

# 2018 WHO'S WHO

Community Yearbook  
and Business Reference

Who's Who  
Person of the Year –  
Yelm Mayor  
JW Foster

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A SUPPLEMENT TO THE  
NISQUALLY  
VALLEY NEWS



# Being Mayor Isn't a Job, It's a Way of Life for Yelm's Foster

BY MEGAN HANSEN

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To Yelm Mayor JW Foster, being the mayor isn't a job, it's a way of life.

And while you're likely to find him daily at City Hall, Foster can also be found around town at most community events, shopping at the Saturday Farmers Market and even cleaning up land around the Nisqually.

He's a member of several service organizations and can often be found around town serving.

"It's just who I am," Foster said. "I like it. That's why I live in a community and not out in the woods."

"If I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it to the best of my ability."

Foster grew up in East Greenwich, Rhode Island "where community service is just a part of what people did."

His dad was a Rotarian and worked as the editor and publisher of the local paper. His mom was the first female president of the first Baptist Church in Greenwich.

At 16, Foster joined the local fire department and volunteering his time.

"I just got the bug of helping people," he said. "It just makes me feel good."

Foster's spirit of service continued into adulthood where he spent four and a half years serving in the Marine Corps, eventually landing in California. There he moved on to paramedic school and started a 34 year career.

In 1988, Foster and his wife, Nicki, moved to Thurston County where he volunteered to help develop the paramedic side of Southeast Thurston Fire and worked for the Tumwater Fire Department until 2013.

*Continued on Page 7*



Yelm Mayor JW Foster gives back with community cleanup.

File Photo

## *Allstate Ronelle Funk Insurance*

Wouldn't it be great to have your very own personal insurance agent to make sure you are protected?

You can at Ronelle Funk's Allstate Insurance office.

Ronelle and her agents answer the phone during business hours and you never have to listen to a another phone tree again.

Her office wants to know you and your family to make sure your insurance meets your needs and protects you from financial loss. Ronelle is the past-president of the Yelm Chamber and would love to help you if you have a small business. Ronelle's Allstate office offers home, auto, motorcycle/boat, renters, landlord, business, life insurance and retirement services.

Ronelle's office is located in Prairie Plaza on Creek Street next to the Yelm Post Office.

Come by today for a free, friendly comparison quote and see how much her office can save you on your insurance!



**Ronelle Funk - Agency Owner**



**10501 Creek St., Suite 3 - Yelm  
360-458-6061**



## *Blue Waters Acupuncture Center*

Dr. Mike and his wife Edith have been operating in Yelm since May 2010.

Edith is the office manager, and with the assistance of Ann at the front desk, and Ella in the Chinese herbal dispensary, we are honored to help a growing number of people in our community and surrounding areas effectively using a medicine that has been successful for thousands of years.

Dr. Mike is Nationally Board Certified by the NCCAOM in both Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine. He has an extensive Chinese Herbal Dispensary and can effectively help a variety of health concerns.

Having had a background as an MD in internal medicine, Dr. Mike is uniquely qualified to assess the potential strengths and weaknesses of both medical disciplines to determine if our treatment is a good fit or not.

(He is licensed only as an Acupuncturist in WA State)



**Pictured left to right: Ann, Edith,  
Dr. Mike, Ella**



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## Hometown Property Management

Hometown Property Management, Inc. is the region's leader in professional property management, providing professional services to residential property owners and home renters in Thurston County for over 20 years.

### HISTORY

In 1998, Hometown Property Management started out with a portfolio of approximately 40 properties. Today, they manage over 1,200.

"One of our keys to success is that we are integrated into the community and very active participants in community service and giving back," said Andrew Barkis, who co-owns Hometown along with Rob Rothwell.

In fact, in March 2016, Barkis was appointed Washington State Representative for the 2nd Legislative District (Yelm) and in November 2016 was re-elected by popular vote.

### REGIONAL LEADER – BENEFITING BOTH OWNER AND RENTER – NOW IN YELM

Hometown also credits their success to their commitment to customer service for both property owner and tenant. "We've created an amazing program of Property Management/ Customer Service that's unmatched in this area – probably in this region, focusing on single-family property management. And, we continue to grow," says Barkis.

In 2016, Hometown opened an office in Yelm! "The Yelm rental market is exploding," said Lori Delong, Hometown's Yelm Office Manager. "We're seeing a high demand for rental homes, and we need more inventory. It's a great opportunity for people who are considering an investment property or wanting to move into a bigger home."



Andrew Barkis



204 E Yelm Ave. - Yelm  
360-955-5993  
www.hometownpm.com

CH588257M

## J&I Power Equipment

J&I Power Equipment has been serving Thurston County since 1974. They are proud to be celebrating their 12th year in Yelm. J&I is family owned and operated. You can meet the owners on any given day working in either location. Randy Longnecker and his daughter, Angela, manage their Yelm location while Lori Longnecker and her son, Greg, manage their Olympia location. J&I's friendly staff pride themselves on selling quality equipment and providing excellent customer service.

They only carry top-of-line products like Kubota, STIHL, Honda and Hustler Turf Equipment.

J&I has a large stock of replacement parts and also services everything they sell. Whether your needs are big or small, visit J&I Power Equipment today.



Yelm J&I Staff



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## Terry Kaminski

Terry Kaminski has been a successful full time Realtor for 31 years. Currently the Managing Broker at Windermere Yelm, she continues to serve buyers and sellers in commercial and residential sales. A veteran of the industry, Terry says "Every transaction has a million moving parts, but navigating and facilitating this process to completion is exhilarating."

She still marvels at the synergy of putting people and properties together. After having lived most her life in a big city, Terry says working in a small town makes doing business extra friendly, very personal and extremely rewarding.

Completely committed to community service,

Terry serves on the Board of Directors for both The Yelm Area Chamber of Commerce, Bounty for Families and was elected this year to Yelm's City Council.

"I am proud to live and work in Yelm and contribute all I can to our beautiful city!"



Terry Kaminski

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## Leavitt Orthodontics

Leavitt Orthodontics has a fun and friendly atmosphere; Dr. Leavitt and his team work hard to make sure that every patient feels comfortable and welcome at every visit.

The office is beautifully decorated, warm and inviting.

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We make smiles  
come true!

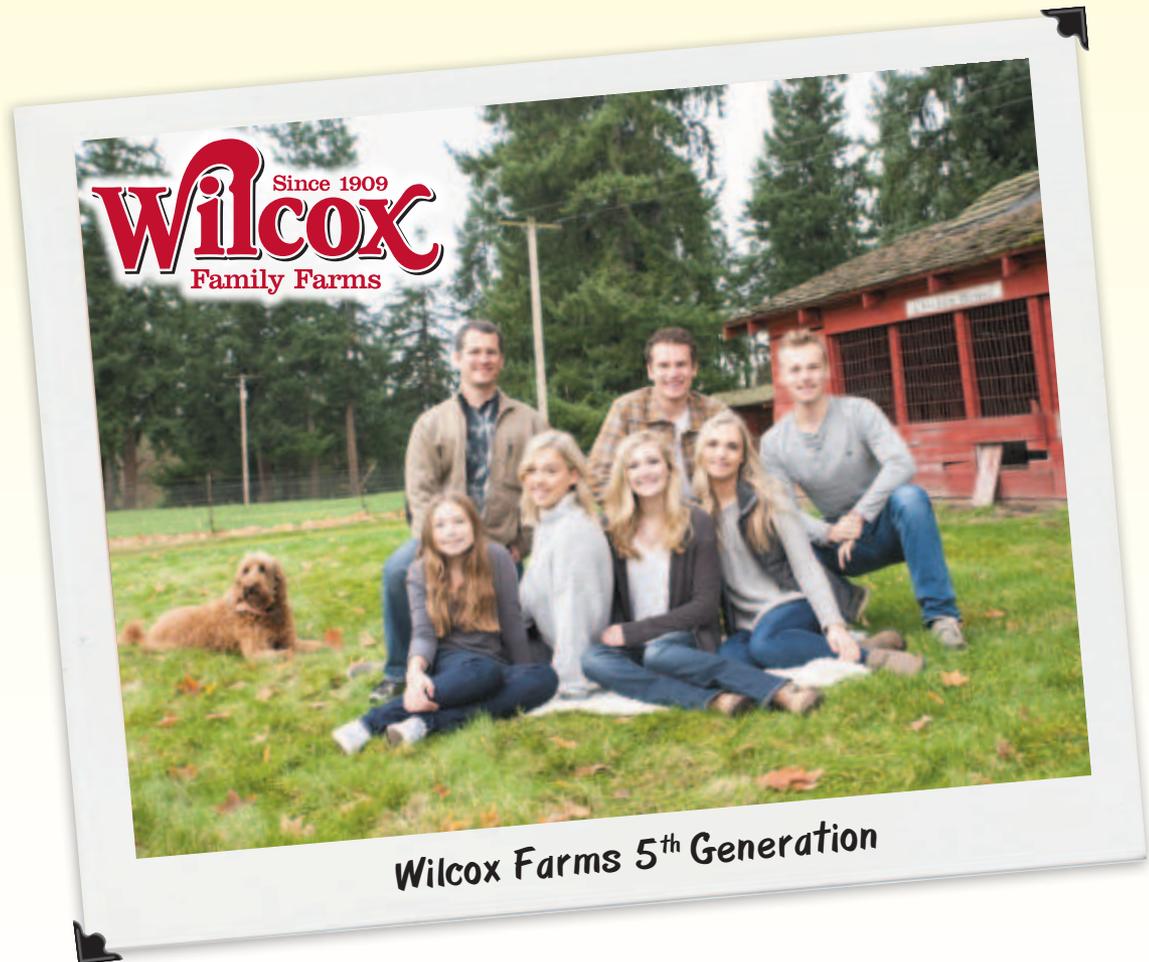


360-458-7333  
718 Yelm Ave. W - Yelm  
[www.leavittortho.com](http://www.leavittortho.com)

CH58265M

## Wilcox Family Farms

Meet the fifth generation of Wilcox children! They may be found around town at the local Starbucks enjoying a cup of coffee, or shopping for groceries at Safeway. Wilcox has been a part of the Yelm community for more than 100 years and not only has Yelm been the location of the family business, but also a home to their children as they grow. Today, the fifth generation enjoys their summers working on the family farm; it is not always easy work, but always a great opportunity to bond and learn about the business. Some days you can find them in our hardboiled plants packaging eggs, sometimes caring for the chickens and other days working at local events to help spread the word about their family legacy.



Wilcox Farms 5<sup>th</sup> Generation

360-458-7774  
40400 Harts Lake Valley Rd. - Roy, WA 98580  
[www.wilcoxfarms.com](http://www.wilcoxfarms.com)

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## Yelm Area Chamber of Commerce

The Yelm Area Chamber of Commerce, established in 1977, is a nonprofit organization owned by Yelm, Rainier, Roy, McKenna, and surrounding area businesses. Line Critchfield became executive director of the Chamber in June of 2016 and serves with an elected board of directors.

President, Angie Evans, Prairie Hotel; President Elect Dan Nicholson, D'Zines Creative Solutions & Graphics; Treasurer, Jane Walker, Olympia Federal Savings; Past-President, Denise Hibbeln, Prairie Park. Board Members: Amber Young, America's Credit Union; Ben Ontiveros, Easthaven Villa; Brian Wharton, Yelm Community Schools; Shawna Dutton, South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity; Steele Clayton, State Farm; Terry Kaminski, Windermere Real Estate; Tracey Wood, Mr. Dougs Restaurant; Tracie Choate, Re/Max Professionals.

The board and staff are dedicated to promoting members and urge everyone to shop locally and support the businesses of McKenna, Roy, Rainier, Yelm, and surrounding areas. The Chamber recently moved locations and is now open at 608 East Yelm Ave. We invite you to stop into our new location.



2018 Chamber Board

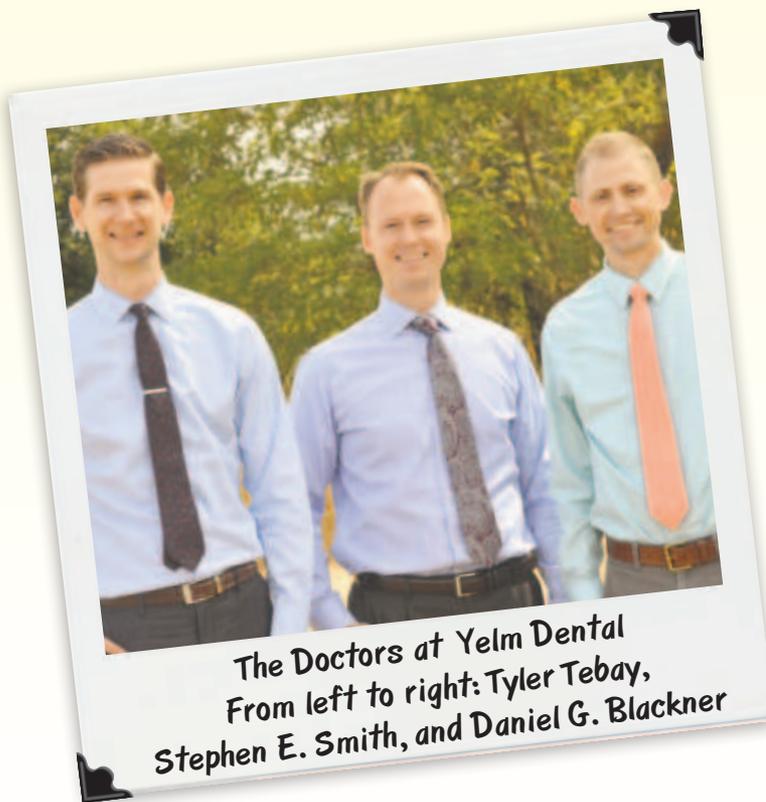
Yelm Area  
Chamber of Commerce

360.458.6608  
608 East Yelm Ave. - Yelm  
www.yelmchamber.com

CH568259M

## Yelm Dental

Our growing team has expanded our ability to provide dental services for patients of all ages and dental needs. We invite you to visit our website at [www.yelmdental.com](http://www.yelmdental.com)



The Doctors at Yelm Dental  
From left to right: Tyler Tebay,  
Stephen E. Smith, and Daniel G. Blackner

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Shane Brant from Images By Brant

Yelm Mayor JW Foster offers a handshake to Yelm Chamber President Angie Evans at the 2017 Best of Nisqually Gala. Foster was voted Best Politician in the Nisqually Valley in 2017.

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“We realized Yelm is where we always wanted to be,” Foster said.

In 1996, the couple moved their family of four children to Yelm.

“We have focused our life on creating a family unit,” he said. “We’re family central.”

“We found a place that had some acreage. The kids grew up with chores and animals, getting to see the cycle of life.”

A major goal for the couple was being able to pay for all four children to go to college and start their adult lives debt free.

“Nicki and I are very proud to have accomplished what we have as a family,” Foster said. “It’s a great source of pride.”

Appointed as interim mayor in 2016 and elected in 2017, Foster approaches leadership as more of a supportive role.

He looks at it from the perspective of what can he do to help his staff do their best.

“I really love doing this,” Foster said. “We’re making some good changes.”

Since taking the reins, Foster said there’s been focus on the infrastructure of government, saving a lot of money and improving efficiency.

He’s focused on creating the best run government, upgrading software and adding key personnel.

During his first term as mayor, Foster set three budget goals.

- Maintain quality and safety of our workforce.
- Enhance community services.
- Strengthen community partnerships.

“We’re getting more done than ever before but spending less,” he said.

The City of Yelm has 60 employees that serve a population within city limits of just over 9,000 people.

But when you count the outlying areas, the 98597 zip code, the city and its amenities serve 45,000 to 55,000 people, Foster said. There are people who live around Yelm and come to the city for services.

Every dollar they spend helps support those services, he added. That’s why a key focus of the city is



File Photo

Foster holds up a sign to excite the Lackamas students for the Great Kindness Challenge.

economic vitality.

The city is also focuses on trying to make road improvements to help ease congestion through town.

“We are doing as much as we can to dig ourselves out of it,” Foster said.

The State Route 510 Bypass has been decades in the making with the help of current and elected officials of the past.

But in 2022, Foster said it should be completed.

And as Foster continues his first full term as mayor, he’s continually finding ways to serve his community outside of office.

He and his family have been closely associated with the Nisqually Land Trust for years, Foster just this year retiring from the board.

He’s a member of the Yelm Lions Club and Rotary Club of Yelm.

And, if you didn’t know already, he’s a musician.

“I like music,” Foster said. “I play and guitar and sing.”

He’s even written and performed a half dozen song for weddings, including his daughter’s own recent wedding.



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