

Small Business Happenings

Brown Bag topic looks at future of women in agriculture

JOSEPH — The April 9 Brown Bag at the Josephy Center will feature students from the Oregon State University Agriculture and Natural Resource Program at Eastern Oregon University. The senior-year students will talk about the future for women in agriculture. This Brown Bag is part of the Josephy Center's celebration of Women's History month and coincides with the "Women on the Edge" exhibit. OSU's program at Eastern pulls lower division courses from the EOU catalog together with agriculture and natural resources classes taught by OSU faculty members — some of whom are also on staff at the Union Experiment Station. Chad Mueller, the animal science specialist and academic adviser to many of these students, will be along to answer questions about the program. The Brown Bag lecture series is free and open to the public. Talks begin at noon at the Josephy Center for Arts and Culture, 403 Main St., Joseph. Bring a lunch or snack if you like. The coffee pot will be on.

Spring brings extended hours at Nature's Pantry

LA GRANDE — Nature's Pantry will be open until 5 p.m. on Fridays until the time change in the fall. Located at 1907 Fourth St., La Grande, Nature's Pantry strives to make a positive impact in local communities by believing in and behaving in line with the core values of nutrition, supplementation, service, education and healthy living. The store is open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call 541-963-7955 or go to www.naturespantry.life.

Employers sought for Baker County job fair

BAKER CITY — A Baker County Job Fair will be held April 11 at the Baker County Event Center, 2600 E. St., Baker City. This opportunity for employers and employees to come together will focus on Baker County high school students, adults and veterans. Employers who wish to participate must register through Candace Chandler at OED_920@Oregon.gov or 541-523-6331, ext. 224. The job fair will be open to high school students from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and adults and veterans are welcome from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. For more information stop by the WorkSource Center, 1575 Dewey Ave., Baker City, or call 541-523-6331, ext. 224.

Register now for Oregon Employer Council's spring conference

NORTH BEND — The annual Oregon Employer Council Spring Conference will be held April 29-30 at The Mill Casino in North Bend. The conference offers keynote speakers and breakout sessions on human resources, labor law and business topics as well as opportunities to network with businesses from around the state. Registration is \$349. Booths are available for exhibitors for between \$600 and \$800. To register or for more information, contact Greg Ivers at gregory.e.ivers@state.or.us. Agenda and more information are available at www.oec.org. The Oregon Employer Council is a nonprofit organization with chapters throughout Oregon. OEC chapters create bridges between business and government and provide low cost, local training for businesses. Membership is open to all Oregon businesses.

Wheat Commission announces special meeting

BOARDMAN — The Oregon Wheat Commission is having a special commission meeting to discuss commission business April 11 in Boardman. The meeting will be held at the Port of Morrow Riverfront Facility, 2 Marine Drive, beginning at 10 a.m. Lunch will be provided. Commission meetings are open to the public. Dress is business casual. For more information, call the Oregon Wheat Commission office at 503-467-2161.

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La Fiesta celebrates 20-year anniversary in La Grande

By Francisca Benitez
WesCom News Service

La Fiesta, The iconic bright pink Mexican restaurant in La Grande, is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

"We want to express our most sincere gratitude for the support we have been given for 20 years."
— Armando Robles, co-owner

There will be a celebratory event from 5:30 p.m. to around 8 p.m. at the restaurant Friday. It will feature live music and cake and the Chamber of Commerce will be in attendance.

The restaurant is owned by Armando and Irma Robles, who have been married for 21 years and have two children, Alejandro and Natalia.

The Robleses are both originally from Mexico. They moved to La Grande from Walla Walla, Washington, 20 years ago to open a restaurant. Armando had previously worked in the restaurant business for nearly a decade, and Irma had been an accountant, so they made a good team.

They said that opening a business was not easy, and the challenges that came with it were surprising at times, but they are proud that they have managed to stay open for 20 years.

"No matter what happens, we are really grateful because we've survived 20 years, and not many people can do that,"

Armando said.

The Robleses said the building was originally built to be a Taco Time in the 1980s, and you can still see some of the original Taco Time color scheme in two stained glass windows that separate dining areas. You have to know what you're looking for, though, because the restaurant has been renovated several times. The family added a bar and lottery room plus two new dining areas over the years and now has a unique and intricate decor of handmade tile designs.

Armando explained he is always looking for ways to improve the restaurant, from the three major renovations the place has had to improving the recipes. He said that he is currently making more improvements and additions to the menu in honor of the anniversary to show the community appreciation.

"We would like to invite the community to come and find out what changes we have made," he said.

The Robleses described moving alone to La Grande as a scary experience at first, but Irma said the community quickly made them feel at home.

"I didn't know anybody," she said. "And then I became pregnant with my first child right after we opened the restaurant. One of the locals took me under her arm and she did my baby shower. It made me feel like I was really from here."

The couple said La Grande



Francisca Benitez/WesCom News Service

The Robles (from left) Natalia, Armando, Irma and Alejandro.



Francisca Benitez/WesCom News Service

La Fiesta is celebrating its 20 year anniversary with an event this Friday.

was a great place to raise their children and a wonderful place to live.

"When we go out of town and someone asks where we're from we say La Grande. After 20 years we feel like La Grande is our hometown," Armando said.

The Robleses said that the

anniversary event is an opportunity not only to celebrate their accomplishments, but mostly to thank the community for the support.

"We want to express our most sincere gratitude for the support we have been given for 20 years," Armando said.

Dismissals at Secretary of State's office

By Andrew Selsky
The Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. — On Oregon Secretary of State Bev Clarno's first full day in office

Monday, three executives in her department were dismissed.

The departures of Deputy Secretary of State Leslie

Cummings, chief of staff Deb Royal and governmental and legal affairs director Steve Elzinga came just a day after Clarno, an 83-year-old Republican former lawmaker, was sworn in.

"Looking forward to serving Oregon as Secretary of State!" Clarno tweeted.

Clarno succeeds Dennis Richardson, a Republican who died in February of brain cancer. As the state's top election official, Clarno will be responsible for overseeing the 2020 elections.

She said via email that she starts work this week and will be requesting briefing

materials for all secretary of state office initiatives, and will meet with staff and state leaders. Her office will not comment on any staff transitions "as they are personnel matters," her statement said.

Democratic Gov. Kate Brown, who has known Clarno for years, on Friday appointed her to the state's second-highest office under the agreement that she won't run for the office in the next election. Richardson's term ends in January 2021. Brown earlier told reporters that she wanted a secretary of state who would focus on overseeing elections instead of running for office.

Clarno was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives in 1988, and served as House speaker from 1995 to 1997. She then was elected to the state Senate in 2000, which was split 15-15 between Republicans and Democrats, the Cascade Business News reported in a 2017 profile of Clarno. She became Senate Republican



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The Oregon Capitol building in Salem is seen on a sunny day.

Leader in 2003. In that role, she developed a working relationship with Brown, who was then a top Democratic senator, the Cascade Business News said.

Royal, who also served as Richardson's spokeswoman, was taking her dismissal in stride.

"It's a political appointment, and in political appointments, you serve at the pleasure of the principal,"

Royal told the Salem Statesman Journal.

Clarno tweeted that she was sworn in Sunday evening by Senior Judge Michael Sullivan, who retired from the Deschutes County Circuit Court in 2012 and is eligible for temporary assignments.

A formal swearing in is expected later this week for Clarno, who is from the Central Oregon town of Redmond, in Deschutes County.

ODA rulemaking on ACP herbicide postponed

From Staff Reports

SALEM — Due to a request from Bayer Crop Science LP, Environmental Science Division, the Oregon Department of Agriculture postponed the date of the proposed permanent rule (OAR 603-057-0392) limiting the use of aminocyclopyrachlor, an herbicide also known as ACP. The proposed permanent rule, which was drafted by ODA after meeting with stakeholders and the public,

was scheduled to be adopted on March 22. Upon receipt of a timely request, the ODA is required by law to postpone the date of its intended action at least 21 days, and no more than 90 days, from the earliest date that the rule could have become effective. The postponement will end April 12. Public comments will be accepted until April 5 (email comments to acp@oda.state.or.us).

ODA first adopted a tem-

porary rule limiting the use of ACP in September 2018 after finding tree deaths next to ACP-treated right-of-way sites in Central Oregon. After 18 of 22 foliage samples from those trees tested positive for ACP three years after the last application, ODA drafted and proposed a more comprehensive permanent rule. Because the temporary rule expires on March 26, pesticide applicators can use ACP on all

labeled sites, as long as they follow the instructions on the label. ODA urges pesticide applicators to use caution when applying any product containing ACP in areas where the roots of non-target trees or shrubs may extend. For questions, contact Rose Kachadoorian at 503-986-4651 or rkachadoorian@oda.state.or.us, or Dale Mitchell at 503-986-4646 or dmitchell@oda.state.or.us.