

# IACC Honors Washington's Community Builders at 2026 Annual Conference

*Annual awards celebrate leadership, stewardship, innovation and impact in communities across the state*

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The [Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council \(IACC\)](#), a statewide nonprofit that connects Washington communities and tribes with infrastructure funding, technical assistance and partners, honored individuals and projects making a lasting difference across the state during the 2026 IACC Conference, held October 20-22 at the Wenatchee Convention Center.



**IACC**  
INFRASTRUCTURE ASSISTANCE  
COORDINATING COUNCIL

The Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council (IACC) is a statewide nonprofit that connects Washington communities and tribes with infrastructure funding, technical assistance and partners.

The 2026 IACC Awards recognize the people and partnerships behind the infrastructure communities depend on, from longtime public servants and environmental stewards to local leaders finding creative solutions to complex challenges.



Strong communities don't happen by accident. They are built by people who know their communities, bring others together, share what they know and help turn ideas into progress"  
*Janea Stark, Chair of IACC and Executive Director of CERB*

"Strong communities don't happen by accident. They are built by people who know their communities, bring others together, share what they know and help turn ideas into progress," said Janea Stark, Chair of IACC and Executive Director of [Washington State's Community Economic Revitalization Board \(CERB\)](#). "These awards are our opportunity to celebrate those community builders and the many ways they contribute, whether they are solving a

difficult infrastructure challenge, protecting community resources, sharing their expertise or helping others succeed. We are proud to recognize and uplift their incredible work on behalf of communities throughout Washington."

2026 IACC Award recipients include:

Joe Mitschelen Lifetime Achievement Award: Michael Echanove, City of Palouse, and Andrew Denham, Town of Twisp

The Joe Mitschelen Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes individuals whose achievements over the course of their career have delivered long-term benefits for the communities they serve.

Community Impact Award: Tom Hastings, Snoqualmie Pass Utility District

The Community Impact Award recognizes a person or project whose work has had a widespread and meaningful impact on their community.

Creative Solutions Award: City of La Center

The Creative Solutions Award recognizes a person or project that developed an innovative approach to an infrastructure challenge and found a new way to get the job done.

Heart and Soul Award: Barbara Smith, Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) (retired), and Lori Blau, Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)

The Heart and Soul Award recognizes IACC members who generously give their time, expertise and energy to support the organization and help make its annual conference a success.

IACC was founded in 1986 when staff from several agencies began meeting to share information and better coordinate infrastructure assistance for local governments. Three years later, the group held its first statewide infrastructure conference in Wenatchee. That spirit of collaboration has remained at the heart of IACC ever since.

Today, IACC brings together communities, tribes, state and federal agencies, local government associations, funders and technical experts to connect communities with resources, learn from one another and find practical ways to move infrastructure projects forward. The IACC Awards, first introduced in 2009, celebrate the leadership, persistence, creativity and collaboration that make that work possible.

For more information about IACC, visit [infrafunding.wa.gov](https://infrafunding.wa.gov).

#### About IACC

Founded in 1986, the Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council (IACC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping Washington communities and tribes identify and obtain the resources they need to develop, improve and maintain infrastructure. IACC brings together state and federal agencies, local government associations and nonprofit technical assistance organizations to improve coordination, connect communities with financial and technical resources, and help infrastructure projects move forward.

Manny Rivera  
Rivera Communications  
+1 626-864-7467

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