

Tax break

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taxing entities, such as Marion County Fire District, for the tax breaks to receive the exemption.

Marion County, which is the first county in Oregon to allow such tax exemptions in accordance with the 2016 law, also approved Marion Ag Services of St. Paul on Wednesday.

Marion Ag proposed to build \$2.1 million in new taxable property value including a 250-foot by 300 foot metal building for storage and was approved for an estimated \$72,984.24 in tax breaks over the next three years.

The company had 31 employees and planned to add four more with the expansion.

Marion Ag already has approval from the rest of its taxing districts for its expansion.

“This would be the last step for Marion Ag to move forward,” Marion County Economic Development Coordinator for Marion County Jason Schneider said.

In 2019, Marion County approved an application to defer an estimated \$129,777 in taxes over three years for \$4 million in improvements by DK Fab of Hopmere.

The former NORPAC filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in August 2019, stating it had \$164 million in debt.

The Brooks site served as one of the major processing facilities for NORPAC for decades and at its peak employed more than 500.

In the months that followed NORPAC’s bankruptcy filing, the company announced it could lay off 466 workers in Brooks, 485 in Stayton and 458 in Salem.

Lineage Logistics agreed to purchase NORPAC’s Brooks, Salem and Stayton facilities in bankruptcy court in January, but part of that deal included leasing

the Brooks plant to PNW Vegco and eventually purchasing the site so it could condense all remaining vegetable processing operations to that facility.

“The anticipated employment for Pacific Northwest Vegco at Brooks is 600, about 300 more than was there previously,” said Marion County Business Retention & Expansion Manager Nick Harville for SEDCOR.

Vegco’s application states it would make \$15 million in improvements, including building one new building valued at about \$1 million, \$10.5 million in modifications to the existing building and \$3.5 million to purchase heavy equipment.

Among the improvements Vegco intends to make, according to its application, is to add office space for clerical workers, new rooms and new and used equipment for bagging fruits and vegetables and to construct new dry storage space.

“I really like the idea it incentivizes

people to invest in Marion County,” Marion County Commissioner Colm Willis said. “As a result, we’re going to have that capital in Marion County long term.”

From March 15 through May 2, there were 17,305 people in Marion County who filed initial unemployment claims.

“We need to get people employed,” Cameron said. “Obviously as they expand these businesses, guess what comes with it? Jobs.”

The Tiegs-owned National Frozen Foods, which is based in Albany, received a proposed fine of \$2,000 by Oregon OSHA Monday in connection with an outbreak of the coronavirus that sickened at least 34 people. It was the first OSHA fine of an Oregon company in connection with COVID-19.

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Lawsuit

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He was sent home after a few hours, despite the family’s concerns.

Over the next few hours, Blaize’s fever and fussiness persisted.

Poff said something still wasn’t right.

She rushed him back to the hospital, and he was flown to OHSU Doernbecher Children’s Hospital in Portland.

Blaize’s heart stopped. He was resuscitated and put into an induced coma.

By the day’s end, her son was dead from bacterial meningitis.

A first-time mom, Poff spent that Mother’s Day in shock, planning the cremation and memorial for her son.

“No mother should feel the way I feel right now,” she said at the time.

Following Blaize’s death, Legacy Health officials expressed their sympathies to his family.

They declined to comment on what could’ve been done to prevent the baby’s death.

On Tuesday, hospital officials said they were not aware of the lawsuit and therefore have not reviewed the allegations in detail, but said it was Legacy Health’s practice to not comment on litigation.

According to the lawsuit, Blaize showed “significant signs and symptoms of systemic Meningococemia” when he was first taken to the Silverton hospital.

The parents’ attorney accuses the treating ER physician of failing to properly assess these signs and symptoms, including the presence of a rash that nurses noted and an abnormal respiratory pattern.

Medical staff allegedly did not test for a meningococcal infection, did not give Blaize antibiotics and did not acknowledge how the treatment with antibiotics for another pre-existing condition could affect the presentation of symptoms in the emergency room.

Because of the medical staff’s “unreasonable conduct,” Blaize’s condition worsened and resulted in his death, according to the lawsuit.

An average of 4,100 cases of bacterial meningitis resulting in 500 deaths are reported every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Babies are at an increased risk of contracting meningitis, which can be spread during birth, in the air through coughing and sneezing and via contaminated food.

Marion County health officials said all invasive meningococcal diseases are required to be reported to the county within 24 hours and confirmed that the county received a report of Blaize’s



Summer Wheeldon is mourning the loss of her son, Blaize after he died from bacterial meningitis on May 11, 2018. SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

death.

They also confirmed his death was caused by a meningococcal disease.

State health officials said Oregon sees an average of 22 meningococcal cases a year. About 10 percent of those cases occur in children under the age of 1, and 10 percent of the total cases are fatal.

A year after Blaize’s death, another Salem infant died from meningitis after initially being discharged from Salem Hospital.

Ginger McCall, the mother of Eviana Rose Quintero-McCall — Evi for short — said she wished she would’ve known to demand a meningitis test after her 7-week-old daughter was sent home without being tested.

A few hours later, still concerned, McCall took Evi to her pediatrician. At the doctor’s office, the doctor told her to immediately go to the ER.

(Story continues below.)
Evi’s vital signs crashed at the hospital, and she was transferred to OHSU Doernbecher Children’s Hospital, where she was placed on life support.

She later died in her parents’ arms after being taken off life support.

McCall, too, questioned the hospital’s decision to discharge her daughter after the first visits.

Both deaths left the parents reeling and wondering what could’ve been done to prevent the tragedies.

Their son’s death damaged Poff and Wheeldon permanently, the lawsuit said.

Both struggle with anxiety, depression, insomnia, post-traumatic stress disorder, isolation, loss of faith and even simple daily tasks.

The lawsuit requested the Silverton hospital pay a total of \$6.37 million, including \$70,000 for medical expenses, \$1 million for loss of companionship, \$500 for funeral expenses and \$3.3 million for emotional distress and non-economic damages.

RESTAURANT INSPECTIONS

Editor’s note: With statewide restrictions on in-person restaurant dining, Statesman Journal restaurant inspection reports will be limited due to procedure changes at the county level.

Marion County Environmental Health is not currently conducting routine in-person inspections of restaurants. In-person inspections are currently reserved for situations such as complaints regarding immediate health risks. Environmental health staff is calling all licensed facilities and documenting their phone consultations for food safety and social distancing measures, the department said.

Polk County Environmental Health is contacting restaurants to give them the option of an in-person inspection or phone consultation. Phone consultations do not take the place of a formal inspection. In-person inspections will be rescheduled.

POLK COUNTY

Semi-annual restaurant inspections from April 22 to 27.

B’s Buzz

Location: 11065 W Perrydale Road, Amity
Date: April 27
Score: 100
No priority violations

Chen’s Family Dish

Location: 165 Orchard Drive, Dallas
Date: April 27
Score: 100
No priority violations

Domino’s

Location: 772 Main St., Dallas
Date: April 27
Score: 100
No priority violations

Independent Ice Cream

Location: 226 S Main St., Independence
Date: April 22
Score: 100
No priority violations

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