

LAIRD: Sisters-based company's motto is 'Move, Start, Grow'

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to help support the project of moving and expanding the manufacturing to Sisters.

It may not be long before the company is the largest employer in Sisters, according to Hodge.

Laird Hamilton addressed the crowd as well. "I am honored to be here and thankful everybody that I have come across has got unique spirit and there is something about this place energetically that I felt when I first landed. This whole project is a positive thing. We are here because of the goodness this represents. This is something that can affect a lot of people."

Speaking of the products themselves, Hamilton said, "I believe that when people are healthier and they feel better they are happier and they then make better decisions in their lives. With Paul's help we expanded to making this stuff for more than just our buddies."

Hodge said, "We moved here seven years ago to raise our family in a culture that we wanted to raise our kids in, to be able to experience nature and enjoy everything that Central Oregon has to offer. Naturally the people that are here, now as employees, fit the culture of the company of keeping a healthy lifestyle, so it all seems to be lining up. It's a match made in heaven, so to speak."

Hamilton agreed that locating in Central Oregon fits the nature of the products they manufacture. "The reason why the company is here is because of Paul. It makes complete sense that it is right here in Sisters."

Hamilton joked that the company's success has made people begin to refer to him as "the creamer guy" rather than for his identity as a world-class surfer.

Hodge also spoke of the future vision of the company. "The bigger picture is that we are working to build an overall food brand that encompasses the entire grocery store. You should be able to go (to) every food (isle) and be able to find some Laird product."

Hodge believes the company and the employees that it will attract will be a further benefit to the entire Sisters community.

"Obviously, some of the jobs will be imported given that we expect to have a large number of new employees in the years to come, some of which will need specialized skills sets. The type of personality and culture we will

attract will be a huge benefit to this community. They will be active community members who are athletic and into the lifestyle and here for all the right reasons."

Paul and Carla Schneider of Sisters bought the lots in the industrial park about a year ago, not sure of how the property would be developed. "It's worked out really well so far," he said.

Also on hand was Mike Wallenfels, a board member for the Oregon Outdoor Alliance as well as working as the vice-president of global sales at Hydro-flask. He sees Laird's products as being related to the work he is doing in both capacities of his life.

"There is a great intersection between natural foods and lovers of the outdoors, because folks with healthy, active lifestyles love this stuff. The OOA and Hydro-flask both have natural relationships with companies like this," he said. "This company is providing good jobs, really good jobs for people."

Keeton-King Construction, which is the main contractor for the buildings Laird will occupy, is another beneficiary of the development. Ed Gilmore attended the ceremony, happy that his company has gotten to be part of such an important local project. A second building is under construction, and a third is planned for the property in the near future.

"We don't generally get commercial projects like this right in Sisters," he said. "We didn't know when we started what the buildings were going to be used for, but once that got decided we had to really get going right away on this first building."

From the outside the building are fairly non-descript metal structures, but the interiors are quite specialized for food production, according to Gilmore. He feels good about his company's role in the project.

"It's great to see all the locals who are working for Laird, which has made it a great project for us to be a part of," he said.

The nonprofit group EDCO (Economic Development for Central Oregon) played a large role in helping Laird locate in Sisters. The group's motto is "Move, Start, Grow" which relates encouraging businesses to move to the region, for entrepreneurs to start a business, or for established businesses to grow. EDCO helped guide the company by providing data, connecting it with incentives, and more.

Capi Lewis, who works in the Sisters office of EDCO as managing director, said, "This project can be such a showcase for how this can work, and the City's support cannot be underestimated," she said. "The incentives the City provided along with the support from the county commissioners really made this happen."

According to Lewis, higher wage living quality jobs are what this area really needs and that having Laird Superfood here will provide opportunities for graduates of Sisters School District to return to the area and find living-wage jobs.

"Companies like this are what we need here for our next generation," she said.



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SISTERS ENTERTAINMENT & EVENTS

WED...JULY 18

Sisters Saloon Poker Night 7 p.m. Every Wednesday! \$20. For additional information call 541-549-7427 or go online to sistersssaloon.net.

Food Cart Garden at Eurosports Trivia Night 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Sign-up is at 6:15 p.m. Free, every Wednesday! For additional information call 541-549-2471.

THURS...JULY 19

Village Green Park Rhythm & Song in the Park 5:30 p.m. for free community dinner; 6 to 8 p.m. for rhythm & song. All are welcome; rhythm instruments provided or bring your own! For info go to citizens4community.com.

Cork Cellars Tasty Thursday Hosted Wine Tasting 5 to 7 p.m. with Jones of Washington Winery. For information call 541-549-2675 or go online to corkcellarswinebistro.com.

Sisters Saloon Karaoke Night 9 p.m. to midnight. Every Thursday, no cover! For information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersssaloon.net.

FRI...JULY 20

Food Cart Garden at Eurosports Live Music with Bitter Creek Band 5 to 7 p.m. No cover! For additional information call 541-549-2471.

Hardtails Bar & Grill Karaoke Night 9 p.m. Every Friday, no cover! For more information call 541-549-6114 or go to hardtailsoregon.com.

Fir Street Park Sisters Farmers Market 2 to 5:30 p.m. Fresh on Fridays, thru September! For additional information go online to sistersfarmersmarket.com.

SAT...JULY 21

Three Creeks Production Facility 10th Anniversary Party & Live Music with Larry and His Flask 2 to 8 p.m. at 265 E. Barclay Dr. with food trucks, games, dunk tanks & more! Free entry and family friendly. For more information go to threecreeksbrewing.com or call 541-549-1963.

Paulina Springs Books Brad Smith Memorial 5 to 7 p.m. All are invited to remember and pay tribute to Brad Smith. If you'd like to donate to his memorial bench, checks may be made to Paulina Springs. For more information go to paulinasprings.com or call 541-549-0866.

Food Cart Garden at Eurosports Music & Swing Dance Lessons 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. with professional dance instructors Clint and Jenny. Free! Come alone or bring a partner! For additional information call 541-549-2471.

Cork Cellars Live Music with Mark Conklin 7 to 9 p.m. No cover! For additional information call 541-549-2675 or go online to corkcellarswinebistro.com.

Suttle Lodge & Boathouse Live Music on the Lawn with Mission Spotlight 7 to 9 p.m. Free, all ages welcome! For additional information go online to thesuttlelodge.com or call 541-638-7001.



Events calendar listings are free to advertisers. Submit items by 5 p.m. Fridays to teresa@nuggetnews.com

MON...JULY 23

Hardtails Bar & Grill Open Mic & Jam Night 7 p.m. Every Monday, no cover! For information call 541-549-6114 or go to hardtailsoregon.com.

Sisters Saloon Painting Party 6 to 8 p.m. \$35, every Monday! For additional information call 541-904-5280 or go to sistersssaloon.net.

TUES...JULY 24

Sisters Saloon Trivia Night 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Sign-up is at 6:15 p.m. Free, every Tuesday! For information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersssaloon.net.

WED...JULY 25

Food Cart Garden at Eurosports Trivia Night 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Sign-up is at 6:15 p.m. Free, every Wednesday! For more information call 541-549-2471.

Sisters Saloon Poker Night 7 p.m. Every Wednesday! \$20. For additional information call 541-549-7427 or go online to sistersssaloon.net.

THURS...JULY 26

Fir Street Park Live Music with Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper 6:30 p.m. Free bluegrass concert, presented by Sisters Folk Festival. Bring seating or a blanket, and a picnic if desired! For more information go online to sistersfolkfestival.org.

Cork Cellars Tasty Thursday Hosted Wine Tasting 5 to 7 p.m. for "Variety of Malbecs." For information call 541-549-2675 or go online to corkcellarswinebistro.com.

Sisters Saloon Karaoke Night 9 p.m. to midnight. Every Thursday, no cover! For information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersssaloon.net.

FRI...JULY 27

Hood Avenue Art Artists' Reception with Patricia Freeman-Martin and Jeff & Heather Thompson 4 to 7 p.m. with live music and refreshments! Info, call 541-719-1800 to hoodavenueart.com or call 541-719-1800.

Food Cart Garden at Eurosports Live Music with the Bobby Lindstrom Trio 5 to 7 p.m. No cover! For additional information call Eurosports at 541-549-2471.

Paulina Springs Books Author Signing with Dennis McGregor 4 p.m. Dennis will circulate between the book store and Sisters Gallery & Frame Shop to sign "You Stole My Name." Info: 541-549-0866.

Sisters Gallery & Frame Shop Author Signing with Dennis McGregor 4 p.m. Dennis will circulate between the gallery and Paulina Springs Books to sign "You Stole My Name." 541-549-9552.

Downtown Sisters 4th Friday Art Stroll 4 to 7 p.m. Galleries & shops feature entertainment and treats! For info: sistersartsassociation.org.

Fir Street Park Sisters Farmers Market 2 to 5:30 p.m. Fresh on Fridays, thru September! For additional information go online to sistersfarmersmarket.com.