

# Networking Dinner encourages EOU students to plan for careers

EO Media Group staff

LA GRANDE — Valentine's Day provided dozens of students at La Grande's Eastern Oregon University with opportunities to make connections for their futures.

EOU Career Services held its annual Launch Networking Dinner, which invites soon-to-be graduates to mingle with a range of business leaders while discussing their goals and resumes. The professional networking and mentoring event took place Friday evening and allowed students and business professionals to engage in career-oriented conversation.

"Traditional career fairs can be heavy on handshakes and light on meaningful interactions, so EOU Career Center Director Justin Chin designed a new type of event that gives students and employers more elbow room," according to Eastern spokesperson Vicky Hart.

The university reported last year's dinner connected 42 students with employers representing an array of industries, agencies and nonprofits. And 40% of those students, Hart said, applied for a job or internship with one of the employers they met at the dinner.

This year, the event expanded to allow more than



Photo contributed by Eastern Oregon University

Five dozen Eastern Oregon University students attended the annual networking dinner Friday at the campus. The event allows students who will soon graduate to discuss their goals and resumes with a range of business professionals.

60 students from a diverse range of majors, ethnic backgrounds and hometowns to meet employers as they launch their career journeys.

"Students and professionals discussed career aspirations and goals while gaining helpful insight on how to get there," EOU reported in a news release.

Attendees included Oregon Health and Science University, La Grande School District, ThreeMile Canyon Farms and Achieving the Dream.

Philanthropist Maurizio Valerio, field coordinator at the Ford Family Foundation, told students at the event his job is to invest in rela-

tionships. Each day, Valerio explained, he places a coin in his metaphorical piggy bank. The piggy bank represents the value he gains from having meaningful interactions, such as networking and building professional relationships.

For more information regarding events like this, contact Chin at [jchin@eou.edu](mailto:jchin@eou.edu).

# ODA recruiting for commodity commissioner positions

EO Media Group staff

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Agriculture is seeking applicants to fill 70 commissioner seats on two of the state's agricultural and commercial fisheries commodity commissions. The deadline to apply is March 16.

Commissioners work as public officials and serve two- to four-year terms. Their duties include funding decisions for promotion, education and research projects. ODA Director Alexis Taylor is looking for applicants who represent the diversity among Oregon's farmers, ranchers, processors and commercial fishers.

The Fine Fescue Commission has a position specifically open to a producer from Union County.

A public member must be a U.S. citizen, an Oregon resident and have an active interest in improving economic conditions for the commodity. A "producer" is a grower or harvester. A "handler" is the first to buy the commodity from the producer and often is a

processor, distributor or marketer.

The following agricultural commodity commissions have openings:

- Alfalfa Seed Commission — three producers
- Beef Council — one beef producer, one dairy producer
- Blueberry Commission — two producers, one handler
- Clover Seed Commission — three producers
- Fine Fescue Commission — three producers (one state at large, one from Union County, one Highland Bentgrass grower), one handler (state at large)
- Hazelnut Commission — two producers, one public member
- Hop Commission — three producers
- Mint Commission — one producer, one public member
- Potato Commission — three producers (one from Blue Mountains, one from southern Oregon, one state at large), one Blue Mountains handler
- Processed Vegetable Commission — three producers, two handlers

- Raspberry and Blackberry Commission — two producers, one handler
  - Ryegrass Seed Commission — three producers (one Linn County, one Marion or Polk County, one state at large)
  - Sheep Commission — two producers, one handler
  - Strawberry Commission — three producers, one handler
  - Sweet Cherry Commission — two producers (state at large), one brine handler (state at large)
  - Tall Fescue Commission — two producers (one of Orchardgrass seed), one handler
  - Wheat Commission — one producer (Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam, Sherman, Jefferson or Wasco counties), one handler, one public member
- For instructions on how to apply, the application or to learn more about commissions, visit [www.oda.direct/commissions](http://www.oda.direct/commissions) or contact Kris Anderson, ODA commodity oversight program manager, at [kanderson@oda.state.or.us](mailto:kanderson@oda.state.or.us) or 503-872-6604.

## WHEAT

Continued from Page 1B complete loss and enable growers to continue onto the next year.

"I've been farming for 40 years and never had a crop fail like this," he said.

McLaughlin said he approached the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners last fall, requesting it declare the county a disaster area because of the weather-related harvest conditions.

"That never happened," he said.

Commissioner Todd Nash, whom McLaughlin contacted, said the commissioners considered McLaughlin's request, talked to other growers in similar positions and determined "there wasn't a lot of benefit" in a disaster declaration, Nash said.

He said he made contact with most growers similarly affected by the weather and most had gotten their crops harvested. However, many got low prices for the grain due to high moisture content or having sprouted in the field. Much of it had to be sold for feed.

Nash said he didn't recall



Photo by Bill Bradshaw/EO Media Group

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

the number of farmers or acres involved, but said, "Most of it got harvested."

He also said he repeatedly checked with McLaughlin and other growers to make sure they got adequate insurance settlements.

"It was a tough deal," he said of the farmers' plight.

McLaughlin's grain usu-

ally gets shipped to the Far East after being trucked to Burbank, Washington, where it's loaded on barges on the Columbia River and shipped to Portland.

For this year's growing season, McLaughlin said that as soon as weather conditions permit, he'll burn last year's crop where it stands.

He would have preferred to turn under the stubble of a harvested crop for its fertilizer value, which will be lost by burning.

"But that's about my only option," he said.

But he keeps on keeping on. "We don't dwell on the past," McLaughlin said. "We just keep moving on."

# Local organizations receive tourism promotion grants

EO Media Group staff

LA GRANDE — Several local and regional organizations received state grants to help boost tourism.

The Eastern Oregon Visitors Association announced the fiscal year 2019-20 recipients of the Eastern Oregon Regional Grants Program. The association in a news release reported it launched the program in October 2019 to help promote the Eastern Oregon visitor experience and enhance and preserve the region's quality of life and economy.

The grants program stems from House Bill 4146, which required Travel Oregon, the state's tourism marketing organization, to establish a program to invest 20% of the statewide lodging tax from Oregon's seven state-designated tourism regions. Eastern Oregon Visitors Association serves as the regional destination management organization for Eastern Oregon and implements tourism program dollars on behalf of the region.

The program received 43 applications seeking more than \$322,000 in total. The Eastern Oregon Visitors Association provided \$81,850 to a total of 20 projects, including the following:

- \$4,000 to the Eastern Oregon Film Festival in La Grande for the Regional

Connection Project.

- \$6,000 to the Union County Visitors Bureau for tourism promotion and \$2,400 for the Union County Farm Crawl.

- \$3,000 to Nella Mae's Farm in Cove for agritourism visitor infrastructure.

- \$6,000 toward developing a four season destination at the Wallowa Lake Lodge, Wallowa.

Alana Carollo, executive director of the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association, said of the response to the grant program, "We were ecstatic by the interest and excitement with the launch of our Regional Grants Program. The Grants Program has been a great opportunity to engage with new partners and organizations, and to further grow and align our collaborative efforts. We are looking forward to the product development and economic impact the project recipients will have at the local, region, and state level, and are excited to see what next year's submissions will bring!"

Applicants may apply for grants on an annual basis. Each project requires its own application and must demonstrate a cash match. The visitors association will announce the next grant cycle in late summer. You can find more information at <https://eova.com/grantprogram/>.

# Wheat Growers League opposes cap and trade

EO Media Group staff

PENDLETON — The Oregon Wheat Growers League on Friday announced its opposition to Senate Bill 1530, the legislation limited carbon emissions.

While this latest version of the cap-and-trade proposal delays some elements of the legislation for some areas of Oregon, according to the statement from the league, "the fundamental provisions that are most troubling to Oregon's wheat growers are essentially unchanged."

The league, the primary representative for Oregon's wheat growers, contended the bill provides no significant reduction in Oregon's carbon emissions but would inflict large cost increases on all sectors of the state's economy, and wheat growers would not be able to pass those costs onto customers.

"The global wheat market is hyper-competitive, and

we are already unable to compete on price in many markets," according to the league. "Further raising our costs will simply drive wheat farmers, especially smaller operations and new and young farmers, out of business in the years ahead."

Moreover, the league expressed concern any tax revenue from cap and trade would primarily go to social programs that have little to do with carbon reductions or climate adaptation and provide no funding for ag research to reduce the industry's carbon footprint or to reward growers for innovations they adopted.

"Oregon can do much better than SB 1530," the league stated in the news release. "We hope that this legislation will be defeated so we can develop a carbon plan that actually helps with climate change, strengthens Oregon's rural economy, Oregon agriculture, and Oregon's other natural resource industries."

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