

Small-business & Ag

HAPPENINGS

Countertop Solutions makes

it official with grand opening

Saturday

LA GRANDE — All are invited to Countertop Solutions, 1415 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, for a Grand Opening party Oct. 26. The business has been open and serving clients in the region since May 2019 and is making it official with a party from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. There will be tasty treats, local beer, wine, music and shop tours.

A custom manufacturing and retail operation that builds and installs stone, acrylic and laminate countertops, Countertop Solutions was a recipient of Urban Renewal funding that allowed owners Chris Loman and Sam Jacobson to recently expand their business.

Workshop focuses on growing

your business digitally

BAKER CITY — The Small Business Development Center at Blue Mountain Community College is continuing its fall workshop series with a class in Baker City on Oct. 24. “Digital Marketing and Content Creation for Social Media” will focus on promoting and growing your business digitally, creating a voice for your business, how to create two-way communication channels, digital advertising options and strategies, and calendaring your content. The workshop 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.

The Baker City workshop will go from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and include light refreshments and a follow-up session to evaluate your progress several weeks following. The cost is \$39, payable by cash or check made out to BMCC. For more information and registration, call Andrea Fowler at 541-278-5833.

SAIF offers free ag safety

seminar in La Grande

SALEM — SAIF is offering 29 free seminars on agriculture safety and health in 17 cities across Oregon beginning Oct. 28 with a seminar in La Grande. Nine of the seminars will be presented entirely in Spanish. The seminars are designed primarily for people working in agriculture but are open to anyone interested in ag safety and health — being insured by SAIF is not a requirement to attend.

The seminar in La Grande will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Blue Mountain Conference Center, 404 12th St. Lunch will be provided. This year’s seminars will focus on four topics: respiratory personal protective equipment, working at elevation, safety leadership for anyone, and incident analysis — a structured process for identifying what happened and reducing recurrence of injuries moving forward.

Employers with small ag businesses who attend the seminar will meet OSHA’s instructional requirement — one of four requirements that exempt small agricultural operations from random OSHA inspections. More information — including registration details — can be found at www.saif.com/agseminars.

Businesses and organizations

welcome to sponsor Farmer-

Merchant Banquet

LA GRANDE — The annual Farmer-Merchant Banquet is set for Nov. 7 at the Blue Mountain Conference Center in La Grande. A no-host social hour begins at 6 p.m. followed by dinner and an awards program. There will also be live music and a program will focus on “The Roots of Union County” — the theme of the evening — showcasing the rich history of Union County.

Tickets are free for members of the ag community and \$30 for the general public. Call the Union County Chamber Office at 541-963-8588 to make reservations.

Business and organizations are encouraged to consider sponsoring the event. For more information on sponsorship, call the Chamber, stop by 207 Depot St., La Grande, or email Director@VisitUnionCounty.org.

New ‘Moms & Pops’ store opens

in Elgin

ELGIN — An eclectic new shop, Moms & Pops Almost Everything Store, is now open at 810 Inkwood in Elgin. The store offers new and used household items, “farm and auto stuff,” hardwood, hardware and more. The store is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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SabrinaThompson/EO Media Group

The new store JaxDog store features a cafe and kitchen right next to a large collection of books.

New location for JaxDog

By SabrinaThompson

EO Media Group

In November of 2018, the ceiling of JaxDog Cafe and Books collapsed, forcing the La Grande business to close its doors. After finding the right place to relocate and a thoughtful remodel, owners, husband and wife, Jon and Laura Hancock are now supplying coffee, food and books a few blocks to the east, at 1305 Adams Ave.

Jon opened JaxDog Cafe in 2014 as a place to eat and drink upstairs in the building that was then housing Looking Glass Books. After Looking Glass relocated, Jon and co-owner Laura turned the space into JaxDog Cafe and Books, with Jon as chef and Laura as the bookstore’s manager. The bookstore and cafe combination was a success, and the owners have every reason to expect this to continue in their new location, which officially opened Oct. 10.

“The thing that struck me over this past week is that even though it has been a year since we last opened, seeing all these familiar faces again, it is almost as if no time has passed at all,”

Laura said. “It’s a neat thing to have that connection in the community.”

The business was named after the couple’s rescue dog, Jax. The original space featured a resident cat named Amber that roamed around and had gained local fame. The cat has since “retired,” Laura said, and will no longer be seen at the new store. At the previous location, the cafe was upstairs and the owners allowed dogs into the downstairs bookstore, but due to the proximity of the kitchen in the new store, only service animals are allowed.

In the new store, the cafe and bookstore are on the same floor, which provides better accessibility for all patrons. Jon said he is happy with the store’s open layout, which clearly showcases the cafe alongside the bookstore.

“The cohesiveness of it, having it be on one level, it’s great,” he said. “With this space everything is up to code and ADA compliant, and our visibility has also improved.”

Laura said she enjoys being able to work in close proximity to her husband, and the new



SabrinaThompson/EO Media Group

JaxDog, owned by husband and wife Jon and Laura Hancock, reopened Oct. 10.

store’s layout makes it easier to collaborate. The couple, who are avid readers, said the new store allows them to more cohesively combine their interests, which in turn will benefit their customers.

“Being able to sit down and have a cup of coffee or tea and read is just one of those simple comfort things,” Laura said.

The collection of books is a mixture of new and used copies,

covering a wide range of genres. The store also sells greeting cards and journals. Used books are collected through donations. The cafe serves breakfast and lunch. Everyday there is quiche and salad specials and a weekly entree special. All of the food is made from scratch.

“I do all my own baking, make all my own soups from the

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IRS extends relief for

Oregon farmers and

ranchers affected

by severe weather

Internal Revenue Service

SALEM — The Internal Revenue Service has extended tax relief for farmers and ranchers who were forced to sell livestock due to drought, flooding or other severe weather in recent years.

Among the Oregon counties eligible for federal assistance are Baker and Union counties. Counties that border those listed are also eligible for federal aid.

In most cases, qualified farmers and ranchers whose drought-sale replacement period was scheduled to expire on Dec. 31 now have until the end of their next tax year to replace the livestock and defer tax on any gains from the forced sales. Sales of other livestock, such as those raised for slaughter or held for sporting purposes, or poultry, are not eligible.

“Because the normal drought-sale replacement period is four years, this extension immediately impacts drought sales that occurred during 2015,” said IRS spokesman David Tucker II. “The replacement periods for some drought sales before 2015 are also affected due to previous drought-related extensions affecting some of these localities.”

A list of all eligible areas in 32 states, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands can be found in Notice 2019-54 Extension of Replacement Period for Livestock Sold on Account of Drought, available on IRS.gov.

More information on reporting drought sales and other farm-related tax issues can be found on IRS.gov; in Publication 225, Farmer’s Tax Guide.

Voodoo Doughnuts

co-founder gives talk

Eastern Oregon University

LA GRANDE — Voodoo Doughnuts co-founder Tres Shannon will be the featured speaker at Eastern Oregon University’s Entrepreneurship Club’s fall Pub Talk Oct. 24 at Side A Brewing & Firehouse Museum, 1219 Washington Ave., La Grande. Shannon will share the history of the business — known for its pink boxes and doughnuts that push the limits of edible art — and discuss his journey as an entrepreneur.

The Entrepreneurship Club at EOU hosts regular Pub Talks with entrepreneurs and business owners throughout the academic year.

“One thing that is pivotal in the entrepreneurial community is for entrepreneurs to have heroes — people who have been there and done that and can show they started out just like you,” said Wilson Zehr, the Entrepreneurship Club’s faculty adviser.

Voodoo Doughnuts started out in Old Town Portland with Richard “Tres” Shannon and Kenneth “Cat Daddy” Pogson. The founders have built a nationally recognized brand from one original shop in Portland. There are now eight stores, with two of the newest located at Universal Studios in Orlando and Hollywood.

Zehr met Shannon during a photoshoot in Portland after coaching football with a real estate broker who worked with Voodoo Doughnuts. He said relationship-building and networking like this is another big part of what Pub Talks are meant to do.

“The intent is not only to inspire young entrepreneurs but to help foster an entrepreneurial community, while creating opportunities to build relationships and establish networks,” Zehr said.

The EOU Pub Talk series was inspired by Portland’s Oregon Entrepreneurs Network. Zehr described how local entrepreneurs got together in an informal environment with peers to discuss their businesses and the challenges they were facing, and to share tips with one another. He said this model has helped launch the startup scene in a number of cities.

EOU’s Pub Talks are all recorded at available for viewing at www.livestream.com/eou/entrepreneurclub.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and the talk begins at 6 p.m. Food and drinks are available. This event is free and open to the public. For more information contact Wilson Zehr or wzehr@eou.edu.