## Small-business & Ag HAPPENINGS

### Dual county businesses partner for holiday event this evening

LA GRANDE — Terminal Gravity Brewery and Pub of Enterprise is partnering with La Grande's Benchwarmers Pub & Grill for a "TG Tap Takeover" Wednesday at Benchwarmers, 210 Depot St., La Grande. The takeover will run from 6-8:30 p.m. and feature seven beers on tap, including brand-new releases plus swag giveaways, beer samples and conversation with TG representatives.

### Rosewood Cottage plans Customer Appreciation Day

LA GRANDE — Rosewood Cottage, which changed locations late this year, is hosting a Customer Appreciation Day Thursday in its new space in Pat's Alley, 1414 Adams Ave., La Grande. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., the community can stop by for samples, holiday discounts and drawings.

### Oregon Wheat Growers League and Oregon Wheat Commission announce new CEO

PENDLETON — The Oregon Wheat Commission and Oregon Wheat Growers League announce Amanda Hoey, of The Dalles, will serve as the next chief executive officer of the organizations.


Hoey

Hoey has more than a decade of executive leadership experience and a close connection to the Oregon wheat industry, growing up on a dryland wheat farm in Wasco County. Her experience includes serving as the executive director for Mid-Columbia Economic Development District since 2008; managing the bi-state regional organization, serving five counties in both Oregon and Washington; and serving on the National Association of Development Organizations Board of Directors where advocacy for federal resource support and policy changes within USDA was a high priority.

"The OWC and OWGL representatives were equally impressed with Amanda's qualifications and interview. She was very well spoken and has a great deal of experience to take on the role. I have complete confidence she will serve the organizations well," current CEO Blake Rowe stated.

Hoey takes pride in returning to her roots and investing in rural economies. Amanda recognizes an opportunity to further expand the investment into the area most important to her: "From enhancing resources for ag research to addressing policy challenges that would otherwise hinder farm profitability/viability, the work of Oregon Wheat is critical to ensuring vibrant rural communities."

### 'Kicker' details confirmed

SALEM — According to a press release from the Oregon Department of Revenue, more than $1.5 billion tax surplus was confirmed by the Office of Economic Analysis earlier this month, triggering a tax surplus credit, or "kicker," for the 2018 tax year. Instead of kicker checks, the surplus will be returned to taxpayers through a credit on their 2019 state personal income tax returns filed in 2020.

To calculate the amount of your credit, multiply your 2018 tax liability before any credits (line 22 on the 2018 Form OR-40) by 16%. This percentage is determined and certified by OEA. Taxpayers are eligible to claim the kicker if they filed a 2018 tax return and had tax due before credits. To claim the kicker credit, taxpayers must file a 2019 tax return even if they don't have a filing obligation. The state may use all or part of the kicker to pay any state debt owed, such as tax due for other years, child support, court fines or school loans.

A What's My Kicker? calculator will be active at www.oregon.gov/dor for personal income tax filers when the filing season opens in January. To calculate your kicker, enter your name, Social Security number and filing status for 2018 and 2019.

### Edward Jones named one of the 2019 Best Workplaces for Parents

ST. LOUIS, Missouri — Edward Jones, a financial services firm with branches in Pendleton, La Grande and Ontario, has been named one of the 2019 Best Workplaces for Parents by Great Place to Work and FORTUNE magazine. The firm ranked No. 5 on the list of 50 companies, up two spots from last year. Edward Jones' generous 16-week paid parental leave policy continues to highlight its suite of associate benefits.


Photo by Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Washington Grain Commission CEO Glen Squires says the new Phase One trade agreement with China could offer a big opportunity for the U.S. wheat industry.

# Encouraged by 'Phase One'

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

The U.S. and China last week agreed to a "Phase One" trade deal that American wheat growers hope will create "tremendous" potential to boost exports.

The agreement would roll back tariffs and re-open China's market to U.S. agricultural exports.

The National Association of Wheat Growers and U.S. Wheat Associates, the overseas marketing arm for the industry, welcomed the news that the two countries have "agreed on the text" of an agreement.

"It sounds like this is a great step forward," Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission, told the Capital Press.

According to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the trade deal "requires structural reforms and other changes to China's economic and trade regime in the areas of intellectual property, technology transfer, agriculture, financial services, and currency and foreign exchange."

It also includes a commitment by China that it will make substantial additional purchases of U.S. goods and services in the coming years.

"President Trump has focused on concluding a Phase One agreement that achieves meaningful, fully enforceable structural changes and begins rebalancing the U.S.-China trade relationship," U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said in a press release.

Before the trade war began, China's imports of soft white wheat — the type primarily grown in the Pacific Northwest — had increased to about 300,000 tons, Squires said. There are 36.74 bushels in a metric ton.

China was the fifth largest market for U.S. white wheat in the 2017-2018 marketing year, and could easily go "much higher," he said.

China does not produce a low-protein, weak-gluten wheat, so it has "tremendous potential" for soft white wheat, Squires said.

"More demand creates upward pressure on prices, and upward pressure on prices creates more plantings," Squires said. "Our production, instead of hovering around 300 million bushels in the PNW, it could go higher. We're really kind of talking down the road."

Phase One opens the door for trade to resume, Squires said.

"We just hope it continues and actually materializes into demand," he said.

U.S. Wheat has continued to work with millers in China. It held a crop quality seminar in November, Squires said.

"Despite all of this challenge over the last couple years, them not buying wheat, we (in) the U.S. wheat industry have continued to provide trade servicing, to interact, to bring Chinese teams ... to the states," Squires said. "We've been fully engaged with them, looking forward to the time we could return to the market."

In the meantime, China had switched to purchasing high-protein hard red spring wheat from Canada, he said.

"I think China would very much like to have another source to buy from, rather than just Canada," Squires said. "It's huge for hard red spring; it's good for hard red winter, soft white, soft red winter. I think this is a tremendous step forward."

# 'Solid' year ahead for U.S. beef industry

By Carol Ryan Dumas
Capital Press

A strong U.S. economy is keeping domestic beef demand steady, but a growing global appetite for beef is reshaping U.S. markets.

The U.S. beef industry has moved from a supply-driven market to a demand-driven market, Joel Packham, University of Idaho Extension educator, told producers during the University's Ag Outlook conferences last week.

"That's somewhere we haven't been in a while. We have lots of supply, just now demand is driving markets," he said.

African swine fever in China and growing economies among some U.S. trading partners has USDA projecting U.S. beef exports will be up 5% in 2020 and imports will be down 2%, he said.

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Associated Press file photo

A sales person at Jusco Supermarket arranges U.S. beef products in Tokyo. Exports to Japan and China will contribute to a "solid" year ahead for the U.S. beef industry.

# A decade of perseverance for small biz

By Jeremy Field

This year brings an exuberant end to the decade. There has never been a better time to start or grow a small business in the current booming economy.


Field

The unemployment rate is at a 50-year low with 110 months of consecutive positive job growth. Wages have increased 3.1% during the past 12 months. And 30.7 million small businesses are creating two out of every three net new jobs.

However, the 2010s had a humble beginning. Still reeling from the Great Recession, many small businesses were struggling. Job growth was flat, the unemployment rate was a staggering 9.6%, and there were only 26.8 million small businesses in the U.S.

Hiring was stagnant, and lending and spending were tight. Survival was the goal as small business owners felt the weight of keeping their doors open, keeping their staff employed and finding their way in a post-recession economy. It was a difficult and stressful time to be a small business owner.

However, true to the entrepreneurial spirit and American dream, small businesses persevered.

During the past couple years in my role as regional administrator for the U.S. Small Business Administration, I've traveled around Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington to meet small businesses and listen to their journeys. I've met businesses that reshaped what they do in order to move forward. I've met businesses who innovated with new cost-saving strategies for their customers. I've even met entrepreneurs who started their businesses during a time most would say they were crazy.

The common thread is they all adapted, they all took risks, and they all had a vision they focused on seeing through.

One local story that comes to mind when I think of the perseverance of small businesses

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