

Small-business & Ag

HAPPENINGS

The Other Guys celebrates new location

ISLAND CITY — The Other Guys Auto Sales is throwing a party Oct. 5 to thank the community and customers for welcoming the business to Island City. KUBQ 98.7 “The Ranch” will broadcast live onsite beginning at 12:30 p.m., and Hines Meat Co. will serve sausage dogs and pulled pork. Soft drinks will be provided. At 2:30 p.m., the Union County Chamber of Commerce will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by live music from Wasteland Kings until the party winds down around 6 p.m. There will also be giveaways for those attending the grand opening at 11201 Island Ave., Island City, including \$500 in Grocery Outlet gift cards.

East Oregonians encouraged to apply for BOLI position

SALEM — According to a press release from Rep. Greg Barreto, the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries has extended the recruitment for the new Eastern Oregon Employer Assistance and Apprenticeship Coordinator position. A number of applications have been received, but BOLI would like to see more candidates who live and have worked east of the Cascades. The right candidate is someone who can work with local businesses in providing feedback and technical assistance and who can work to expand apprenticeship opportunities in Eastern Oregon. Once filled, this will be the first time in more than two decades BOLI has had a staff person based in Eastern Oregon. For more information, go to www.oregon.gov/BOLI, e-mail DCBS.Recruiting@oregon.gov or call 503-378-3200.

‘Mummies’ welcome at Real Deals

LA GRANDE — Real Deals, 1108 Adams Ave., La Grande, is having a Mummies’ Night Out from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Oct. 3. The promotional evening will include wine from Tap That Growlers, treats, sales and specials. All “mummies” are welcome.

Use Google to grow your business

BAKER CITY, ENTERPRISE — The Blue Mountain Community College Small Business Development Center is hosting “Integrating Google Business Into Your Digital Marketing Strategy,” a seminar that focuses on the ever-important role Google is playing in search results. The class will be held from 9 a.m. to noon Oct. 10 at 3275 Baker St. in Baker City and from 9 a.m. to noon Nov. 5 at 107 SW First St. in Enterprise.

The courses will be led by Michael Mettler, founder and director of strategy at MCM Strategic + Communications, a marketing and management consulting firm based in Walla Walla, Washington. Each class is \$39, payable by cash or check made out to BMCC. For more information and registration, call Andrea Fowler at 541-278-5833 or visit [BMCC SBDC on Facebook @ bluemountainsbdc](https://www.facebook.com/bluemountainsbdc).

SAIF’s new online video offers fall training

SALEM — Ergonomic issues are one of the leading causes of injury in Oregon. According to a press release from SAIF, Oregon’s not-for-profit workers’ compensation insurance company, in the last five years the company has received more than 84,000 strains and sprains claims from Oregon workers. A new SAIF video, “5 Ways to Make Your Fall Safer,” offers easy tips for how to avoid injury while at work or doing common fall activities.

Tips offered in the video cover the importance of lifting safely: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Keep your chin up and look forward to keep the natural curve in your lower back as you lift. Flex your knees and avoid deep squatting. More information can be found at saif.com/fall-ergo. Watch the video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7NAYZ6d3c8.

Les Schwab sponsors Community Stadium scoreboard

LA GRANDE — For nearly 20 years, La Grande’s Les Schwab Tire Center has been an important and active partner to EOU and Mountaineer athletics programs. Recently Les Schwab and Eastern Oregon University signed a new 10-year agreement to keep the Les Schwab name atop the scoreboard at Community Stadium. The agreement is part of the Building

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AGRICULTURE

Drones becoming crop sensors

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press

Drones will be increasingly important in crop production and research in the coming years, Jae Ryu believes.

The unmanned aerial vehicles even could replace manned agricultural aircraft within a decade, the University of Idaho researcher said.

Some farmers already use small drones to identify areas of water stress in the field, said Ryu, a Boise-based associate professor in the Department of Soil and Water Systems.

But bigger drones and payloads are often required for detecting nutrient shortages as well as the presence of insects and disease, and for spot-spraying a chemical, he said.

“At this point, it is still expensive,” said Ryu, whose largest drone is worth about \$60,000 including its sensor package. “But large farms can consider getting this kind of equipment.”

Analyzing drone-collected images and data also requires additional time and special skills, he said.

Farmers can access equipment, facilities and human resources by partnering with the university, Ryu said. The data and contract or fee revenue support research advancement as well as current projects.

Drone use in agriculture has grown partly because satellite information is too coarse to use effectively for farm-scale decision-making, he said. With a drone, there are fewer physical constraints such as clouds, the user gets high-resolution images quickly, and “you can see a dime from the sky from maybe 200 feet off the ground.”

Hyper-spectral sensors can identify crop stress possibly caused by water or nutrient shortages, or pest and disease impacts. Ryu said hand-held versions excel at taking images anywhere in a crop, including pinpointing crop stress, and enable the user to move around a field easily.

By mounting the sensor on a drone, “we can basically identify a crop-stress area at farm scale,” he said. Light-spectrum data from the drone-mounted sensor can be cross-validated with information gathered by hand-held device, increasing data accuracy



Brad Carlson/Capital Press

Jae Ryu of the University of Idaho checks one of the drones he uses to analyze farm fields.

and utility.

In an onion field, for example, a hand-held sensor may find one light spectrum indicating crop stress from a lack of water and another spectrum showing stress from a nutrient deficiency.

“It is only identified locally,” Ryu said. “But the drone can tell them if this area is heavily affected.”

Spot spraying may require a heavier “freight” drone.

“Many Asian and European countries already are implementing drone-based spot spraying,” Ryu said. “That is my next project,

to build a spot-spray drone to advance pest control in the Treasure Valley.”

He uses remote-sensing technologies and satellite images to view drought and characterize its impact on Western agriculture. He is working on using drone-mounted sensors to chart water quality, important in that detecting an issue early could reduce problems later, he said.

Drones, with their close-proximity imagery, also show promise in estimating grape and tree fruit productivity, Ryu said.

He is considering developing a drone workshop for farmers.

Working together helps ensure success

By Greg Smith

All entrepreneurs and business owners need to have a solid team in place working toward the same goal.

There are many hands that can help a business be successful. This may include a spouse or partner, suppliers, a lender, accountant, attorney, employees or even a webmaster. Local government, economic development, business advisers or other agencies are often behind-the-scenes team members and can play vital roles.

There is an inner circle that has the most direct influence. Carefully deciding exactly who to include in your inner circle and making sure those closest to you are on the same page are critical first steps.



Smith

This may seem obvious, but there are many married couples or partners who find out one of them is not supportive of the decision to start a business or are hesitant to expand or pursue financing, resent the unforeseen commitment of time or the fact regular paychecks can no longer be counted on. Managers may not fully understand what is expected, and employees are sent mixed messages. Not only does this cause strife, but creative energy and effectiveness are compromised and may lead to the ultimate demise of a business.

An effective team requires good leadership. The person at the helm must first and foremost demonstrate honesty and integrity. Being a clear communicator and excellent listener who inspires others by demonstrating commitment and passion is key.

Delegating and empowering others helps ignite passion and encourages creativity and innovation. After receiving information and input from others, the leader should have sound decision-making abilities, and there must be accountability when things do not go as planned. Identifying strengths and weaknesses or even making the tough decision to replace an ineffective or uncooperative team member who causes discord is essential.

Working with a team is sometimes difficult for those with an entrepreneurial mindset. Entrepreneurs often make decisions quickly and are willing to take risks others do not feel comfortable with. Consulting others with different areas of expertise and experience may slow down the process, but it allows for brainstorming and collaboration. Having more than one person

to solve problems and complete complex tasks increases productivity, creativity and chances for continued success.

In addition to accountability, the willingness to “share the win” is an important part of being a strong team leader. People who feel appreciated and see their ideas implemented are apt to continue making positive and meaningful contributions.

The common acronym “T.E.A.M.” (Together Everyone Achieves More) is very accurate.

Greg Smith is the director of the EOU Small Business Development Center and can be reached by calling 541-962-1532. The office is located at 1607 Gekeler Lane in La Grande with office hours from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Email eousbdc@gmail.com to schedule a one-on-one, free, confidential business advising session.

Legislation would provide financial certainty

US Senate news release

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A bipartisan group of Western senators introduced legislation to provide long-term financial security for rural counties Sept. 16.

The legislation introduced by U.S. Senators Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Jim Risch (R-Idaho), Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) and Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) would reauthorize the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program for 10 years. The program provides critical resources to nearly 1,900 counties across 49 states. Counties have used these payments for more than 40 years to fund law enforcement, firefighting, emergency response and other essential county services.

“The PILT program is a critical lifeline for rural counties struggling to pay for essential

services like law enforcement, jails, mental health and libraries,” Wyden said. “Congress and the federal government have a moral responsibility to provide stable and reliable funding for this important program. Rural counties in Oregon and across America deserve certainty. It’s time to end the financial roller coaster they face each year.”

“Rural communities shouldn’t have to wonder if they will have the resources they need to pay their firefighters, emergency first responders or law enforcement officials,” Merkley said. “It’s time for Congress to reauthorize the federal support counties need to pay for these critical services on a long-term basis, so families across Oregon and America have the peace of mind they deserve.”

“Idaho’s rural counties depend on PILT funding for vital functions like law enforce-

ment, emergency response, public health and critical transportation infrastructure,” Crapo said. “The federal government does not pay local property taxes, which makes rural counties containing large swaths of federally owned land face tough financial decisions. Our legislation would provide much-needed stability to these counties so they can budget appropriately according to expected revenue and provide these essential services to local citizens and taxpayers. I look forward to continue working in a bipartisan manner to end the financial uncertainty thousands of rural counties face nationwide.”

“Without PILT funding, many rural communities throughout our state and much of the West would face economic devastation,” Risch said. “Our rural communities need a

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