

Small-business & Ag HAPPENINGS

Know where your meat comes from by helping change labeling policy

The American Grassfed Association — a leading organization in developing grass-fed meat production and market development for producers of grassfed meat, dairy and pastured pork — is calling on its members, supporters, collaborators and consumers to help raise awareness and raise funds to bring about change and better transparency in the marketplace.

The goal is to raise the standard by clarifying confusing labeling rules. Currently, regardless of where in the world the animals live, once the meat is repackaged it can be labeled as a “Product of the USA.” Abuse of this labeling loophole by multinational groups to profit through their deception is made at the expense of the American farmer and rancher. Contributions to help AGA fight to end this unfair practice may be made at www.gofundme.com/stop-misleading-food-labeling-now.

On June 12, the Organization for Competitive Markets and the American Grassfed Association petitioned the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service to change policy to ensure only U.S. domestic meat products can be labeled “Product of the USA.” The deadline for comment submission is Aug. 17. To submit a comment, go to www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FSIS-2018-0024. AGA is based in Denver, Colorado. For more information, email AGA@AmericanGrassfed.org or call 877-774-7277.

Buckskin Bucks are available all year long

ENTERPRISE — The Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce reminds local employers and other residents to consider Buckskin Bucks for employee appreciation gifts, exceptional performance rewards birthdays or any other special occasions.

Buckskin Bucks come in denominations of \$10 & \$25 and may be used at any of the more than 50 businesses printed on the back. Buckskin Bucks may be purchased at the chamber office, 309 S. River St., Enterprise. Retailers and restaurants interested in signing up for Buckskin Bucks should call the chamber at 541-426-4622.

Support farmers, ranchers impacted by Substation Fire

SALEM — The Oregon Farm Bureau has established a fund to provide support to farmers and ranchers impacted by the recent Substation Fire.

“Rural Oregonians support their neighbors, as we saw by the immediate action taken by many heroic farmers who worked alongside first responders to put out the Substation Fire,” said Anne Marie Moss, Oregon Farm Bureau communications director.

To contribute, send checks made out to “Farm Bureau Fire Relief Fund” to Oregon Farm Bureau, c/o Patty Kuester, 1320 Capitol St. NE, Salem 97301. The Oregon Farm Bureau Board of Directors, in consultation with Wasco County Farm Bureau, will decide how to best use funds received.

For those wanting to help the family of John Ruby, the farmer who died while cutting a fire line to protect a neighbor’s place, a fund has been set up at Columbia Bank in The Dalles, 316 E. Third St. For more information, contact the branch at 541-298-6647.

Edward Jones named one of “50 Companies That Care”

According to a press release, Edward Jones, which has branch offices in La Grande, has been named one of People Magazine’s “50 Companies That Care.”

The ranking is based on the firm’s associate feedback about how their workplace makes a difference in their lives and their communities. Rankings represent feedback from more than 4.5 million employees across the U.S.

People Magazine partnered with Great Place to Work, a global people analytics and consulting firm, to analyze employees’ survey feedback and to consider the generosity of each organization’s benefits, philanthropic and community support. Edward Jones took the No. 5 spot on the list.

Edward Jones, a Fortune 500 company headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, provides financial services in the U.S. and, through its affiliate, in Canada. Visit the firm’s website at www.edwardjones.com and its recruiting website at www.careers.edwardjones.com.

Thirteen restaurants in La Grande have signed up for new delivery service



Max Denning/WesCom News Service

Arley Atkins, franchise owner of MyTown 2 Go in La Grande, picks up a pizza for delivery from Local Harvest Eatery and Pub on Tuesday. Atkins can pick up food at 13 restaurants for his delivery business.

ON THE GO

Business offers alternative to picking up food

By Max Denning
The Observer

In May, Arley Atkins opened a La Grande franchise of the national food delivery company My Town 2 Go. Now, the website has 13 restaurant options that the service will pick up and deliver to residents of La Grande.

My Town 2 Go was founded in 2016 as a delivery service that utilizes a website and mobile app to allow customers to order food from their choice of restaurants on the website. In La Grande, it ranges from Chinese cuisine to Mexican food to pizza.

Atkins, who also owns a food delivery service in Baker City named Baker City to Go that opened in December 2017, said the La Grande community has been receptive to the service.

“I’ve got a lot of (customers) who have been using the service multiple times,” he said.

He also said he expects to get more business during the winter time.

“Summer can be a bit of a war of attrition, because people are on vacation, they’re barbecuing, they’re maybe doing larger group functions with cooking,” Atkins said. “Winter time ... people take advantage of it more.”

The delivery service costs \$3.99 per order, which doesn’t include tip, and takes on average 34 minutes to deliver, Atkins said.

“La Grande’s food preparation is pretty quick. What I have been experiencing with (La Grande restaurants) has been awesome so far,” he said.

To place an order, one must either use the

website or the mobile app. Phone calls are not accepted.

Atkins said he often puts out promotional codes, such as 10 percent off your first order or free delivery for customers on their birthday. The La Grande franchise currently has three delivery drivers who deliver to customers around the city. My Town 2 Go is currently in more than 60 cities nationwide. These include small towns such as La Grande and bigger metropolitan areas such as San Antonio, St. Louis and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Food delivery is not just for “lazy people” Atkins said, describing many situations where ordering food is necessary from working individuals too busy to make dinner or adults taking care of their elderly parents

See **Delivery** / Page 2B

Cricket Flat Coffee Company opens in Elgin

By Trish Yerges
For The Observer

Lisa Risseeuw, owner of Cricket Flat Coffee Company, said she wanted to give back to the community she lives in, so she decided to open a coffee shop.

Risseeuw is a native of Ohio, who moved to live in Walla Walla, Washington for 15 years. She moved to Elgin three years ago, got married and wanted to start a business in Elgin.

“My motivation in buying this place was that I wanted to buy something in my town,” she said. “This is where I live. I pay taxes in this town — and in this county. I want to see my home base succeed.”

This is a new venture for Risseeuw, but she has found a supportive coffee company that has helped her get started.

“My roaster is the Walla Walla Roastery company, which

specializes in Italian style coffee,” Risseeuw said. “They call it the black coffee tradition, which I love.”

Walla Walla Roastery has provided professional training for Risseeuw and her staff, as well as helping them perfect their latte art.

“I’m proud to be serving Walla Walla Roastery,” she said. “It’s a solid company. They roast on site, and my beans are maybe a week old from being processed, so they are fresh beans.”

The decaf coffee is a water process and not a harsh chemical process.

“They don’t use chemicals when they process the decaf coffee, and it’s delicious,” Risseeuw said. “I’ve never had decaf that I liked, but I like this coffee. They have a mocha java that is dark and oily that is yummy. Their beans are certified.”

She serves hot coffee, cold



Trish Yerges / For WesCom News Service

Owner Lisa Risseeuw of Cricket Flat Coffee Company is open for business at her drive-through coffee shop in Elgin. She uses fresh roasted beans from Walla Walla Roastery for all her latte recipes.

brew, and she makes all the espresso drinks that customers want, but she specializes in

caramel lattes.

“I make a yummy spice

See **Coffee** / Page 2B

U.S. Supreme Court ruling in union dues impacts case in Oregon

By Andrew Selsky
The Associated Press

SALEM — An Oregon state employee and a labor union have reached a settlement over her lawsuit seeking payback of obligatory union fees, marking the first refund of forced fees since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in late June that government workers can’t be required to contribute to labor groups,

the employee’s lawyers said Monday.

Debora Nearman, a systems analyst with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, said in her lawsuit filed in April in federal court the state’s practice of forcing her to pay fees to fund union activity violated her First Amendment freedoms. She said the Service Employees International Union, or SEIU, opposes

her political and religious views and even led a campaign against her husband Mike when he successfully ran as a Republican candidate for the state Legislature in 2016.

Nearman is a member of a state-wide bargaining unit represented by SEIU but doesn’t belong to the union.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation,

which was involved in both the Supreme Court case and Nearman’s, is handling some 200 other cases across the country, including a class-action lawsuit in California by 30,000 state employees, said Patrick Semmens, the group’s vice president.

If the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rules in favor of the plaintiffs in the California case,

See **Union** / Page 2B