

MARKET

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coaster — but the Market Place Fresh Foods management team is determined to put the past behind them and start anew. While Al Adelsberger, the original and current developer of the project, still owns the building, Snyder said new co-owners, Marco Rennie and David Yount, have revamped the entire business. The pair also opened a community grocery store in Joseph on June 1, 2018, filling a gap that was created when the town's own Family Foods closed due to the bankruptcy.

According to a press release, Rennie and Yount are striving "to provide a shopping experience that 'not only enhances the health and well-being of the community, but reduces their stress levels by taking into account people's busy schedules by offering meal solutions that are healthy and easy.'"

Rennie, who was involved with the operation of Market Place Family Foods, has a background in operating grocery

stores, including Whole Foods Market, a major grocery store chain that specializes in natural and organic foods.

Yount, the marketing director for wholesaler Spokane Produce, won a major design award for My Fresh Basket, a small neighborhood grocery store in Spokane, Washington and one of his responsibilities with Market Place Fresh Foods was to redesign the store.

"The layout of the store wasn't good at all," Yount told The Observer in November. "That (design flaw) hindered it a little bit, (plus) what they were offering wasn't unique enough, or enticing enough, to get people to come back."

The new layout is open, clean and provides the most accessible shopping experience for customers, according to Snyder. The Chop Shop station offers to make meal prep easier by slicing and dicing produce however a customer would like at no extra charge. At the 4th Street Bistro corner of the store, shoppers can pick up ready-to-eat hot meals and ready-to-cook recipe bundles, or even order a glass of refreshing



Amanda Weisbrod/The Observer

Market Place Fresh Foods' Chop Shop gives customers the option to have their produce sliced and diced any way they'd like — and at no extra cost — before they leave the store.

craft beer on tap at the bar.

Upstairs, a vast seating area spans from an indoor mezzanine out to the roof, which offers a view of the train depot and downtown La Grande. A "Brew Hiker" will even run up and down the stairs to deliver beer to customers sitting in the upper level, so there's no need for visitors to make multiple trips down to the bar.

Snyder also said this area will soon have free WiFi access for anyone who wants to bring their devices to work or play, but it is especially tailored toward students of Eastern Oregon University.

"We're going to livestream all EOU sporting events," Snyder said, pointing to the TV mounted on the wall of the lower

level mezzanine. She added that EOU coaches will be stopping by the store soon to deck out the upper floor in navy and gold EOU decorations.

"We wanted to consider the students because this is a convenient location for them," Snyder said.

EOU freshman Patience Dudley mans the cash register at the store and

said she's had a great time working there so far.

"I heard it was going to be new and different and heard of the great new owners," she said, adding that it's been fairly busy at the corner grocery store since its soft opening on May 3. "I feel very appreciated and like I'm doing a great job."

Market Place Fresh Foods will feature promotional pricing through the month of June as well as host several events where customers can meet local vendors face-to-face, according to Snyder. She said she wants the grocery store to be as welcoming as possible, and these events are one way to show the community Market Place Fresh Foods intends to do just that.

"You know when you feel like you need a glass of wine just to work up the courage to go to the grocery store? Instead of having the liquid courage to go, you can have a beer while you're shopping here," she said. "We want this to be a memorable customer experience. We want it to be some place where people look forward to coming to." ■

WALKOUTS

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many students wore red to support the movement.

"We had a great turnout (of staff and students wearing red)," said Chelsea Rohan, a counselor who helped lead the effort.

Students and staff in the North Powder School District also wore red on Wednesday in support of the push to boost funding for education, said Superintendent Lance Dixon.

The Union School District was also involved in the effort. Prior to the start of the school day, a support rally for education was conducted outside. Many held up signs including ones that thanked the community for its support of education and others that read: "Honk if you love Union schools."

The rally was well received, said Union School District Deputy Clerk Mendy Clark.

But in Cove, business did operate as usual as the school district chose not to participate in "Red for Ed" activities. Superintendent Earl Pettit said this is because his

district doesn't have fiscal problems, and Eastern Oregon in general is less likely to be affected by a budget shortfall.

"I will say that different school districts have very different needs," he said. "On the other side of the state, they're talking about a lot of local service activities at the cost of the school that Eastern Oregon doesn't do."

But, Pettit said, "there's certainly improvement that could be made to the school funding system. The instability of the funding is really the danger and how it can swing."

Beyond protesting to raise awareness of the problems in the Oregon school system, the walkouts were also demonstrations of support for a possible solution: House Bill 3427, known as the Student Success Act. The legislation would put a new business tax in effect that would raise \$2 billion each biennium for schools in Oregon.

Chris Panike, the La Grande School District's business manager, said the passage of House Bill 3427 would be very good for schools. He said schools need the additional funding because so much is expected of them.

He explained children come to school today not only to learn, but to be in a safe place where some medical service is available, services promoting their social well-being are provided, meals are served and more. He noted that for many children, their most nutritious meal of the day is the lunch they receive at school.

Panike supports HB 3427 but wishes it did not tax businesses and instead was a sales tax. He does not like raising taxes on businesses because he does not believe this is good for the economy.

He noted that a sales tax would bring in money from tourists visiting Oregon.

"We would be taxing people outside our communities. Why just tax ourselves (by taxing corporations)?" Panike said.

IMESD Superintendent Mark Mulvill had a similar sentiment, saying he wished Oregon's schools would be funded through a sales tax instead of a business tax, but no matter where the additional funding comes from, the budget needs to "contain costs" in PERS and health insurance.

"To me, the revenue package

and student success fund is coupled with cost containment in the future, otherwise those dollars won't go where they're intended," he said. "We need additional revenue and we need to contain the cost so we can hire the staff the public wants for lower class sizes."

Mulvihill said funding for Oregon schools has not been adequate since 1991 when state ballot measure 5 went into effect, which lowered property taxes and moved the responsibility of education funding from individual communities to the state at large.

"Overall, we've never been back to the level of funding that we had before ballot measure 5," he said. "We're in a historic time in Oregon, when the Legislature is trying to bring us back to those levels for the first time."

Pettit said if HB 3427 does pass, his district would probably use the money it receives to build infrastructure. He explained that his district needs better structures for providing counseling and mental health services for students. These services are now housed in aging modular-like buildings. Pettit said the services could be delivered

more effectively in new or renovated buildings.

Pettit noted that the Cove School District is planning to build a dining hall during the next year, which will leave its present kitchen and cafeteria at the elementary school empty. The superintendent said this area could be converted into space for counseling and mental health offices with money from HB 3427.

The educator noted that schools also would have the option of using funds from HB 3427 to hire more teachers to reduce class sizes. Pettit said large class sizes are not an issue in Cove or most other Northeast Oregon School Districts, so he believes HB 3427 funds would be used more often in his region for infrastructure.

Pettit's perspective aligns with Mulvihill's, who said while class size is less of an issue in Northeast Oregon than on the west side of the state, there are still "pockets of problems" due to inadequate infrastructure.

"Some of our smaller schools have low class sizes, but larger schools don't have the capacity to do that," Mulvihill said. "A lot of this issue is having adequate facilities and staffing." ■

IMBLER

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that it is being hurt by rising Public Employees Retirement System expenses. The cost that Imbler and all Oregon school districts must pay into PERS is scheduled to jump dramatically in 2019-20. The Imbler School District's PERS cost is expected to be \$91,000. The district had already been paying at least \$30,000 a year into PERS.

Lahey-Campbell said the school district has been conservative in its spending in recent years in part because of anticipated rising PERS costs.

The superintendent said she is hopeful that Imbler will not have to draw as much from its reserve fund as the budget is proposing. She said that the budget was built on the assumption that the Legislature will provide schools with a budget of \$8.97 billion for the 2019-21 biennium, and there is a possibility that school districts will receive more than this.

The Imbler School District's fiscal picture could also be boosted by the passage of House Bill 3075. This bill would repeal Senate Bill 1067, which the Legislature passed in 2017 and is set to take effect in October.

Senate Bill 1067 would prohibit school district employees in many instances from being covered by the health insurance of their spouse. Currently, Imbler School District staff may choose to be covered by their spouse's insurance and are then given a stipend from the district. The stipend is paid because the school district saves on money paid for insurance premiums when an employee is covered by a spouse's insurance.

Should House Bill 3075 pass, repealing SB 1067 and allowing the current system to remain in place, the Imbler School District would save \$84,000 in 2019-20, said


Deputy Clerk Teresa Dewey. Dewey and Lahey-Campbell both said, though, HB 3075 does not appear to have a good chance of passing.

The Imbler School District's budget committee was presented with the proposed budget Tuesday. The committee will next meet at 6:30 p.m. May 21 in Room 1 of Imbler High School. The committee may vote at that meeting to recommend a 2019-20 budget to the school board.

The school board will later vote on the adoption of the 2019-20 budget following a public hearing. The school board must adopt a budget by June 30. ■

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Union County wants to help YOU control your noxious weeds!

Thanks to the Weed Levy, the Union County Weed Control Department is offering up to a **\$500 reimbursement** for treating noxious weeds on your property. This is a 50/50 Cost Share program for qualified applicants, and applies to many different integrated weed management strategies. Weeds required to be controlled in Union County are listed below. Please call us at 541-805-5399, email bcapp@union-county.org, or go to our website www.unioncountyweedcontrol.org for a cost share application and more info.

State of Oregon Laws & Regulations on Noxious Weeds

Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 569 — Weed Control (excerpts)
569.180 Noxious weeds as public nuisance; policy. In recognition of the imminent and continuous threat to natural resources...noxious weeds are declared to be a public nuisance and shall be detected, controlled and, where feasible, eradicated on all lands in this state.

What is a noxious weed?

A weed is designated noxious when it is considered by a governmental agency to be injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife, or property (Oregon Administrative Law 603-052-1200). Most noxious weeds are non-native plants that are serious pests causing economic loss and harm the environment. Noxious weeds choke out crops, destroy range and pasture lands, clog waterways, affect human and animal health, and threaten native plant communities.

Designation of Noxious Weeds in Union County

CLASS "A" WEEDS

Class "A" designated weed is a priority noxious weed designated by the Union County Commissioners as a target weed species on which the Weed Control District will comply with a state wide management plan and/or implement a county wide plan for intensive control and monitoring. An "A" rated weed may also be a weed of known economic importance which occurs in small enough infestations to make containment/eradication possible; or one that is not known to occur here, but its presence in neighboring counties make future occurrence here seem imminent.

Russian knapweed Common bugloss Meadow knapweed Yellow starthistle (outside the Cove area) Rush skeletonweed Scotch broom Leafy spurge (greater than 1 mile from the Grande Ronde River) King-devil hawkweed Meadow hawkweed	Mouse-ear hawkweed Orange hawkweed Yellow hawkweed Hoary cress -- Whitetop (within the Grande Ronde or Wolf Creek drainages) Perennial pepperweed Giant knotweed Japanese knotweed Himalayan knotweed Hybrid or Bohemian knotweed Tansy ragwort	Common crupina Garlic Mustard Yellow toadflax Myrtle spurge (except residential) Velvet leaf Black henbane Common tansy Giant Foxtail Ravenna Grass Viper's Bugloss Rose Campion (except residential)
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CLASS "B" WEEDS

Class "B" designated weed is a weed of economic importance, which is both locally abundant and abundant in neighboring counties.

Jointed goatgrass Spotted knapweed Diffuse knapweed Yellow starthistle Oxeye daisy (except residential) Canada thistle Wild carrot -- Queen Anne's Lace Leafy spurge (within 1 mile of	Grande Ronde River) Hoary cress -- Whitetop Dalmatian toadflax Purple loosestrife Scotch thistle Sulfur cinquefoil Puncturevine Houndstongue Armenian (Himalayan) black-	berry Yellow flag iris Medusahead rye Ventena grass-- North Africa grass, Wiregrass Saltcedar Sweet Briar Rose Bittersweet Nightshade
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