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# The Olympian

## County may ask voters for higher property tax

BY MARTÍN BILBAO  
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Thurston County may ask voters to pay more property tax so it can address a widening budget deficit in the years ahead.

The Board of County Commissioners must decide what to do about a structural deficit in its general fund that has grown to an estimated \$23.8 million in 2025.

One potential solution is a 6-year levy lid lift. On Wednesday, Assessor Steven Drew presented the board with a still-hypothetical option of lifting the county's levy rate to \$1.225 per \$1,000 in the first year followed by up to 6% increases in years 2-6. This plan would add about \$26 million to the county general fund in the first year and give the board leeway to bring in more money as needed in future years.

State law generally restricts the board from increasing its levy beyond 1% annually, even when yearly increases to the cost of business exceeds that. Raising the levy by more than 1% requires voter approval.

Drew's presentation was purely informational. The board did not approve proceeding with a ballot measure. Still, the mere consideration of this move is indicative of the difficult position the board finds itself in.

The same day, the board voted to oppose the approval of fiscal year 2025 requests from its departments for general fund additions, positions or reclassifications that may impact the general fund.

"I made the motion last time," Commissioner Wayne Fournier said. "I think that I have information in my mind to say that, yes, we need to make sure we're taking some action to stop the bleeding as we triage forward."

The county recently warned

**SEE PROPERTY TAX, 4A**

## Inmate dies at Thurston County Jail amid drug outbreak

BY TY VINSON  
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The Thurston County Sheriff's Office has requested an independent investigation from the Region 3 Critical Incident Investigation Team after another inmate died at the Thurston County Jail — the second death at the jail in September.

The investigation will be led by the Grays Harbor County Sheriff's Office.

According to a news release from TCSO, deputies and fire personnel responded to the jail just after 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 14, to reports of an inmate in medical crisis.

Corrections staff and on-site medical personnel immediately began life-saving efforts, which were continued by arriving medics. The medics began to transport the inmate, at which time he was pronounced dead.

Coroner Gary Warnock said the inmate was a 53-year-old

man. He could not confirm his name.

Sheriff Derek Sanders posted on his social media on Sunday evening about the incident. He said while the cause of death has not been determined yet, there has recently been another outbreak of drugs getting into the jail.

The sheriff said every time an inmate dies, some people immediately insinuate that corrections deputies are supplying drugs inside the jail. He said

since he's taken office, not one inmate, social worker, nurse, technician, attorney or anyone else has made an allegation that this is happening in Thurston County.

"I'll say that again: It's not that deputies have been alleged to supply drugs and were cleared after investigation," he said. "Not one deputy has been accused, period. If a deputy were to supply drugs inside our jail,

**SEE INMATE, 4A**



BRIAN HAYES [bhayes@thenewtribune.com](mailto:bhayes@thenewtribune.com)

A bus drives through the snow in the McKinley Hill neighborhood of Tacoma, Wash., on Feb. 3.

## Almanac says Washington winter to be mostly mild

BY SARA SCHILLING  
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Winter is still a few months off, but if you love the snow — or if you do everything you can to stay out of it — you may already be wondering what the season will bring.

Nationwide, it's expected to be a "mostly mild" winter, with some "pockets of wild," according to The Old Farmer's Almanac, which said that "most areas will experience near-normal to slightly milder temperatures," while some areas "should brace for a sharper chill."

So, where does Washington fall on that spectrum? Here's a look at the state's winter forecast:

### WHAT'S THE WINTER WEATHER FORECAST FOR WASHINGTON IN 2025-26?

In the Pacific Northwest weather region — which includes western Washington, western Oregon and part of northern California — it appears a mild winter may be in the cards, with some "chilly spells and below-average snow," according to The Old Farmer's Almanac.

Temperatures are expected to be above normal, with the coldest weather hitting in late November, early December and early February, per The Old Farmer's Almanac.

The region's winter forecast shows below-normal rain and snowfall, according to The Old Farmer's Almanac, which said it'll be snowiest in the early part of February.

In the Intermountain weather region — which includes eastern Washington and Oregon, all of Idaho, and parts of several other states — a "mild winter with mixed precipitation and fluctuating snow amounts" is forecast, per The Old Farmer's Almanac.

It's expected to be warmer than normal, with the coldest weather hitting in late November, early December and early February.

Precipitation is forecast to be "slightly above normal," and snowfall is expected to be less than normal up north and above normal in the more southern part of the region.

Meanwhile, some other weather sources had their own takes.

An outlook from the National Weather Service's Climate

Prediction Center put the probability needle toward below normal for temperatures in much of the state in December through February.

And the Farmers' Almanac, which is separate from The Old Farmer's Almanac, said "the Pacific Northwest mountains are gearing up for some impressive snowfall totals" this winter, while the Northwest, including Washington and Idaho, should "prepare for a cold winter."

### WHEN IS THE FIRST DAY OF WINTER IN 2025?

The winter season kicks off in December, although the specific date depends on whether you're going by the meteorological or astronomical definition, The Old Farmer's Almanac said.

The meteorological start of winter is Dec. 1, per The Old Farmer's Almanac, which said "meteorological seasons are based on the annual temperature cycle and climatological patterns observed on Earth."

**SEE ALMANAC, 3A**



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THURSDAY OCT 9 7:30PM

**MARIACHI HERENCIA DE MEXICO**  
WEDNESDAY OCT 15 7:30PM

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