JANUARY 2026

OUR TOWN

The official newsletter of Kalama, WA



IN THIS ISSUE

- New Year, New Faces
- New Rates and Some Planned Changes - Parks & Rec, Community Building, and City's 4th of July Event
- Capture Our Community
- Dog Fees & Licensing in Kalama
- What's Happening @ the Library?
- Upcoming Events

New Year, New Faces

With new rates, new council members, and a new mayor-- we have a lot of change within the city as the new year begins!

Welcome new Mayor Jon Stanfill, Council Position 1 Rose Scattergood, and Council Position 2 Paige Bozarth. Their terms in office begin on January 1st, 2026.

New Rates and Some Planned Changes

The Council had to make some challenging decisions regarding the 2026 budget. A few changes you may want to know about include the following:

Sewer Rates: For city residents, the sewer base fees and consumption rates will increase by 3%.

Water Rates:

- For city residents, there is **no increase to water rates**.
- Residential Kalama water users outside city limits will see a 10% increase to base fees and consumption rates.
- Commercial water users outside city limits will see a 15% increase to base fees and consumption rates.

Garbage Rates: Garbage rates will increase as of January 1, 2026. Your rate depends on your cart size, and whether you're a residential or commercial customer. These rates are set by Waste Control. New rates will be posted here: https://tinyurl.com/2vfe3jt6

Stormwater Fees: New Stormwater fees will be $9.25 per ERU (equivalent residential unit). These fees were $8.81 per ERU in 2025.

Parks & Rec: The Parks & Recreation Advisory Board and programs will be placed on pause for 2026 due to the tight budget. Parks & Rec is funded from one-time revenues where subdivision developers pay a "fee in lieu of parks" if they choose not to build (or dedicate land to) a park within the development. For more about the fee in lieu of parks, visit the KMC here: https://tinyurl.com/4ta2btwy Work on the comprehensive plan in 2026 will include a finalized Parks Plan to be eligible for grant future grant funding.

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Community Building: The Kalama Community Building and its operations have been closed starting January 1, 2026. The City is formally notifying civic groups and regular users of the building, and coordinating access to the building for groups to retrieve their belongings from the building. For 2026, funds have been budgeted to keep electricity on, as well as natural gas to have the heat on low (scheduled 55 degrees), water will be shut off and pipes/water heaters drained to prevent freezing during the cold months. The heating system will be serviced every 6 months. The city is required to pay insurance on any facility it owns, so insurance costs have been included in the budget, and the area around the facility will still be maintained (mowing, gutters, sidewalks). The City will also repair any damage or acute minor concerns like leaks, broken windows, or wind damage while the building is closed.

Discussion will continue throughout 2026 regarding next steps for this facility, which will take place during City Council meetings (1st & 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00pm) and we plan to discuss the initial results of the community building survey during a February Council meeting (likely February 5th).

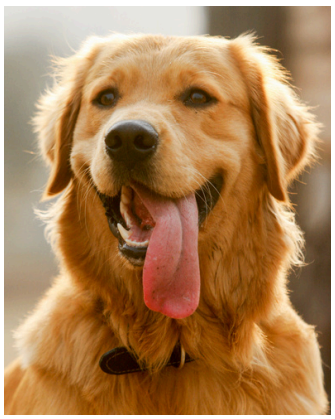
City's 4th of July Event: We've had questions about some of the 2026 budget decisions made by the city council. One of those questions is regarding the City's "Kalama Summer Lights on the Fourth" event that the city has put on for 3 consecutive years. Historically, this event has been funded by city tourism funds, county tourism grants, and sponsorships and donations from some very generous businesses. The council chose to reallocate the funds that would go specifically toward that event, including wages that pay for personnel to run that event (set up beer garden, clean bathrooms, remove garbage, set up food trucks and manage vendors, coordinate live music, audio visual, insurance, and transit service). The funds will be dispersed to the other tourism funding applicants. The fireworks at the waterfront were never sponsored by the City, and we are certain the community will continue their tradition of lighting off fireworks at the waterfront --whether there is activity at the amphitheater or not. There is some discussion of another group or organization taking on this event in a new way, but we still have time to see how Kalama will celebrate America's 250th birthday!

Capture Our Community



This is a friendly reminder that it's not too late to submit your photos that "capture our community" to be included in the Planning Commission's comprehensive plan update! Winners get their photo(s) included in the comprehensive plan final document plus bragging rights. Submit your photos to building@cityofkalama.com by March 31st by 5pm for consideration. This project is open to all who live in the 98625 zip code.

Dog Licensing in Kalama



This is a reminder that dog licenses for 2026 are due on or before January 30th by 5pm. This is required for Kalama residents inside city limits. Licensing your dog ensures rabies vaccinations are current and aids in reuniting lost dogs with their owners (our Kalama Police Department handles animal control). Complete the license application on the city's website or at city hall. If you renew after February 1st, the fee doubles.

- **unaltered (not spayed/neutered): $40 per year**
- **neutered or spayed: $20 per year**

Apply online at https://tinyurl.com/mrh9uf9s or complete a paper application at city hall or mail to PO BOX 1007, Kalama, WA.
City hall hours: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm (closed 12pm-1pm for lunch)

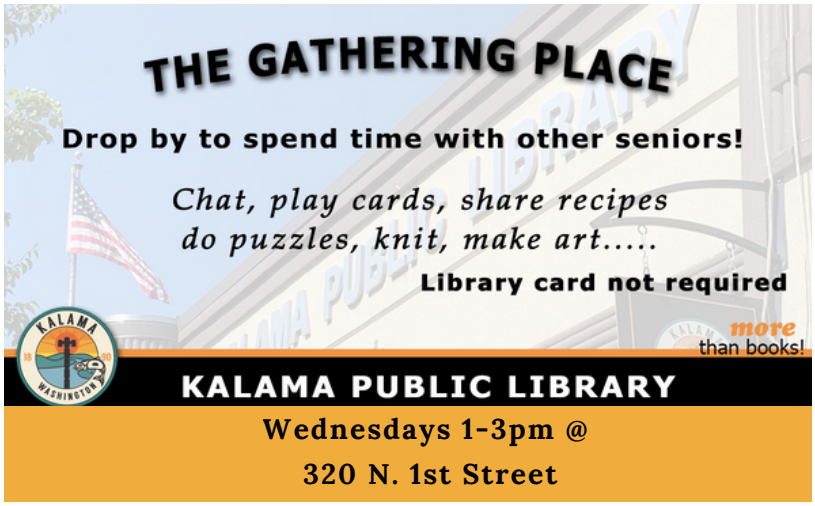
The Gathering Place

The Kalama Public Library is a place filled with more than books-- it's a place for community, a place to gather and share. Join us for The Gathering Place on Wednesdays from 1-3pm. This is geared toward seniors, and is a time to enjoy comradery, work on crafts, puzzles, play games, play cards, discuss books, create art, bring your own hobby, eat snacks & drink coffee, and simply enjoy the wonderful people that live in this community!



Stay in Touch in 2026

As we start the new year, be sure to check our social media (below) to stay up-to-date on existing programs for kids and adults. Storytime for pre-readers begins again in January as does The Gathering Place for the retiree set. We're looking to add a monthly kids' art program and continue our popular Watercolor with Marie and the exhilarating Puzzle Challenge! Stay in touch with us: www.kalamalibrary.com and be sure to like us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/kalamapubliclibrary/ and follow us on Instagram at: https://www.instagram.com/kalama_public_library/



Winter Storytime

Preschool children are welcome to come for songs, stories, rhymes and games. Kids bring your parents, meet some new friends, and learn something new. Join us on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 10:30am-11:15am. We hope to see you soon!

January 7th: Good Friends! (Bring your Stuffies!)
January 21st: What's the Weather?
February 4th: Pajama Time! (Wear your PJ's!)
February 18th: Sing, Sing a Song
March 4th: Dr. Seuss' Birthday Party

FOLK

Thank you for your support of the Kalama Library through FOLK! Watch for us next on February 13th and 14th at our annual Valentines book, basket, and bake sale from 10:00am to 4:00pm each day! We'll have books from many genres including children's books, Valentines gifts, and yummy treats to enjoy! Did you know that all our books cost just $1.00 each? If you fill a bag of books, it's an even better buy! All our proceeds go directly to help the Library.

Judy's January Drum 4 Fun Classes

Judy Bain has led her "Drum 4 Fun" class through Kalama's Parks and Recreation program. She and her husband Jim have found a solution for relocating their workout classes since the city is closing community building operations for 2026. Although it will no longer be a city program, this class is a great success in the Kalama community, and we wanted to spread the word about the new location!

New Location:
Mountain Timber Market
254 Hendrickson Dr.
10am-11am
Tuesdays & Thursdays in January



JANUARY 2026



UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, January 1st	**New Years Day - City Offices & Kalama Public Library closed (Council meeting canceled)**
Monday, January 19th	**Martin Luther King Jr. Day - City Offices & Kalama Public Library closed**
Fri & Sat, February 13th & 14th	**FOLK's Annual Valentines Book, Basket, and Bake Sale, 10am-4pm each day @ the Kalama Public Library**
Monday, February 16th	**Presidents Day - City Offices & Kalama Public Library closed**

Did you know there's a calendar with all Kalama events? From exercise classes, to City events, and everything in between. Check out the Kalama Events calendar here: **https://www.kalamachamber.com/community-calendar**

Meeting Info

- City Council : 1st & 3rd Thursdays @ 7pm
- Planning Commission: 2nd Thursday @ 6pm
- Civil Service Commission: 4th Thursday @ 5pm
- Library Board: 3rd Wednesday @ 5:15pm (bi-monthly beginning each January)

Meeting Location: 320 N 1st St, Kalama, WA 98625 (and via Zoom, click Agenda for info)

Contact Us

- Public Works 360-673-3706
  - (after hours) 360-703-0168
- Police (office) 360-673-2165
  - (emergency) 911
  - (non emergency) Cowlitz County dispatch 360-577-3098 and press 3
- City Hall 360-673-4562
- Library 360-673-4568
- Building/Planning 360-673-5211
- Utility Billing 360-673-4554
- Community Building 360-762-7690

Helpful Contacts

City of Kalama - Main	360-673-4562
Comcast	888-226-2278
Cowlitz County Assessor	360-577-3010
Cowlitz Bldg & Planning	360-577-3052
Cowlitz PUD	360-423-2210
Fire District #5 (office)	360-673-2222
Kalama Post Office	360-673-3567
Kalama Telephone Co.	360-673-2755
Labor & Industries (L&I)	360-575-6923
Utilities Locate	800-424-5555
Waste Control	360-425-4302

We are on Facebook & Instagram