BUILDING NORTH CENTRAL WASHINGTON

Construction Industry Snapshot

October 2026 Board Meeting | Chelan & Douglas Counties

At a glance: Chelan County home sales softened in September, while Douglas County recorded more transactions than a year earlier. Local permit activity shows construction continuing, but housing sales and permits measure different stages of the market.

1 | Local housing market

September 2026 indicator	Chelan County	Douglas County
Closed home sales	Down 27.8% year over year (NWMLS)	51 sales; up 35.3% year over year (Redfin)
Median closed-sale price	$555,000; down 9.7% year over year (NWMLS)	$510,607; down 5.8% year over year (Redfin)
Market context	8.38 months of inventory relative to sales (NWMLS)	Redfin reports a faster recent sales pace

Reading the data: These figures use different reporting sources and definitions. Treat them as directional signals, not a direct apples-to-apples county ranking. Sale prices do not measure the cost of constructing a new home.

2 | Construction and permitting activity

City of Chelan: January through September 2026, the city reported 157 building permits and more than $12.6 million in construction value, including 16 new single-family homes under construction.

City of Wenatchee: The city publishes monthly permit activity and year-to-date reports. A consistent 2025-to-2026 comparison should be compiled from the underlying reports before drawing conclusions.

Wenatchee-East Wenatchee metro: Census-derived data reported 48 residential units authorized in July 2026, including 43 single-family units. This metro figure should not be added to city or county totals because geographic coverage overlaps.

Douglas County jurisdictions: A comparable jurisdiction-level 2026 permit total was not verified for this edition. Obtaining reports from East Wenatchee and Douglas County is a recommended next step.

3 | Why Building NCW members care

Construction industry	Other small businesses
Sales softness may influence speculative starts, subcontractor schedules, material orders, and cash flow.	Changes in construction activity can affect demand for retail, professional services, equipment, and local suppliers.
Permit trends can help identify where work is moving and which project types are active.	Housing prices and availability affect employee recruitment, relocation, and wage pressure.

4 | What the numbers do not tell us

This snapshot does not yet establish whether total new-home starts, permit turnaround times, or construction employment increased or decreased across both counties. These require consistent jurisdiction-level records and labor data. Avoid interpreting fewer home sales as proof that all construction activity has declined.

5 | Building NCW next steps

Next step	Purpose
Request 2025 and 2026 monthly residential permit totals from Wenatchee, East Wenatchee, Chelan, and both counties.	Create a consistent local construction activity trend.
Ask builders and suppliers a three-question pulse survey about backlogs, bid activity, and primary obstacles.	Connect public data with what members are actually experiencing.
Track quarterly housing sales, construction employment, and permitting updates.	Create a repeatable quarterly board snapshot.

Board discussion

Suggested question: Are members seeing the same shifts indicated by local housing sales data, or is their project pipeline telling a different story?

Sources and methodology

Northwest Multiple Listing Service, September 2026 Market Snapshot: https://www.nwmls.com/market-snapshot-september-2026/
City of Chelan, Building Department, January-September 2026 activity: https://www.cityofchelan.gov/169/Building-Department
Redfin, Douglas County housing market, September 2026: https://www.redfin.com/county/3079/WA/Douglas-County/housing-market
City of Wenatchee, permit activity reports: https://www.wenatcheewa.gov/government/community-development/building/permit-activity
Census-derived metro permits, July 2026: https://pumsdata.com/data/permits/metro/wenatchee-east-wenatchee-wa