

Small-business & Ag HAPPENINGS

Union County Chamber of Commerce invites you

LA GRANDE — The Union County Chamber of Commerce invites the community to come out and support neighboring businesses and events. The new owners of R&C Family Store on Bearco Loop in La Grande are hosting an open house to mark the store's improvements alongside continuing traditions, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 17. Later that day, Wine Down will celebrate its new location with a ribbon cutting at 6:30 p.m. at 115 Depot St, La Grande. The annual Ag-Timber Parade events beginning at 6 p.m. Friday at Fred Beeman Park in Island City with the parade starting at 8 p.m. And, on May 21, all are welcome to come and mingle between 4:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. at a Business After Hours get-together at La Grande Country Club, 10605 S. McAlister Lane, Island City.

Ag bloggers and producers sought for conference

DENVER — The American Grassfed Association, which has its headquarters in Denver, Colorado, is looking for bloggers and influencers to join the organization at ShiftCon, to be held in early October in Atlanta, Georgia. According to <https://shiftconmedia.com>, ShiftCon is an eco-wellness influencer conference focusing on food, wellness, health, sustainability and platform growth. Shifters are part of an online influencer community that seek healthier and more sustainable lives and promote brands that mirror their values.

A newsletter from AGA — which has been a proud sponsor and connection between farmers and the bloggers and influencers who educate consumers — stated that the conference is a great opportunity for farmers to get in front of influencers that reach multiple thousands with their blogs and social media presence. Food donations are needed and booths are available.

For more information on how to get involved, go to <https://shiftconmedia.com>.

The American Grassfed Association is a national organization that provides certification, market support, education, research and advocacy on behalf of grassfed ruminants and dairy and pastured pork producers and supporters. AGA offers independent family farms and ranches use of the first and USA only grassfed certification program developed by grassfed ranchers, scientists, veterinarians, and other industry experts. Go to www.americangrassfed.org for more information.

Report prevented planting and failed acres

WASHINGTON, D.C. — USDA Farm Service Agency reminds producers to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some programs. Producers should report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency. Contact your local FSA office for a list of final planting dates by crop.

If a producer is unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports will be accepted only if FSA conducts a farm visit to assess the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged. Additionally, producers with failed acres should also use form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, to report failed acres.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, within the required 15 calendar days.

For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops including grasses.



Courtesy photo

Dr. Shari Carpenter (top left) teaches the newest class at EOU called TheAgency@EOU, where students receive real-life experiences while helping local businesses grow and adapt their marketing plans to a rapidly changing business world. The enrollment response of 20 students for the first term has been enthusiastic, and Carpenter is very excited to use her 22 years of marketing experience to teach as a full professor at EOU.

STIMULATING THE LOCAL ECONOMY FROM THE CLASSROOM

By Trish Yerges
For WesCom News Service

A new creative marketing class called TheAgency@EOU is making its debut during spring term at Eastern Oregon University. The class is guided by Shari Carpenter, Ph.D., who previously owned a successful marketing company and is now sharing her knowledge with the top business students at EOU.

Carpenter's extensive resume includes working in the retail and marketing industries from 1983 to 2005.

"For my first business, I created a marketing company after graduating from Purdue University with an associate and bachelor's

degree," she said. "Armed with an understanding of human motivation, my marketing agency thrived."

Carpenter went on to earn a master's degree in business administration and a doctorate degree. Thinking of herself as a perpetual student as well as a teacher, she is always looking to expand her skill sets through research and then share it with others.

"With each class I teach, I strive to be better, more engaging and to deliver the best product I can to students," she said.

The "product" is an empowering class: "TheAgency@EOU (is) a student-run agency that fosters experiential learning in the field

of marketing," Carpenter said. "Through membership in TheAgency@EOU, students gain real-life skills and experience."

Many of the students have never had full-time jobs before, she said, so in The Agency classroom, Carpenter is teaching them how to be employees, how to build a business, and how to successfully complete their responsibilities in the ad agency, whether their contributions are creative, written or administrative. The skills taught in the class are broad and multifaceted.

"One of the things that marketing does at its finest is to inform people of the potential

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Brittany Hargrove photo

Cheryl Hargrove is the branch manager of Union's Old West Federal Credit Union branch. The bank had a soft opening on April 22, but will have an open house and ribbon cutting to celebrate its opening May 23.

Open house to celebrate credit union opening set to take place May 23

WesCom News Service staff

UNION — Banking services have returned to Union with the opening of the Old West Federal Credit Union branch at 539 S. Main St. The branch is now open but there will be an open house from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. May 23 with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony at 6 p.m. A barbecue dinner, live D.J. and drawings for prizes will also be part of the event.

The credit union is being welcomed enthusiastically by the community, which has not had a banking institution since 2016 when Umpqua Bank closed its Union branch.

"It is exciting, absolutely," said Jocelyn Jones of Union.

The opening of the branch means residents will no longer have to leave town to do their banking.

"This will be way more convenient," Jones said.

Michele Later of Union expressed

a similar sentiment.

"Now if I need cash, I don't have to go to La Grande," she said. "All I have to do is walk down the street."

The new branch of Old West Federal Credit Union is in the old Community Bank building. The interior of the bank has a distinctly Union and Grande Ronde Valley flavor with at least a dozen large black-and-white prints of local photos decorating its walls. Many of the photos, which include those of ranchers at work and World War I veterans, were provided by the Union County Museum, said Branch Manager Cheryl Hargrove. The images were converted into prints by the Mitres Touch Gallery in La Grande.

The photos are meant to reflect how dedicated the credit union is to serving the people of Union.

"The credit union is all about local

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Retaining your best employees

By Greg Smith

Most employers expend a great deal of time, effort and resources during the recruitment process helping to ensure they hire the most qualified candidate. While this is essential, emphasis on



Smith

employee satisfaction and retention is all too often overlooked. Not only is this costly, but has a negative impact on morale, production and customer service. If a business gets the reputation as having a "revolving door," this will significantly impede the owner's ability to attract top tier individuals and will compromise their bottom line.

Managers often assume employees leave because of inadequate pay and benefits. While these factors are critical, there are many other reasons employees change jobs. Two common reasons are ineffective management and feeling unappreciated. Certainly, there are other considerations including a lack of advancement opportunities and unreasonable workloads. With the strong economy and many options for quality employees to find employment better suited to their needs, it is critical for all employers, even those with limited cash flow, to implement creative strategies to keep top talent.

Here are some thoughts:

• Ask them. Find out from

your employees what makes them feel their contributions are appreciated. Incentives can be as simple as formally recognizing them as employee of the month, providing a gift card, offering flexible scheduling when possible, or an occasional paid afternoon off. Even a hand-written thank you note can mean a lot.

• Offer opportunities for professional development. This may include paying employees to attend workshops or conferences to enhance their skills and whenever possible, promoting from within the company.

• Establish and execute good management and leadership practices. This is something successful business owners should already have in place, but often employees don't clearly understand their job duties, how their performance will be evaluated, what the company policies are and whether they are enforced consistently. This leads to frustration and is damaging to morale.

• Welcome open communication. Employees feel respected when they can freely address conflicts, express grievances, or make suggestions about enhancing workflow or other ideas beneficial to the company. It is rewarding when an individual's ideas are considered and even more so when they can be implemented.

• Encourage a work-life balance. See **Employees** / Page 2B

