Health, District Court, General Services Administration and more. A video system allows for some District Court appearances.

However, Van Horn said Camano residents still must go to Coupeville for some services, such as law and justice issues.

Another ferry?

Just over 80 years ago, regular ferry service ran between Camano and Whidbey islands.

A feasibility study of restarting ferry service was made in 2008, but the plan did not get far.

Some fundamental complications exist, said Jeff Wheeler, area manager for the Salish Foothills of Washington State Parks.

"In 2010, Coupeville was studying the idea of a ferry between its downtown pier and Cama Beach State Park," Wheeler said. "This would have required the construction of a pier and increasing the parking."

Building a pier at Cama Beach is problematic, he said.

"There are environmental reasons, such as the disruption of shellfish and other marine life, that makes the idea of a pier at Cama unfeasible," Wheeler said. "Add to that the issues with increased traffic on the nar-

row roads of Camano, and it basically puts the idea of a pier for a ferry off the table."

This past January, with input from the public, the Puget Sound Regional Council evaluated the potential demand for new passenger-only ferry service to connect communities throughout Puget Sound. A Camano-Whidbey route was not ranked as a priority. St. Clair took issue with the relatively small amount of local feedback used in the study.

"It is important to note that participation by Island County was only 2% and by Snohomish was only 1%, so I don't think this study is a fair representation of our needs, recently amplified by the ferry crisis and cutting of ferry routes to Island County," she said.

Camano slowly adds services

The island hasn't been forgotten or left behind, however. Community leaders developed services through connections to the mainland.

In 1996, Camano voters approved annexation into the Island Transit district, bringing public transportation to Camano Island.

In July 2000, the island was assigned its own ZIP code of 98282, breaking away from Stanwood's 98292. A new post office for Camano was reportedly in the works but never materialized.

The Camano Center, with an emphasis on serving senior citizens, opened a community building in 2001 and moved out of an

outdated facility built in the early 1970s. Also in 2001, Elger Bay and Utsalady elementary schools opened. They marked the first time in more than 80 years that younger students could go to school without leaving the island.

A permanent library on Camano Island, part of Sno-Isle Libraries, was opened in 2015.

A bright future

About 40 years ago, there were few places to shop or to access commercial or professional services on Camano Island aside from some local convenience stores. Today, the commercial landscape is quite different.

In 1998, the IGA Camano Plaza on East Camano Drive grew from a convenience-type store to a complex including a full-service grocery store, hardware store, retail shops, restaurants and office space.

For years, developers tried to create a retail space at Terry's Corner.

In 2004, coffee entrepreneur Jeff Ericson opened Camano Commons, which features a mix of shops, restaurants and professional offices.

Other small shops and offices opened over the years to enhance the ability of Camano Islanders to avoid driving "off Island" to get what they need.

Jessica McCready, Camano Island Chamber of Commerce executive director, said business people generally are happy with the county government.

"Local businesses feel supported by the Board of Island County Commissioners," she said. "In fact, I recently worked with Janet St. Clair to help Camano businesses access assistance from the COVID-19 economic recovery funds provided by the CARES Act."

McCready is proud of the positive changes that have occurred and believes Camano Island is coming into its own.

"I think today, the Camano Island community feels support by county government," she said. "Overall, the future is bright for our beautiful island."

Advertisement for STOWES SHOES & CLOTHING, A family business. Includes logos for Birkenstock, Carhartt, Danner, Hoka One One, Keen, Merrell, Olukai, Red Wing Shoes, Teva, and Xtratuf. Address: 420 E FAIRHAVEN AVE | DOWNTOWN BURLINGTON. Open Mon - Sat 9 - 6 | 360-755-0570.



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MAGAZINE INSIDE



**Spartans fall to Ferndale,  
still control playoff hopes**

SPORTS B1

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## Exploring History

# Florence flourished, fizzled



*Stillaguamish River boom town boasts boatload of history*



MARY JENNINGS / FOR THE STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

**Above: Amy Christianson in front of the Lady Florence, built in 1912 by John P. Anderson who made his fortune in the Klondike gold rush. It is now a vacation rental and wedding venue in Florence. At top: A steamer docks in Florence in the 1880s in a branch of the Stillaguamish River the dwarfs the size of the channel today. On the left is Hevly store. The old Florence school is at the far right.**

By MARY JENNINGS  
For the Stanwood Camano News

More than 150 years ago, Florence and Stanwood were growing fast and competing to become the area's center of commerce.

Both towns were situated in the crossroads where towering tim-

bers and farm produce from rich soils could be funneled through to markets elsewhere around the Salish Sea.

In the middle of the Stillaguamish River delta sat the flourishing town of Florence. Sternwheelers and other vessels plied the Stillaguamish River, taking goods to markets growing across the region.

Florence is mainly situated

on Florence Road, a half-mile loop off Marine View Drive, about 2.5 miles southeast of Stanwood. This pioneer town lies on Florence Island, separated from the mainland by channels of the Stillaguamish River. The geography was an asset Florence leaders used to fuel growth and industry.

■ SEE FLORENCE, A9

## Exploring History

This is the fourth installment in a new series that takes a deeper look at people, places and things that are a part of the fabric of the Stanwood-Camano area's history. Send suggestions for future articles in our history series to newsroom@scnews.com.

# City to pay \$835k in road dispute

*Council settles Viking Way conflict for \$543k more than planned*

By PEGGY WENDEL  
pwendel@scnews.com

The Stanwood City Council agreed to settle out of court on the amount to pay Viking Village owners for property needed to build a road through the parking lot.

Rather than going to court over the amount of compensation for Viking Way right of way, city attorney Brett Vinson advised the council to settle. Council members said they were not happy about it, but agreed to pay \$835,000 to Viking Village Shopping Center Inc., S&H Development Co. and Donna J. Charles T. Cole Charitable Foundation.

Vinson said the city had been in discussions starting in 2018 with Viking Village owners Bob Cole and Greg Gilday, a District 10 state representative, regarding the right of way needed to build a road through the Viking Village parking lot.

The city's appraisal for the land came to \$292,000, and the city put that amount in escrow. The city made a possession and use agreement with the owners so they could begin work.

The property owners got an independent appraisal of \$835,000. After negotiations failed, a trial was set for later this month for a jury to determine compensation.

■ SEE CITY, A8

## ELECTION 2021

# Metz, Bergman eye council seat

By PEGGY WENDEL  
pwendel@scnews.com

As Dianne White, council member and former mayor, vacates position 2, Marcus Metz and Andreena Bergman are competing for her seat.

Bergman, 47, an Arlington native who has lived in Stanwood for 18 years and said she wants to give back in a positive way by listening to citizens' concerns.



Marcus Metz



Andreena Bergman

Traffic issues are a great concern to her, and she said she wants to see the new Camano Gateway bridge have four lanes instead of two.

Bergman said she would push for Highway 532 to expand to four lanes from Stanwood to Terry's Corner on Camano Island. She also thinks roundabouts can be useful to help traffic flow.

■ SEE COUNCIL, A5

## MORE INSIDE & ONLINE

Rob Johnson faces Dani Gaumond in the Stanwood City Council position 1 race, **A5**

Charlotte Murry and Tracy Abuhl vie for the District 2 school board seat, **A8**

Read more about the candidates in their own words with each article at **SCnews.com**

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Police.....A2 Obituaries.....A6 Puzzles.....A8 Classifieds.....B2  
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# Florence

► FROM A1

But the story of Florence and the region began much earlier.

Tribal groups like the Stillaguamish, Tulalip and Snohomish have lived near the Salish Sea for many thousands of years.

## Indigenous people pushed out

As waves of Europeans and Americans arrived, treaties were signed with area tribes and the land was claimed, further stoking the flames of a burgeoning resource-based economy.

Starting in 1854, Washington Territory Gov. Stevens began signing treaties with tribal groups that transferred control of the land to the U.S. government. Millions of acres were ceded in exchange for a guarantee that tribal rights would be protected, that some lands would be reserved and that many services would be provided.

The Center for Study of the Pacific Northwest, University of Washington writes of these agreements: “Although native peoples benefited in some ways from treaties over the long term, the treaty system proved quite disruptive, confusing, and destructive when imposed on Indians in the Pacific Northwest during the 1850s and 1860s.”

By the mid-1800s, Euro-Americans began arriving in the Stillaguamish River with an eye toward developing the land to suit their needs. Most arrived by boat.

“Before roads and railways, vessels, like sternwheelers and scows, plying the Stillaguamish River, were key to growth in the area,” local historian Dave Eldridge said. “This was the main way to bring people and supplies in and transport logs to mills.”

Although pilings of the docks for this long-ago maritime traffic are still visible near Stanwood, local residents are not aware of any remaining evidence of these structures on the water near Florence.

The initial draw to the area was the towering trees of the virgin forests that had all the elements to create a booming timber industry.

“Loggers coming from camps nearby needed places to stay and buy supplies,” Eldridge said. “Towns like Florence and Stanwood sprang up as a way to meet those needs.”

Trails developed into roads so that wagons and stagecoaches could travel through the area, according to Alice Essex’s local history book, “The Stanwood Story.”

These primitive, narrow “slashing roads” that were cut by hand through the forests were developed into roads wide enough for wagons and eventually stagecoaches that made regular stops in Florence and Stanwood, Essex wrote.

Farmers soon migrated to the area to dike the tidelands and take advantage of the rich soil. The first recorded claim on land by the Stillaguamish River was filed in Florence by farmer Henry Marshall in 1864.

## Boom and bust

During its heyday, which began in the 1860s, the bustling boomtown of Florence boasted such amenities as hotels, saloons, a post office, shops and a school.

“By 1870 there were 20 families, six bachelors and logging camp laborers — all staking their future on the wealth of the land and the forests,” Essex wrote.

By 1872, there were enough families in Florence to start a school — classes were held in the home of a



STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS FILE



MARY JENNINGS / FOR THE STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

**At top, the J. Sill Cash Store at Florence was the supermarket in the early days, later becoming the E.A. Hevly Cashstore. E.A. is in shirtsleeves in the middle, and his son Ralph Hevly is second from right. Above, the storefront can still be seen today in Florence.**

local resident until a school was built several years later. However, no U.S. Census records for Florence are available for that era.

By the late 1880s, a shingle mill, post office, stores, hotels and a blacksmith shop operated in Florence, which was vying with Stanwood — then called Centerville — to become area’s dominant city, local historians said.

But a decision in 1890 by the railroad to locate a depot in Stanwood sealed Florence’s fate.

The boomtown went bust.

“In 1890, the railroad came to the area,” local historian Dave Eldridge said. “The tracks hugged the hillside and the first depot in the area went in at East Stanwood. Until 1960, Stanwood was actually made up of two towns, Stanwood and East Stanwood.”

Railroads were more efficient than sternwheelers at moving goods and people, and by the early 1900s, Florence began its decline and the Stanwood area became the center of commerce with its train depot.

Hanson recalled that by the time he was a teenager, the school and most of the other commercial buildings from Florence’s heyday were either demolished for lumber or had burned down.

One business from the early days that remained viable for roughly a century was the Hevly store on Florence Road.

“The Hevly store first opened in the 1870s, and it was still going strong when I was kid,” Hansen said. “It was more of a convenience store than a regular grocery store by then, but it was a great place for me and my friends to ride bikes to and buy candy.”

Although the business dates back to the 1870s, Snohomish County records show that the current structure that housed the Hevly Store was built in 1913.

The store closed sometime in the early 1970s. The store building is still standing, but with a collapsed roof and overall dilapidated condition.

Some farmlands near Florence are set to disappear soon.

Local area Pioneer O.B. Iverson, who lived from 1845-1890, described the dike projects, which began in the Stanwood and Florence area in the early 1870s, as necessary for suc-

cessful farming.

“To fit this land for cultivation, dykes were built to exclude the high water,” he wrote. “These dykes are mud walls of various size. Those on the Stillaguamish flats will average about four feet high ...”

Those dikes also dramatically reduced estuary space for wildlife, including salmon. Now, plans are underway to some remove stretches of dikes to restore nearby farmland into an estuary.

## Florence Packing Co.

A notable part of Florence’s more recent commerce was the Florence Packing Co. facility that opened in 1972. It slaughtered horses and shipped most of the product to other countries, including China and Mexico, for human consumption. The business operated for more than 20 years.

For a time, horsemeat was also available in Seattle, according to a 2010 article in The Seattle Times.

Although, Florence Packing Co. stopped slaughtering horses onsite in the early 1990s, the business shipped live horses to Canada for slaughter until 2016.

According to Snohomish County records, the packing plant property was sold in 2017 and is now a private residence.

Since 2007, the federal government has not funded USDA inspectors for facilities that slaughter horses for food, effectively ending the practice in the United States.

Legislation is currently pending in Congress that



PHOTOS BY MARY JENNINGS / FOR THE STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

**Florence has not completely disappeared. At top, Teresa Miller sells coffee near her Florence home. Above, Goobees Honey Emporium has beehives in a Florence field.**

would permanently ban the slaughter of horses for human consumption and the shipment of live horses out of the country for slaughter.

## Commerce today

Although Florence may have peaked as a center of commerce well over a century ago, a handful of businesses can still be found today.

The Lady Florence, a vacation rental and wedding venue, is one of the grandest homes in the area.

The history of the house is of great interest to Amy Christianson, whose family painstakingly restored the home to its former glory. She determined that the house was built in 1912 by John P. Anderson who made his fortune in the Klondike gold rush.

“J.P. Anderson was a well-respected community leader in Florence, and when he built this house, it was one of the grandest in the area,” Christianson said. “It’s in the American Foursquare style, which was very popular at the time.”

By the time the Christianson’s parents purchased the home in 1989, it was showing its age after years of neglect.

“After Anderson’s widow moved out of the home in the 1960s, it became a rental because none of her three sons were interested in living there,” Christianson said. “I heard from some long-time local residents it became a bit of a commune in the ‘70s, and a squatter lived there in the ‘80s.”

Not far away, Teresa Miller operates S&T Espresso in a trailer on

Florence Road near her home — a Victorian-style structure built in 1898.

Miller relocated to Florence from Seattle 20 years ago in a search of a small-town lifestyle.

“We were told by the people who sold us the house that it used to be a brothel,” she said. “Anyone who can confirm this is probably long gone, but I think this bit of history (lore) adds character to the place.”

Down the road a bit is Goobees Honey Emporium.

Eric Stroschein, who bought property in Florence in 2010, said he felt that the proximity of the Stillaguamish River and the abundance of farmland was perfect for his family’s beekeeping business.

The Stroscheins don’t live on the property, which is where the old school once stood, but they store hundreds of hives there when they are not being rented for pollination services.

“In the winter, the majority of our hives go to California to pollinate almond crops,” he said. “Florence has been a great location and our bees have done well here.”

There are a few other businesses in Florence, including a storage facility and a landscape business, but not much else.

The days of Florence giving Stanwood a run for the commerce dollar are long gone, and that’s fine with long-time resident Trygve Hanson.

“This is such a peaceful and beautiful place to live and farm,” he said. “It’s hard to imagine if it had gone the other way and Florence had grown the way Stanwood has. I’m OK with the way things turned out.”

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# STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

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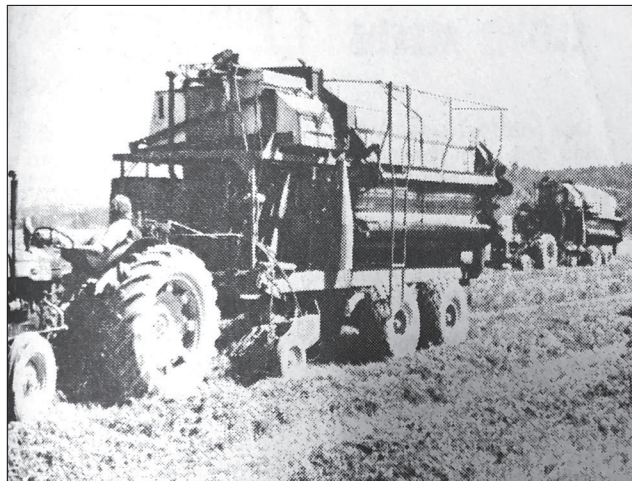
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## Exploring History

# The power of peas

Much of Stanwood's history rooted in this simple crop



SC NEWS FILE PHOTOS

Above, this August 1971 aerial photo shows how the pea harvest operation shifted more work to the Twin City Foods plant in Stanwood. At top right, mobile pea viners were at work in summer 1974 at the Al Christianson farm, where they were expecting to ship 1.4 million pounds to Twin City Foods.

By MARY JENNINGS  
For the Stanwood Camano News

For decades, the pea industry helped build the Stanwood area community by providing jobs to hundreds of locals while producing millions of pounds of the vegetable for the growing country.

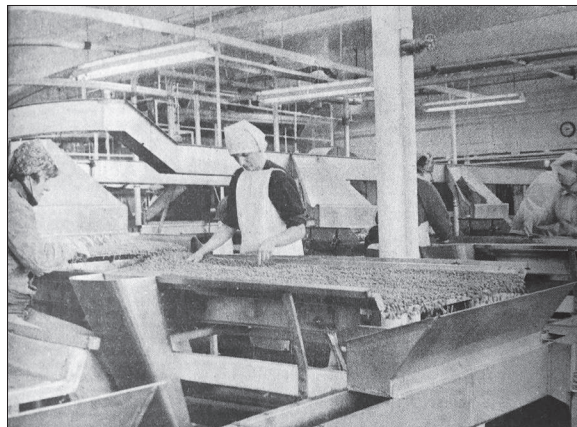
Scott Houser, 62, of Camano Island recalls spending six summers working the local pea harvest during his teenage years.

"As soon as school was out, we'd all head over to the local processors to put our applications in," he said.

In the 1970s, pea fields in the area accounted for more than 20,000 acres — roughly one-third the size of Camano Island — and there were around a dozen processors producing almost 30% of the nation's frozen peas, according to agriculture data for Skagit and Snohomish counties.

"The days were long and the work could be hard, but it presented a great opportunity to earn money for college in a job close to home," Houser said of his memories of those days spent out in the fields of Skagit Valley about 40 years ago.

■ SEE PEAS, A9



A crew at Twin City Foods processes peas in summer 1977.

# SnoCo orders masks indoors

Officials enact mandate to help stem rising cases

By EVAN CALDWELL  
ecaldwell@scnews.com

Snohomish County health officials announced the return of an indoor masking mandate for all residents ages 5 and older.

Snohomish Health District's Dr. Chris Spitters announced the widespread directive — the first county in the state to do so — on Aug. 10. The mandate went into effect Thursday, Aug. 12.

The new masking directive applies to indoor spaces that are open to the public, including retail, grocery stores, government buildings and other businesses and places where members of the public can enter freely. It does not apply to indoor non-public spaces, including businesses, offices, and other places of employment with limited access.

"I strongly urge all people in Snohomish County to voluntarily comply with this directive, and likewise direct all businesses that are open to the public to continue implementing policies and practices to ensure that their customers and employees wear face masks," Spitters, health officer for the Snohomish Health District, said in a statement. "We need everyone to take these steps in order to protect the health of our neighbors, customers, workers, and families."

Officials said in a media briefing that requiring nearly everybody to wear masks indoors again is necessary for Snohomish County to curb the alarming growth in COVID-19 cases.

■ SEE COVID, A6

# City may annex 30 acres for housing development

Council votes to evaluate, study proposal

By PEGGY WENDEL  
pwendel@scnews.com

After hearing concerns from some neighbors, the Stanwood City Council voted 6-1 Thursday to accept a property owner's request to annex into the city.

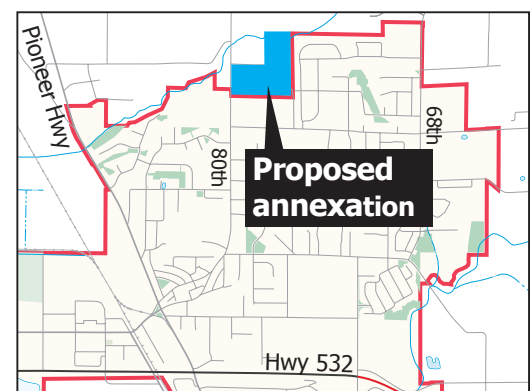
Edwards Development Group LLC, on behalf of Marlyn Kottsick, has applied to annex about 30 acres into the city. Kottsick

owns two 20-acre parcels at 7615 284th St. NW and 28801 80th Ave. NW.

These parcels are east of the Chandlers Reserve housing development and Schenk Packing, west of the Copper Station housing development and north of the Cedar Hill Estates housing development.

The council's acceptance of a petition does not approve the annexation. The action allows the city to start the process and evaluate the proposal for impacts. Community Development Director Patricia Love said. The property would be zoned single-family medium density.

■ SEE ANNEX, A5



Stanwood city limits, outlined in red.

## INSIDE

Council still deciding where to locate Stanwood City Hall, police station, **A5**







SC NEWS FILE PHOTOS

This June 1966 aerial photo shows the pea season equipment being prepped for harvest.

## Peas

► FROM A1

The harvesting and processing of green peas — or pea vining, as it was known — not only provided jobs to local youths, but was also an important crop for farmers who contracted with processors in the Skagit Valley and Stanwood area.

Producers earned nearly \$8 million dollars in 1978 — about \$30 million in today's dollars adjusted for inflation — and provided the economic backbone for the area for more than half a century.

### Peas took off in 1930s

Early settlers recognized that area's fertile soils and temperate climate made for excellent agricultural conditions.

Mike Younquist, 79, whose family has farmed in the Skagit Valley for generations, said growing peas worked especially well for his family of dairy farmers.

"With peas, the part of the plant that was not used for food was used as feed for our dairy cattle. It was a crop that just made economic sense," he said.

Although the Youngquists and other farmers starting growing peas in the early 1900s, the crop really took off in the 1930s during the Great Depression.

Like the rest of the nation, the Stanwood economy suffered and many businesses closed, but farmers adapted, local historian Richard Hanks said.

"A local vacant milk condensery was converted to a pea cannery in 1933," he said. Additionally, Lien Bros. Packing Co. — the predecessor of Twin City Foods — added peas to their canned vegetables line and a new industry was born.

At harvest time, fields of pea vines were cut by a swather — a device on a mowing machine for cutting and making the vines into rows. The vines were loaded into trucks and then taken to stationary viners at the processing plants. Stationary viners removed the pea pods from the vines and gently pried the peas from the pods.

It was the harvest process that proved most labor-intensive and provided many good-paying summer jobs.

Inside the processing plant, the freshly harvested peas were graded for quality in the pea lab and then washed, blanched, frozen and packaged for shipment.

The leftover part of the plant, or fodder, was trucked back to the farm and stacked into mounds to be used as silage for animal feed.



New pea harvesting equipment — mobile viners — arrives in March 1966.

In the 1980s, stationary viners were replaced when mobile combines took over, working right in the fields and moving farm to farm.

### Skilled teenagers helped run the show

In 1973, Houser, who is now a sales manager in electronics distribution, started out working "the stack" — the ever-increasing mound of leftover pea plant that was used as silage.

"Raking up the vines into a huge, slippery pile was demanding work, especially on hot days when the smell could be overwhelming, but everyone just got used to it," he said.

Houser, like many of his fellow young pea workers, did a variety of jobs.

"From working in the fields, I moved on to loading cut vines into the stationary viners," he said. "I also ran equipment that tested pea quality and drove mobile viners."

During the six- to eight-week summer pea harvest season the work schedule was intense.

"We would work six or seven days a week, usually 12 hours a day," Houser said. "I was 14 when I first started, and I was paid 75 cents an hour. When I turned 16, I started getting minimum wage, which was around \$1.80 an hour."

Youngquist, who was often in the fields supervising the young workers, was impressed with the teens' productivity.

"Lots of kids running pea vining machinery or working in the canneries had started out picking berries," he said. "By the time they were 16, these teenagers had skills so that they could put in the long days and earn quite a bit."

Don McMoran, director of Washington State University Skagit County Extension, does not underestimate the significance of the youth contribution.

"There wouldn't have been an industry without teen labor," McMoran said. "The majority of kids had

summer jobs on farms. It was not only a great way to make money but also a way to build meaningful work skills."

### Equal opportunities

Real estate broker Jamie Shaughnessy, 45, who grew up in Stanwood, also worked pea vining as a teenager.

"The Liens, my pioneer relatives, were so hard-working and industrious — especially when it came to farming," she said. "It was just a natural fit for me and many of my family to work in agriculture."

Shaughnessy spent her summers working for Twin City Foods in Stanwood.

Mike Lervick, whose family has owned Twin City Foods for generations, recalls the positive impact that processing had on the area.

"At the peak, I think we were employing around 1,000 young people during the harvest season," he said. "Kids got to earn serious money for college or whatever they wanted to pursue."

Shaughnessy said that by the time she started working in the 1990s, women had just as much opportunity as men.

"I worked in the office and in the pea lab that tested for quality," she said. "These jobs were mostly held by women. Many women also worked in the plant packaging the peas."

Shaughnessy recalled that young women also worked in the fields and several drove the large mobile combine tractors that became commonplace in the 1980s.

"My sister Meghan drove a pea harvester and not only was she good at it, she really enjoyed it," she said. The summer harvest meant not only jobs but also social time.

"They kids had the common experience of working long hard days together, and many found life-long friends," Youngquist said.

Sometimes even romance bloomed in the fields.

"I know that several young workers met their future spouses while out working in the pea fields," Lervick said.

### End of an era

The pea industry thrived for decades here, and many young people followed in their parent's footsteps.

In 2008, Scott Houser's son Erik, 33, spent a season earning money for college.

"I drove the pea harvesting combines all over Skagit and north Snohomish counties," Erik Houser said. "It was surprising as a teenager who hadn't been driving that long that I was allowed to drive these enormous rigs on the highways."

The younger Houser, who lives in Seattle and owns a political consulting firm, appreciated the ability to earn a decent amount of money close to home.

"I remember sometimes making \$100 a day — not bad for a teenager back then," he said. "The smell put me off peas for many years, but I love them now."

Erik Houser was one of the last teens to work in the local pea harvest.

By 2000, the value of the pea crop to producers was about \$3 million — less than half of what it was in 1978.

By 2010, local green pea farming and processing was over. It all came down to economics.

"It is a little bit cheaper to grow peas in other parts of the state, nation and the world, so that is where they are grown," said McMoran, of the WSU Extension.

McMoran added that food preferences changed, and consumer demand for peas just wasn't as great.

Twin City Foods stopped processing fresh vegetables in Stanwood in 2009.

In 2018, the company ended the local repacking of frozen vegetables and closed the Stanwood plant.

The company still has plants in Eastern Washington and its corporate office remains in Stanwood.

Many of those who worked in the pea industry were sad to see it end.

"I know that change is inevitable," Shaughnessy said. "It's just too bad that pea vining is not around anymore for local kids to not only earn money for college but also to gain skills, develop a true work ethic and make meaningful friendships."

Scott Houser agrees. "It was convenient that I was able to earn decent money close to home but I also took pride in the work with its high level of productivity," he said. "The years of working in pea vining were very meaningful to me, and it's a shame that the opportunity does not exist today. I'm glad my son got to be a part of it."

### Exploring History

This is the second installment in a new series that will take a deeper look at people, places and things that are a part of the fabric of the Stanwood-Camano area's history. Send suggestions for future articles in our history series to [newsroom@scnews.com](mailto:newsroom@scnews.com).



#### ANCHOR OF HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH

PO Box 764, Stanwood • 425-320-8273  
(A Church of the Lutheran Brethren)  
Meeting at the Stanwood Sons of Norway Hall  
next to Wells Fargo Bank  
9:30-10:15 a.m. Bible Class • 10:30 a.m. Worship Service  
*Russ Krause, Pastor*

#### BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH

8313 Park Dr. Stanwood • 360-629-2252  
*Steven Casteel Pastor*  
Sunday School - 10 a.m. • Morning Service - 11 a.m.  
Sunday Evening Service - 6 p.m. • Wed. Bible Study - 7 p.m.

#### CAMANO CHAPEL

867 S. West Camano Dr., Camano Island • 360-387-7202  
*Pastor Kris Kramer*  
8:30 a.m. Indoor Traditional Service in Heritage Hall,  
9:00 a.m. Indoor Contemporary Service in the Worship Center,  
10:30 a.m. Outdoor Service  
View Online: [www.camanochapel.org](http://www.camanochapel.org)

#### CAMANO LUTHERAN

Highway 532 at Heichel Rd. Camano Island  
360-629-4592 Church  
*Pastor Scott Brents*  
Online Worship 9:30 a.m.  
Drive-in Worship 10 a.m.  
[www.camanolutheranchurch.org](http://www.camanolutheranchurch.org)

#### CEDARHOME BAPTIST CHURCH

29000 68th Ave. NW, Stanwood • 360-629-9771  
*Dylan McFadden, Worship Director*  
*Janna Dyck, Cedarhome Kids Director*  
*Julie Olson, Nursery Director*  
All-Ages Sunday School - 8:45 a.m.  
Worship Service - 10 a.m.  
Youth Group (Grades 6-12) - Thurs. 6:30 p.m.  
[www.cedarhome.org](http://www.cedarhome.org)

#### CEDARHOME SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

28505 68th Ave. NW, Stanwood  
360-629-2441  
*Pastor Don Bryan*  
Saturday Worship 10:45 a.m.  
Saturday Bible Study 9:30 a.m.  
Spanish Services in the Blue Church  
[www.StanwoodSDA.org](http://www.StanwoodSDA.org)

#### MABANA CHAPEL

3871 South Camano Drive., Camano Island • 360-387-6431  
*Greg Summers, Pastor*  
Sunday School - 9:45 a.m.  
Worship Service - 11 a.m.  
Mon. Bible Study - 7 p.m.  
[www.mabanachapel.org](http://www.mabanachapel.org)

#### NEW VIEW CHURCH

8028 272nd St. NW, Stanwood - 360-629-2600  
Worship Sun - 8:30 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.  
Prayer meeting 1st Sunday each month beginning May 2, 5:30pm  
Tuesday Youth Gathering - 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. • [newviewchurch.com](http://newviewchurch.com)

#### OUR SAVIOUR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Our Saviour's Lutheran Church**  
Stanwood WA 98292  
360-629-3767  
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Alex Abdallah, Director of Student and Family Ministries  
**Additional Traditional Service**  
**8:15 AM Traditional Worship - Sanctuary**  
**Sunday Drive-In Worship, at 9:45 AM (continues)**  
**27201 99th Ave. NW Parking Lot**  
(Signal limited to area surrounding church building)  
**Virtual Service Videos at:**  
**OSLC StanwoodWA - YouTube**  
[www.oursaviourschurch.org](http://www.oursaviourschurch.org)

#### RIVER OF LIFE CHURCH

606 Arrowhead Road, Camano Island • 360-387-2600  
Meets at The Stillaguamish Grange 6521 Pioneer Hwy,  
Worship Service - 10 a.m.  
Sunday School (grades k-5)  
Nursery and Children's Sunday School  
Home groups, call or check out our website for time & location  
[www.riveroflife.cc](http://www.riveroflife.cc)

#### ST. AIDAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

1318 SR 532, Camano Island • 360-629-3969  
*Vicar Drew Foisie*  
Sunday Service - 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.  
Child Care 9 a.m. - Noon & Adult Forum 9:20 - 9:50 a.m.  
Wednesday Eucharist 10 a.m.  
[www.staidancamanoisland.org](http://www.staidancamanoisland.org)

#### ST. CECILIA CATHOLIC CHURCH

26900 78th Ave. N.W, Stanwood  
P.O. Box 1002 • 360-629-3737  
*Father Jan Lundberg, O.C.D.*  
[secretary@saintccc.org](mailto:secretary@saintccc.org)  
[www.stceciliastanwood.org](http://www.stceciliastanwood.org)  
Saturday Vigil Mass - 5 p.m.  
Sunday Mass - 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.  
Faith Formation Office - 360-629-4425

#### TIDELANDS

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of the Presbyterian Church  
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Sunday - 10 a.m.  
[www.tidelands.church](http://www.tidelands.church)



# STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

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## PUD raises rates

*First increase since 2017; residential bills to be \$3 more*

By EVAN CALDWELL  
ecaldwell@scnews.com

Most residents will pay \$2.40 to \$3 more per month for electricity starting in April.

The Snohomish County PUD Board of Commissioners approved the 2.1% rate increase Jan. 18 that raises rates for the first time in five years.

“This rate increase is required to address increasing costs and significant investments in infrastructure and service modernization,” Snohomish PUD GM/CEO John Haarlow said. “This will allow us to fund critical capital projects that will help us continue our mission of providing our customers with safe, reliable and environmentally sustainable power.”

The increase comes in the form of a new base charge of 10 cents per day — or about \$3 per month — for most single-family homes.

For apartments, duplexes and single-family homes with panels or breaker boxes rated for 100 amps or less, the base charge will be 8 cents per day — or about \$2.40 per month.

The PUD Board of Commissioners originally approved the implementation of a base charge in 2019 but delayed implementation in 2021 due to the pandemic.

With the addition of a base charge, the energy usage charge for PUD residential customers will not increase and remain 10.47 cents per

■ SEE PUD, A3



MARY JENNINGS / FOR THE STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

### Exploring History

## ‘A slice of heaven’

*People from throughout the Puget Sound flocked to Camano Island during the heyday of the area’s beachside resort boom*



STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS FILE

**Above: Madrona Beach resort pictured here in the late 1920s or early 1930s from what is now the Camano Yacht Club. At top: Camp Grande on the northwest corner of Camano Island is one of the last remaining resorts that become popular on the island a century ago.**



EVAN CALDWELL / STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

**Cama Beach State Park has preserved many of the cabins from the original resort on the west side of Camano.**

By MARY JENNINGS  
For the Stanwood Camano News

**R**enowned Pacific Northwest adventurer Eddie Bauer was a big fan of fishing off Camano Island.

In the 1920s, Bauer and other movers and shakers proclaimed Camano Island’s pristine waters and unspoiled beaches the ideal vacation spot in a series of articles and advertisements. They would come to the island

### Exploring History

The seventh installment of our “Exploring History” series — which takes a deeper look at the fabric of the Stanwood-Camano area — tells the story behind the many resorts Camano Island.

to catch a big king salmon, dig up buckets of clams and spend the day beachcombing.

For decades, Camano Island, nestled between the mainland and Whidbey Island in the northern Salish Sea, was a resort paradise

for the greater Seattle area. In its heyday, the island featured about 20 waterfront resorts attracting thousands of people each summer.

■ SEE RESORTS, A8

## Local virus cases dropping but hospitalizations continue to rise

By EVAN CALDWELL  
ecaldwell@scnews.com

Though COVID-19 case counts appear to have crested, hospitalizations are still on the rise, and Snohomish County was down to one unoccupied ICU bed last week.

As of Friday, Jan. 21, there were 215 COVID hospitalizations — about double what they were at the county’s previous peak, according to the Snohomish Health District.

### ONLINE

To get 4 free COVID test kits from the federal government, visit [COVIDtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov)  
To get 5 free test from the state of Washington, visit [sayescovidhometest.org](https://www.sayescovidhometest.org)

Data, projections and reports from health care providers suggest Snohomish County COVID infections likely peaked about two weeks ago, Snohomish Health District chief officer Dr. Chris Spitters said in a media briefing last week.

Hospitalizations due to the virus take up about 30% of the county’s hospital beds. Last week, there were 26 non-ICU hospital beds available.

■ SEE COVID, A3

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# Resorts

► FROM A1

## Early history

Camano Island was known by Indigenous people as Kal-lut-chin, which means “land jutting into a bay.”

Archaeological evidence shows that the island, with its 52 miles of shoreline, was an important area for tribes such as the Snohomish and Kikiallis for hunting, fishing, clamming and gathering a variety of marine life.

Their culture was forever changed with the arrival of Euro-American in the mid-19th century and the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott, where the Indigenous people ceded the land as part of the agreement.

With the resulting land privatization, more Europeans arrived, and development began with the logging of massive Douglas fir and western red cedar.

Records show that by the 1890s, over a dozen logging operations were in full swing on Camano. The extensive logging and clearing of land not only resulted in a viable place for agriculture, but the ensuing roads allowed access to shorelines that had previously only been reachable by boat.

A bridge built in 1909 connecting Camano to the mainland and the rising availability of car ownership in the 1920s created even greater accessibility.

In their book, “Camano Island: Life and Times in Island Paradise,” authors Art Kimball and John Dean describe how traffic evolved: “In 1912, there were only 27 cars on Whidbey and Camano combined; one Camano man owned a motorcycle. Fifteen years later, in 1927, 2,570 cars crossed the bridge to the island on an August Sunday, a number which would only increase.”

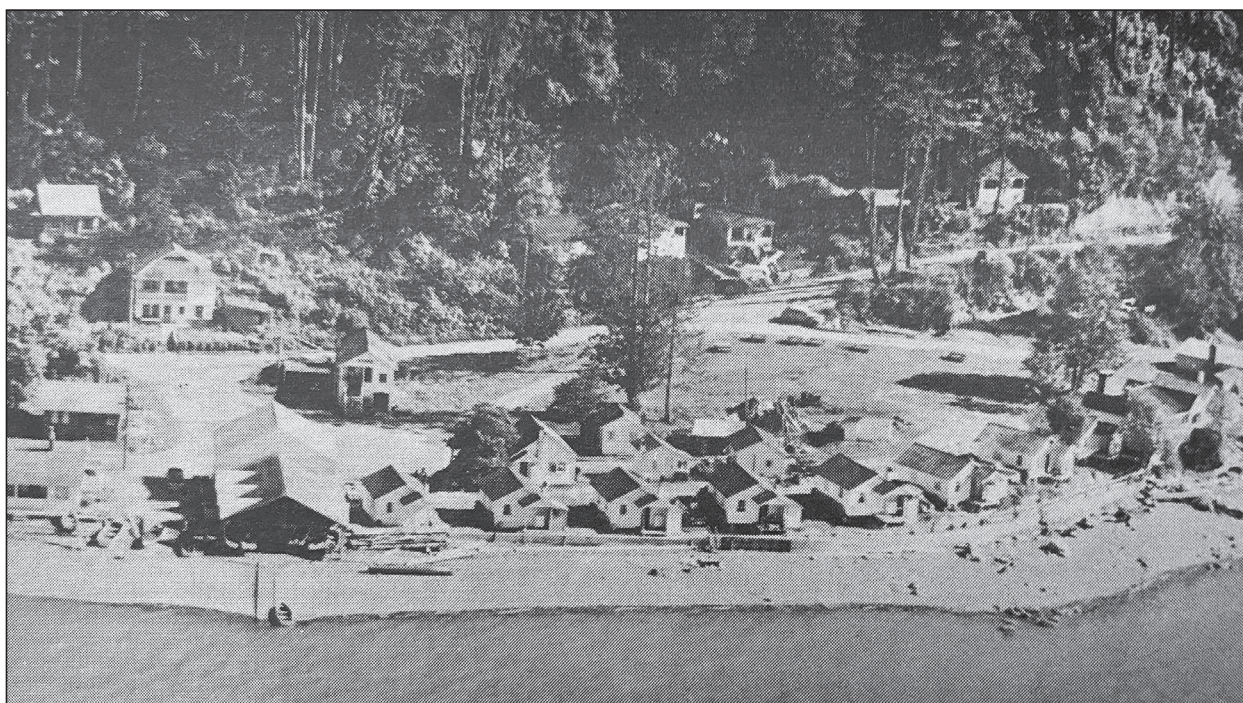
## The start of recreation

Kimball and Dean recount the earliest days of Camano Island’s outdoor enthusiasts, “Locals were camping off Rocky Point as early as 1900, which recorded 38 tents and 150 people in the summer of 1905.”

These early campgrounds evolved into “auto parks” where visitors could park their vehicles, camp and enjoy fishing and clamming at places like Utsalady, Camano City, Indian Beach, Juniper Beach and Mabana.

Soon resorts were established.

“Between 1920 and 1960, about 20 resorts were established, often changing owners many times, providing fishing boats and cabins for vacation rental,” Karen Prasse wrote in her history



STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS FILE

Maple Grove Resort and boat launch seen from the air in this photo from the 1920s or 1930s.



STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS FILE



EVAN CALDWELL / STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

Cama Beach seen about 100 years apart from about the same location in the two photos above. During the island’s resort heyday, it was one of about 20 such beachside resorts on Camano.

book, “Camano Island.”

The resorts ranged from a handful of rustic cabins at Pebble Beach Resort on the south end to fancier resorts with deluxe bungalows, stores, gas pumps and boat rentals at several north-end beaches including Maple Grove and Utsalady.

On the west side of Camano, a variety of resorts with varying amenities could be found at Indian Beach, Camano City, Sunset Beach and Manaco Beach, among others.

In “Camano Island: Life and Times in Island Paradise,” the authors describe popular, family-friendly resort activities, such as Fourth of July celebrations, picnics and beach walks that were enjoyed by vacationers throughout the summer.

In 1927, the Madrona Beach resort was particularly popular.

“There was free parking



Laurie Andersen is one of the owners of Camp Grande on the northwest corner of Camano Island — one of the last remaining resorts that become popular on the island a century ago.

and camping near the beach, and over 1,000 people came for the swimming, boating and fishing one summer day that year,” Kimball and Dean wrote.

Fishing derbies sponsored by many of the resorts offering hundreds of dollars in prize money were a big

draw.

Local author Jason Dorsey’s book, “The Beaches of Camano Island,” describes a successful derby catch, “Fishermen from the resort at Tye Beach fished Camano Head, and Anita Moore caught a 25-pound King salmon there in August of 1925.”

With easy access, Camano resorts were also a convenient place for extended stays for greater Seattle-area families.

“Many families would spend the whole summer on Camano; father would drive back to the city to work during the week and mom and the kids would stay to enjoy the beaches and outdoors,” wrote Prasse, who also serves as president of the Stanwood Area Historical Society.

## End of an era

The popularity of Camano resorts peaked in the 1950s. By the early 1960s, the resort scene was fading away.

Resorts in neighborhoods like Utsalady and Madrona

her grandkids, enjoy Camp Grande every summer without fail. “It is truly a slice of heaven. I’m just so grateful that this very special part of Camano’s history was saved.”

Farther south on the west side of the island is Cama Beach Resort.

With its more than 400 wooded acres and almost a mile of shoreline, Cama Beach Resort, which opened in 1934, was not only one of the biggest and most popular resorts, it also lasted the longest — until 1989.

The resort was developed as a getaway that catered to average-income Seattle-area families with amenities that included dozens of comfortable cabins, boat rentals, a rec hall, gas pumps and a store with all the basics for beachfront fun.

Much has been written about Cama Beach, including the comprehensive “Cama Beach: A Guide and A History,” by Gary Worthington. He is married to Sandra Risk Worthington, whose family founded the resort.

Sandra Risk Worthington and her sister Karen Risk Hamalainen, with the help from state agencies and community groups such as Friends of Cama Beach, helped convert Cama Beach Resort to a Washington State Park in 2008.

Even after extensive renovations, Cama Beach State Park retains much of the rustic charm of the resort and is regularly extolled as a top vacation spot in Washington.

Shortly after it opened, Sunset Magazine wrote, “Washington State Parks resuscitated this beloved cluster of ‘30s-era cabins set between forest and sea last year, and ever since, it’s been a go-to destination for anyone seeking a taste of the simple life.”

Overall, Worthington said he and his wife are pleased with the way things have turned out.

“We feel that Cama Beach State Park is a wonderful place for families and that it has definitely retained its old-time character,” he said. “Also, park management has also done a good job in making sure that environmentally sensitive practices are followed.”

The Worthingtons are delighted with improvements to the park.

“Sandra and I think that amenities such as the Center for Wooden Boats, the Winterfest programs and the beautiful quilts in the cabins make Cama Beach State Park something we can all be proud of.”

They also enjoy all the new trails, including one that connects Cama Beach to Camano Island State Park — another recreational treasure whose development was accomplished in just one day in June 1949 by an army of 1,000 local volunteers.

## A bygone era

Although the heyday of beach resorts on Camano Island is long gone, there are remnants of the past around the island.

Old cabins have been moved and reclaimed as homes in neighborhoods such as Madrona and Utsalady, and even a few old outbuildings can be spotted.

Near sites where resorts once stood at Utsalady Beach, Maple Grove and Mabana Beach, public access to the beach and boat launches can be found thanks to the resorts.

Certainly much has changed since Eddie Bauer boasted to the world about Camano Island in the 1920s.

However, many would agree that the long-ago resort advertisements touting the island as “A Delightful Spot on the Sound” is just as true today as it was 100 years ago.

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Indoor mask rule ending

Mandate for businesses and schools lifts March 21

By SC NEWS STAFF

As of March 21, Washington state government will no longer require masks in schools and most indoor spaces, the governor announced Thursday.

Meanwhile, the state's outdoor mask mandate ends Friday, Feb. 18. And the state will stop requiring proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test for entry to large events as of March 1.

COVID-19 hospitalizations and cases are dropping, and the state thinks the science shows it should be in a place where it can safely start stepping back from mandates, Gov. Jay Inslee said at a press conference Feb. 17.

The goal is to get hospitalization rates down to 5 per 100,000 people because hospitals can then operate normally, he said. After extensive research and projections based on current data, Inslee said he believes the state will meet that goal on March 21.

"We need to keep the mask mandate in place for the next weeks until we get down to that level," he said.

That does not mean masks won't be required anywhere.

Masks are still required in healthcare settings and on public transportation, as required by the federal government.

SEE MASK, A3

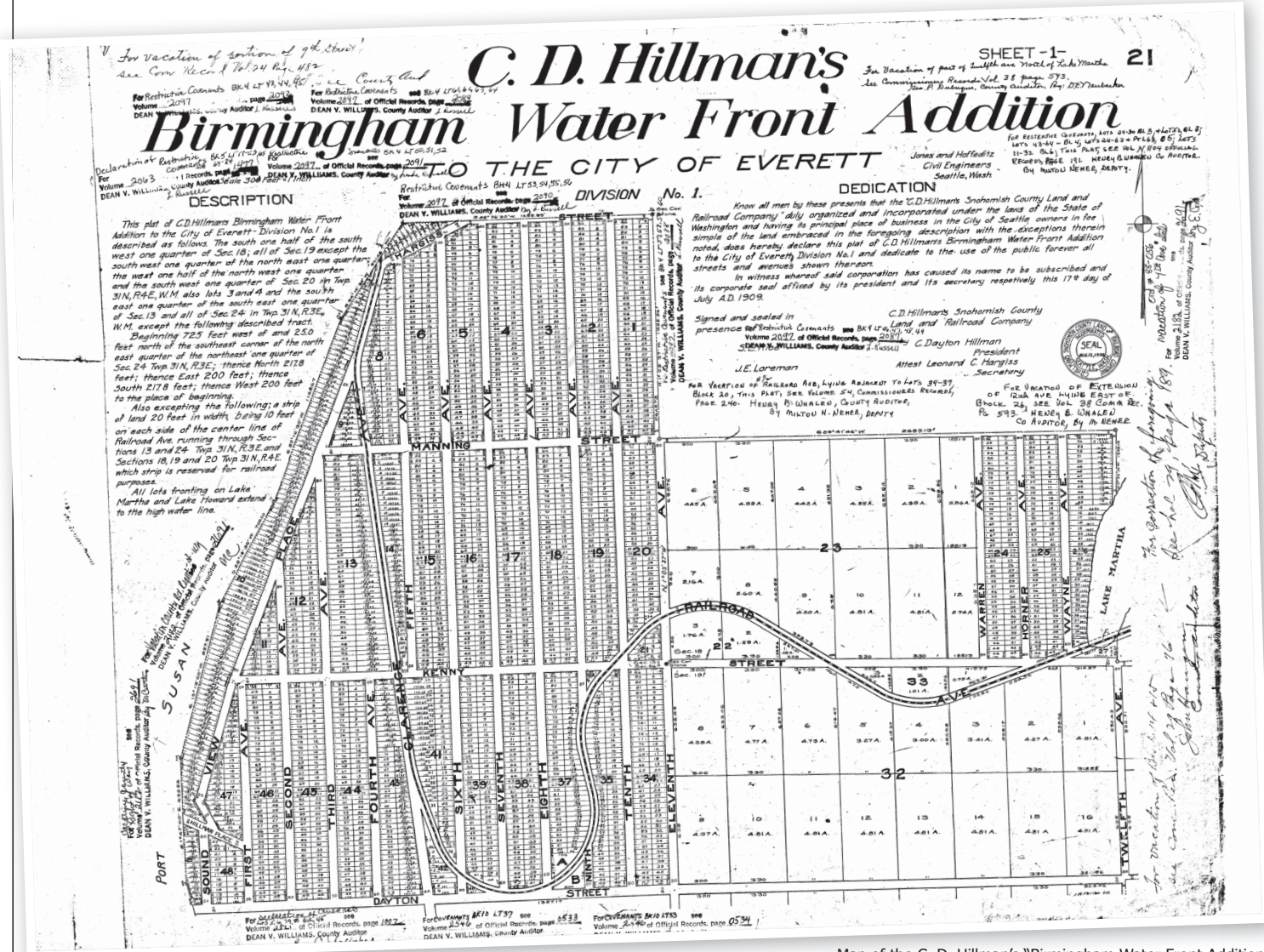


C. D. Hillman

Exploring History

All roads led to Warm Beach

The grand scheme behind the failed city of Birmingham



Map of the C. D. Hillman's "Birmingham Water Front Addition to the city of Everett" plans filed with Snohomish County in 1910.

Penny Buse displays artifacts she has collected while researching her book about the history of Warm Beach.



MARY JENNINGS / FOR SC NEWS

By MARY JENNINGS For the Stanwood Camano News

In 1910, an unscrupulous real estate baron proclaimed that "the markets of the Puget Sound, the Pacific Coast and the entire world" would be "at the door" of his new city of Birmingham — an ambitious development he proposed on Port Susan Bay south of Stanwood.

Although a few publications have touched on what happened all those years ago, the notorious history of Birmingham,

Exploring History

The eighth installment of our "Exploring History" series tells the story of the audacious fraud behind one man's wild attempt to build the city of Birmingham

now known as Warm Beach, would most likely be forgotten if not for the tenacity of a retired Stanwood school teacher.

Penny Buse, 73, grew up in Kirkland but spent her childhood weekends, summers and pretty much every vacation at her grandparents' home in Warm Beach.

During these visits, Buse got to know many of the old-timers who sparked her imagination with their stories of the fantastical city of Birmingham.

SEE WARM BEACH, A9

To some, Glass Quest is more than a simple treasure hunt

By IZZIE LUND ilund@scnews.com

Handmade glass balls aren't the only treasure people find during Glass Quest.

For some, the annual event has grown into an opportunity to create new traditions, connect with family and honor loved ones.

Brittany Luther, a mother of three from Bellingham, has traveled to Stanwood for the past two years to participate in the Great Northwest Glass Quest, which runs through Feb. 27.

She and her husband hide golf balls throughout their hotel room the day before the event so their children can practice.

"One person (hides) in the closet, and the others (are) on the prowl looking for the ball," she said. "They take it very seriously."

The popular free scavenger hunt, now in its 13th year, typically attracts about 15,000 people to the area.



SUBMITTED

Kim Thompson, center, and her family pose with the first clue ball they found in 2019, starting a family tradition.

SEE GLASS QUEST, A10



# Warm Beach

■ FROM A1

"It was the grand scheme of C.D. Hillman, a wealthy Seattle developer with a shady past, who promised working-class people the moon if they would invest in his new city," she said.

Over the years, Buse continued to gather stories and research to piece together the intriguing history behind Hillman's audacious fraud — a grand scheme that can still be felt through the area today.

## Hillman's early years

Clarence Dayton Hillman was born under humble circumstances on a small farm in Michigan in 1870.

As a young man, Hillman pursued land deals in Chicago and eventually decided to "go west" to Seattle in 1896 to seek his fortune.

Hillman arrived in the area at just the right time, Seattle historian Feliks Banel said.

"The late 19th century in Seattle, particularly once the effects of the Panic of 1893 begin to subside and the Klondike Gold Rush gets underway, is a booming period unlike anything the city had seen before or since," he said. "Seattle's population doubled between 1890 and 1900, and that 1900 number tripled by 1910."

Hillman, along with other savvy real estate entrepreneurs, took advantage of the economic opportunity the booming growth presented and as a result, became very wealthy.

He left his mark on Seattle.

"Hillman's legacy is present today in developments like the Hillman City neighborhood along Rainier Avenue and the Kenndale area north of Renton," he said.

He also platted a subdivision around Green Lake, where he built a lavish home on the lake for his wife and three children.

## Hillman heads north

After his prosperous time in Seattle, Hillman set his sights on the northern part of Puget Sound.

In 1907, he purchased more than 6,000 acres of recently logged land about 6 miles south of Stanwood.

This barren, relatively remote parcel was considered by most developers to not be particularly valuable, and it was acquired for a song by the savvy real estate entrepreneur.

Hillman had big plans for this huge tract that stretched north to Florence, south to Kayak Point and east from Port Susan Bay to the Seven Lakes area — encompassing more than 9 square miles.

In 1909, he submitted his development with more than 7,000 lots to the Snohomish County planning department.

The proposal was titled, "C.D. Hillman's Birmingham Water Front Addition To The City of Everett."

The name Birmingham came from a town in Michigan near Hillman's birthplace.

The lots ranged in size from 5 acres for potential farms and industry to much smaller lots



PHOTOS BY MARY JENNINGS / FOR THE STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

## Old pilings in the Warm Beach mudflats looking west toward Stanwood.



## Penny Buse stands near where a dock once stood in 1910 for prospective land buyers to disembark to explore the planned city of Birmingham.

intended for residential use, some less than 20 feet wide.

There were waterfront lots, both on Port Susan Bay and the lakes toward the east, many of them of irregular shape and size.

The land tycoon then set out to create Birmingham.

"Hillman planted Himalayan blackberries and elephant grass to hide the left-behind logging slash that covered the area," Buse said. "He constructed three piers on Port Susan Bay and a 2-mile boardwalk hugging the shoreline for prospective buyers to stroll as they admired what appeared to be new storefronts and industry that included a sawmill and cannery."

In early 1910, he began an advertising campaign to drum up interest.

Details from a booklet distributed by Hillman's Birmingham Land Co. are provided in "The Stanwood Story, Volume II," by Alice Essex.

He described the area as featuring a "handsome wharf" with a railroad that extended to "the ideal farming community" and land that is "ideally suited for industrial development."

The brochure touted a sawmill "equipped with modern machinery" and declared that "free waterfront sites will be given to worthy enterprises."

It stated that Birmingham

ton who had few resources and were looking for the 'promised land,'" Buse said.

Upon arrival in Birmingham, tours were given to prospective buyers of the brand new town.

"As visitors stepped off the boats, they were invited to view the new department store, the two general stores and the newly built sawmill," Buse said. "Also, a church and school building had been built."

Initially, business was brisk and Seattle newspapers reported that the Hillman Land Co. sold thousands of lots.

It all seemed too good to be true.

It was.

"Much of Birmingham had been staged to impress potential buyers," Buse said. "The prospering stores were props staffed with actors, and the sawmill did not function."

Throughout his Birmingham scheme, Hillman continued to rely on false advertising.

"Everything from claims of booming industries looking for workers to farmland that grew bushels of golden wheat and strawberries as big as 'teacups' were all part of Hillman's deception to draw property buyers in," Buse said.

Many of those who purchased land felt cheated when they discovered the reality of Birmingham — recently logged land that didn't have much beyond dirt, rocks and stumps.

Fraud complaints began to pile up.

## The crowbar hotel for Hillman

Due to questionable real estate practices from his time in Seattle, the federal government had been keeping an eye on Hillman.

"The United States District Attorney followed Hillman's business dealings closely," Buse said. "The government wasn't able to do anything about them until Hillman began sending literature through the mail that contained fraudulent claims."

In August 1910, Hillman was charged and later convicted of

mail fraud.

The real estate tycoon was sentenced to 2 1/2 years behind bars at the federal penitentiary at McNeil Island near Steilacoom.

In late 1913, after serving 18 months, Hillman's sentence was commuted by U.S. President William Howard Taft — whose campaign Hillman had generously supported.

Hillman joined his family in California and again began wheeling and dealing in land until his death in 1935.

## Hillman's impact still felt at Warm Beach today

Birmingham's name was changed to Warm Beach in 1924 to avoid confusion with other similarly named towns, according to the Stanwood Camano News archives.

Today, Warm Beach is a part of unincorporated Snohomish County.

According to Jennifer Lenz, land development specialist lead with the county's planning department, issues with Hillman's questionable practices persist.

"There are still times where a person purchases a parcel in this development where they are not able to construct a single-family residence for some reason or another, be it the 'building sites' allowed has been maxed out or the parcel is just too small or narrow to meet all the bulk regulations such as setbacks and lot coverage," she said.

For Buse, Hillman inspired decades of interviews and time spent combing through documents at museums and libraries. Along the way, she published articles and often spoke to community groups of her findings.

"People were just so interested in this relatively unknown history of Warm Beach," she said. "I can't tell you how many times I was encouraged to put it all together in a book."

Near the end of her teaching career, she did just that.

In 2011, Buse self-published "Stuck in the Mud: The History of Warm Beach, Washington." The 366-page tome, which is available at local libraries and online retailers, is a comprehensive history of the area and is filled with drawings, maps and photos.

"I called my book 'Stuck in the Mud' because so many things have been literally and figuratively stuck in the mud of Warm Beach," she said. "Everything from Captain Vancouver's ship that was grounded in Port Susan Bay in the late 1700s to big development plans for an oil refinery in the 1970s that got stuck and didn't pan out."

In spite of the somewhat checkered past of Warm Beach, Buse has only the fondest of memories of the place she's called home for decades.

"I grew up visiting family here, and my husband and I bought a home and raised our son here," she said. "I think Warm Beach is about the most beautiful spot around, and it's pretty difficult to imagine a better place to be stuck."

## Exploring History

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needed "just a few more miles of track" to connect with major railroads.

## The land rush begins

In June 1910, Hillman began offering free excursions via steamer from Seattle and throngs of excited would-be landowners hopped aboard.

Hillman had a specific buying audience in mind for his lots starting at \$65 with generous lending terms from the Birmingham Land Co. of just \$2 per month.

"The type of customer C.D. Hillman appealed to and to whom ads were aimed was the recently landed new residents to Washing-

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