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25 Years of Quil Ceda Village: Built on Sovereignty, Built to Last

Twenty-five years ago, the Tulalip Tribes did something no tribal nation had done in a generation: they built a city from the ground up. Today, Quil Ceda Village is the second federally recognized city in the nation and the leading destination for shopping, entertainment, and dining in Northern Snohomish County. This milestone marks a quarter century of economic growth, job creation, and cultural strengthening—and stands as a testament to the vision and determination of Tulalip leadership.

"As we honor 25 years of Quil Ceda Village, we celebrate more than growth—we celebrate vision, sovereignty, and the resiliency of our people," said Quil Ceda Village President and Tulalip Vice-Chair Deborah Parker. "What began as a bold expression of self-determination has become a thriving, tribally governed city that reflects who we are and where we plan to be. We stand on the shoulders of our ancestors and tribal leaders who believed in this future, and today we carry that responsibility forward—building opportunity, prosperity, and self-determination for the next seven generations."

A Vision Born from the Land

The story of Quil Ceda Village begins with a bold idea: that tribal sovereignty could serve as the foundation for lasting economic independence. In the 1990s, Tulalip Tribal leaders recognized that while gaming revenues had helped strengthen the community's economic growth, true long-term stability would require diversification. They had long viewed potential in 2,000 acres of trust land along Interstate 5 — land that had once served as a Department of Defense ammunition depot and, later, a Boeing jet engine testing site.

On March 2, 2001, their vision became reality. The Bureau of Indian Affairs officially recognized Quil Ceda Village as a tribal municipality, making it one of the first tribal political subdivisions established under the Indian Tribal Governmental Tax Status Act of 1982. The Tulalip Tribes had done what few tribal nations had done at the time: built a municipality from the ground up, on their own terms.

A Thriving Destination, A Model for the Nation

Twenty-five years later, Quil Ceda Village is one of the region's most significant commercial centers, and recognized as a model for Native American economic development worldwide. Home to the Tulalip Resort Casino, Seattle Premium Outlets with over 110 stores, Walmart, Home Depot, Cabela's, and an impressive roster of dining and hospitality destinations, the Village draws visitors from across the Pacific Northwest and beyond. It employs more than 5,600 people, making the Tulalip Tribes one of the largest employers in Snohomish County and a vital economic engine for the surrounding region. Revenues are used to support tribal community and culture, ranging from restoration of salmon spawning to funding critical services.

"Our people are brilliant," said Tulalip Chairman Hazen Shopbell. "Look around Quil Ceda Village, this city is an engine driving the prosperity of our tribe, and we're still building it up. We know we've got to keep moving to secure future growth for our next generations and for our customers. We've got some big things coming in the next few years. Keep coming back, it's going to be exciting!"

The mission of the Consolidated Borough of Quil Ceda Village has always been clear: to ensure sustained economic prosperity for Tulalip tribal members and to inspire appreciation for Tulalip tribal culture by operating a thriving regional destination for shopping, dining, hospitality, and entertainment. Twenty-five years in, that mission is very much alive.

What's Next

This summer, Quil Ceda Village will be hosting a public celebration at the Tulalip Amphitheatre on August 8, 2026 to honor this remarkable achievement. More details to follow.