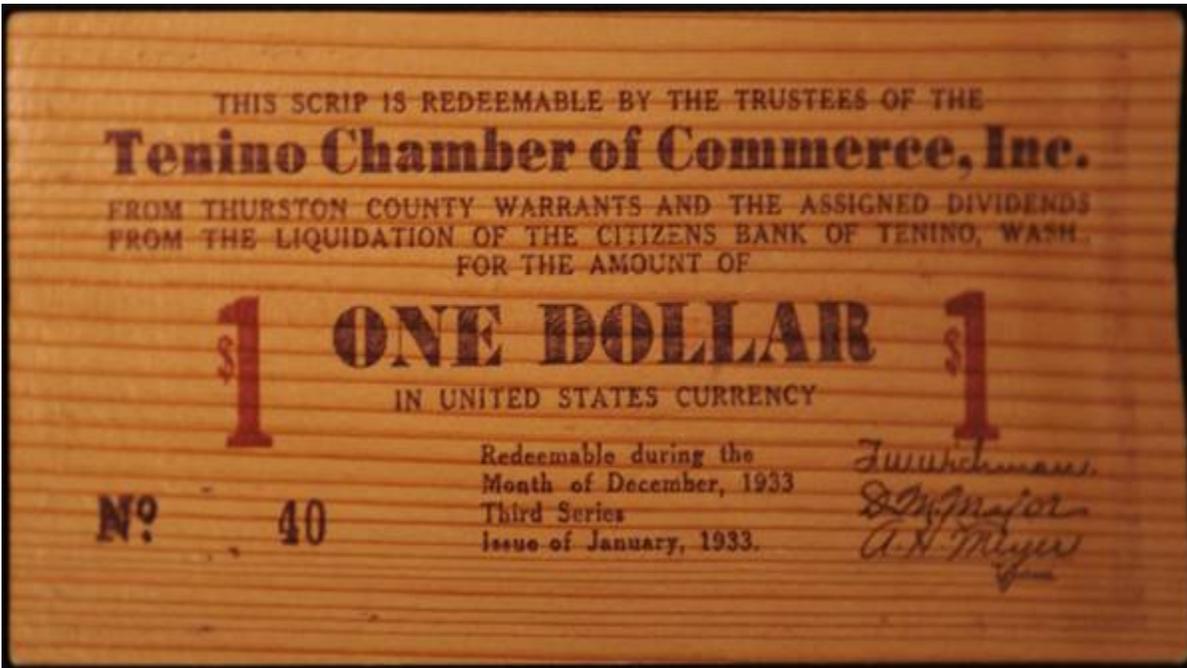


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Woodworking Network

Depression-era wooden money returns in small Washington town

By [Robert Dalheim](#) May 06, 2020 | 12:17 pm EDT



Wooden certificates like these were printed in Tenino, Washington during the Great Depression. Next week, they will make a comeback.

TENINO, Wash. - The small town of Tenino, Washington says it could be facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

The city became famous 90 years ago during the Depression, after it became the first town in the country's history to print wooden money. The only bank in the town had run out of money, so the city council decided to create their own.

Tenino received worldwide recognition for the decision. Some of the original wooden pieces are on display in the town's museum.

And now, it looks like that wooden currency will make a comeback.

The city council recently approved an ordinance to print \$10,000 worth of government-backed wooden scrip (the same amount printed 90 years ago) for one of the town's coronavirus emergency relief grant programs. Even the original press - which was built in 1890 - will be brought back to use.



7 May 2020



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Mayor Wayne Fournier says the program will help people who are struggling with financial hardships.

“All of our businesses are shut down. There’s no trade, there’s no commerce going on. So, that is a recession, in my mind,” said Fournier.

Town financial advisor Chris Hallett [told Fox local news Q13](#) that the town relies on tourism, which isn't happening currently.

Each wooden certificate will be worth \$25 and can only be used for goods including groceries, gasoline, and household bills. It can't be used for items like alcohol and cigarettes, says Fournier.

Residents will have to apply at City Hall to receive it. Qualifying households can receive up to \$300 in wooden money, which they can spend at the town's businesses. The city will then collect the certificates from businesses and reimburse them with real money.

Printing begins next week.

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