

Small-business & Ag HAPPENINGS

Union County hosts upcoming grand openings

ISLAND CITY, UNION — The Union County Chamber of Commerce is hosting Momiji's grand opening and ribbon cutting from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. May 30. Featuring Japanese food, the restaurant is located at 11627 Island Ave., Island City, near Walmart. At the event, Momiji will offer samples from its menu, wine and giveaways. Information on free deliveries and the VIP card (which gets you 50% off happy hour specials) will be available. Check out the menu at www.momijilg.com.

On the 23rd, the Old West Federal Credit Union branch in Union officially opens with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 4:30 p.m. All are invited to help celebrate the return of banking in Union. Come see the new location and hear about future plans for the Union branch.

Get help with costs of organic certification

WASHINGTON, D.C. — USDA's Farm Service Agency offers organic producers and handlers financial assistance with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic certification through the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP). Applications for fiscal 2019 funding are due Oct. 31. OCCSP received continued support through the 2018 Farm Bill. It provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the USDA's National Organic Program.

Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent. Eligible expenses for cost-share reimbursement include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, travel expenses for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage. Certified producers and handlers are eligible to receive reimbursement for up to 75 percent of certification costs each year, up to a maximum of \$750 per certification scope, including crops, livestock, wild crops, handling and state organic program fees.

Contact your local FSA office for more information.

Workshop covers logging considerations for forest landowners

SUMMERVILLE — The OSU Extension Office is offering a class for forest landowners who are considering harvesting trees or doing a fire risk reduction project on their property. The class will be held from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. May 23 at the Blue Mountain 4-H Center, 66501 End Road, Summerville. Check-in is at 8:30 a.m. The workshop will cover topics such as logging operations, tax implications and road maintenance, followed by a panel of loggers, consulting foresters, log buyers and experienced landowners. Cost is \$35 and includes lunch, refreshments and resource materials. To register, go to bit.ly/ExtensionForestryNE or call the Union County Extension Office at 541-963-1010.



Union County farms Nilsson Farming Inc., shown above, and Elmer's Farm, shown below, will both be featured during the eighth annual Biodiversity Working for Farmers Tour June 27.

Courtesy photos

Local farms featured in tour

Oregon State University

The Western Region Functional Agricultural Biodiversity Work Group supports scientists from the western U.S. and specialists in agricultural biodiversity from industry, non-profits and farmers. They meet on a regular basis to develop conservation practices that can be adopted on western farms. Major focus areas of this group are conserving on-farm resources that promote pollination and biological pest suppression by insect predators, parasites and pathogens. As a part of its USDA-sponsored program, the FAB Work Group conducts annual field courses, and this year is organizing a tour of two farms in the Union County where resource conservation and production practices are successfully combined.

The Work Group is partnering with Union County Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel and other regional experts for the eighth annual Biodiversity Working for Farmers Tour.

This free event, which will be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. June 27, will provide information and opportunities for discussion for decision makers, political representatives, conservationists, the agricultural industry and area farmers. The tour will visit Nilsson's Farming Inc. and



the Elmer's Farm. The farmers will lead the tour group through their diverse operations highlighting key conservation enhancement measures and current on-farm projects, soil building techniques, and alternative crop production practices such as no-till, wind-

breaks and insectary plantings.

Botanists, conservationists, entomologists, local farmers, extension researchers and bird and native bee experts will be giving brief, interactive mini-presentations throughout the day. In addition, a mid-day catered lunch will be provided.

Participants will see first-hand the progressive biodiversity enhancement practices that are driving sustainable agriculture forward in the 21st century and interact directly with the farmers and other specialists who are helping to understand the role and importance of on-farm biodiversity for the quality and yield of agricultural crops. The insights gained on this tour will be of direct relevance to discussions on agricultural policies that encourage further adoption of these practices. It will also identify some of the constraints that may limit the potential for the full benefits of these practices to be realized.

The stars of the tour, in addition to the farmers and their agricultural products, will be the organisms themselves, including plants, pollinators, insect predators and parasites, and bird predators that contribute to crop production in important ways. The presenters will describe these organisms, the positive role they play on the farm, and refer to them as they are encountered during the day. Those taking the tour are encouraged to bring notebooks and cameras to make a record of the day's events.

Registration for the tour is required by June 14. To

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Oregon Wheat Foundation awards scholarship to Imbler student

WesCom News Service staff

PORTLAND — The Oregon Wheat Foundation awarded seven \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors this year, representing six counties or regions. Students were judged on their community involvement, academic achievement and an essay on a wheat industry topic. Blake Frost of Summerville was the recipient of the Union County scholarship.

Frost is a senior at the Imbler Charter School and plans to attend either the University of Idaho or Oregon Institute of Technology to become a mechanical engineer. He has maintained a GPA of 4.0 throughout high school and earned 24 college credits. In addition, Blake has also been a four-year scholar athlete, competing in football and basketball.

Blake has been active in his community, including participating in seven years of 4-H competitions, building and maintaining motorcycle trails at Mt. Emily Rec Area, planting trees for La Grande Parks & Recreation and serving as a counselor at the inaugural Imbler Outdoor School program. Blake worked grass seed and wheat harvest two summers for area farmer Wade Bingaman, performed cattle and calf work for Kent Coppinger, and various tasks for Pat and Vicki Brogotti.

The Oregon Wheat Foundation was formed in 1980 by the Oregon Wheat Growers League leadership to raise funds for specific projects. Among the most popular projects of the Foundation is its scholarship program providing higher education assistance to high school seniors of wheat producing families. For more, go to www.owgl.org/foundation.

Oregon cap and trade bill moves closer to becoming a reality

By **Aubrey Wieber**
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon's carbon cap and trade proposal passed out of its legislative committee on a party-line vote Friday, setting it up as the next landmark piece of legislation to pass in the 2019 session.

It's now one step closer to the desk of Gov. Kate Brown, who last week signed the Student Success Act into law. If cap and trade were to pass as well, it would give her two landmark wins within months of her re-election.

The bill now goes to the Ways and Means Committee, where it can continue to be tweaked, though the committee will look at the financial aspects of the bill, not the policy.

House Bill 2020 would set a 52 million metric ton cap on greenhouse gas emissions. Companies that produce at least 25,000 metric tons of emissions per year would have to pay for every ton they emit by buying allowances through an auction. The proceeds from those sales would go to a high-way projects, climate mitigation projects, rural and minority communities and other programs.

The passage would join Oregon with California as the only U.S. states to implement cap-and-trade

systems. It's a journey Oregon lawmakers have been on for about a decade.

The bill's passage out of committee was expected. While similar proposals failed in past years, Democratic leadership has been adamant that it's time to move forward with an answer to climate change.

The proposal has received strong criticism from Republicans and the business community, but with Democratic supermajorities in both the House and Senate, it was always expected to have the votes to pass. It was also something Brown campaigned on.

However, there was a hiccup last week when a deal over an education package was reached. In order to pass a \$1 billion-per-year business tax to fund education reforms, Democrats agreed to kill a couple bills and do a "reset" on cap-and-trade.

For several days, it wasn't clear what that meant. That's because the specifics were never hammered out.

Democrats agreed to give Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, a staunch opponent of the bill, more involvement. That wasn't much in evidence Friday.

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