

## Small-business & Ag HAPPENINGS

### First Whitetail Properties agent assigned to NE Oregon

MT. VERNON — Brandon Hutchison, a native of Northeast Oregon, is the first real estate broker and land specialist assigned to the region as part of Whitetail Properties Real Estate, which specializes in recreational, hunting, ranch and timber land.



Hutchison, a die-hard sportsman who blends his passion for land, wildlife and the great outdoors with a career in land sales, said, "Northeast Oregon has lots of opportunities for hunters, anglers and land investors. A lot of landowners don't realize the true market value of their property when outdoor recreational opportunities are involved."

To contact Hutchison, call 541-620-4143, email brandon.hutchison@whitetailproperties.com or visit his agent page at www.WhitetailProperties.com.

### Resource Wednesdays offers answers

LA GRANDE — The next Resource Wednesday at Ignite Center for Entrepreneurship, 104 Depot St., La Grande, is set for 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 26. The new monthly open house series on the last Wednesday of the month, offering small businesses and entrepreneurs a new way to make connections and find the answers about running a business.

EOU Small Business Development Center, the La Grande Economic Development and Northeast Oregon Economic Development District staff will be available to answer questions and provide information about programs and resources that can help small businesses start, grow and succeed. Those who attend are welcome to come and leave at any time during the open house.

Ignite's mission is to facilitate entrepreneurial growth and development from concept to expansion and through succession. Ignite offers coworking spaces on a monthly membership basis.

### Advocacy team aims to serve Oregon's small businesses

SALEM — The Oregon Secretary of State's Small Business Advocacy Team released its annual report, which provides insight on questions businesses raise and the challenges they face relating to government regulation.

The Small Business Advocacy team, within the Secretary of State's Corporation Division, helps Oregon businesses and non-profits with 100 or fewer employees. The team, led by Trevor Leahy, helps resolve problems, get answers to questions and navigate Oregon's regulations at the state and local level. It also connects businesses with technical support in their community.

"The team is only a phone call, email, or mouse-click away," Leahy said in a news release. The advocacy team can be reached at 1-844-469-5512. Digital copies of the 2019 report are available at [www.oregon.gov/smallbusiness/Documents](http://www.oregon.gov/smallbusiness/Documents).

### Protection available for hemp producers' crops

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the availability of two programs that protect hemp producers' crops from natural disasters.

A pilot hemp insurance program through Multi-Peril Crop Insurance provides coverage against loss of yield because of insurable causes of loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain or cannabidiol oil. And the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program coverage protects against losses with lower yields, destroyed crops or prevented planting where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available.

The deadline to sign up for both programs is March 16.

# Finally able to move on

By Bill Bradshaw  
EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE — Wheat farmer Erl McLaughlin has finally gotten a settlement for his unharvested crop after fretting through the fall and early winter and wondering what the next growing season will bring.

McLaughlin, who farms 550 acres on Alder Slope, was unable to harvest 412 acres of dark northern spring wheat because of the high moisture content from a wet autumn.

Insured under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Multi-Peril Crop Insurance program, McLaughlin said he kept thorough documentation from late September that showed weather and crop conditions he was able to present to the USDA office in Spokane. As a result, he was able to get the settlement in late January.

Though declining to state the exact amount, he said the settlement staved off total disaster.

"Considering the conditions of the crop — because it had a lot of things wrong with it including a high moisture content — the settlement was quite substantial," he said.

Although the high moisture in his wheat would have led to lower prices he would have received, he doesn't consider the insurance settlement better than selling his crop.

"Insurance companies are not designed to make you complete," he said, just to help avoid a

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Photo by Bill Bradshaw/EO Media Group

Alder Slope farmer Erl McLaughlin holds some stalks of wheat he was unable to harvest last fall due to high moisture content. He is waiting for spring, at which time he will burn the crop prior to planting this year's grain.

# Enterprise video, pizza shop up for sale

By Bill Bradshaw  
EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE — Video Buffs Pizza & More of Enterprise is up for sale, but it's not expected to go away, according to co-owner Wup Winn.

"It's been a really good business," he said. Winn, who has owned the shop on North Street since 2015, said he listed it for sale about six months ago.

"We've had quite a few nibbles, many from long-time area residents," he said. "We're just waiting for all the ducks to fall into line."

He also said he doesn't want to see the business close, which has been operating in Enterprise at various locations for around 30 years.

Winn and co-owner/fiancé Amber Love are divesting themselves of the business because they have two others to focus on. They own Bird Dog Signs in Enterprise and Back Country Connection aviation brokerage, which operates out of the Joseph State Airport. The latter business provides bush planes that can land at small airstrips and are popular with outfitters and guides, Winn said. He said the pressure of running all three — as well as maintaining the Joseph airport — is too much.

"We wanted to slow down a bit," he said.

Winn said the video shop doesn't seem adversely affected by online video competition from services such as Netflix or Amazon Prime. He said the video rentals remain an important part of the business.

"Video rentals are about 27% of the business," he said.

The pizza, too, remains popular. He said they have a wide variety, "everything from a standard pepperoni pizza to Hawaiian to our



Photo by Bill Bradshaw/EO Media Group

Wup Winn, co-owner of Video Buffs Pizza & More, checks on pizzas he sells by the slice at the Enterprise business. Winn has put the business on the market but is waiting for the right buyer so it remains in business.

specialty pizzas." He said they even cut back the variety a bit.

The "& More" part of the business consists of 16 flavors of ice cream, as well as shakes, smoothies and a variety of coffees — iced, hot and blended — along with more than 25 flavors to add to them.

"I'd say we've got the biggest selection in town," Winn said.

He said they also recently started delivery service to Enterprise and Joseph.

Winn, a widower, has two sons with his late wife, Nicole, who died in 2015. He is now engaged to Love, who has a teenage

daughter. They hope to have their children involved in the businesses.

Elsewhere in Enterprise, the Les Schwab tire store is unlikely to see any changes since the Schwab family announced it is hoping to sell the Oregon-based business. The Associated Press reported in December the company has hired Goldman Sachs to find a buyer for the family-owned firm.

But Darren Holcomb, manager of the Enterprise Schwab outlet, doesn't expect the company sale will affect the local store.

"We're not going anywhere," he said. "It'll be business as usual."



# PROSPER

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