

Small-business & Ag HAPPENINGS

The Observer

Apply now to obtain chain-up helper permits

LA GRANDE — The Oregon Department of Transportation will issue permits for individuals interested in chaining up commercial vehicles during the winter months along specific sections of Interstate 84 in Eastern Oregon.

ODOT in a press release announced this year the department's in the District 13 office in La Grande will issue six permits for the I-84 Ladd Canyon area in Union County; District 12 office in Pendleton will issue about six permits (depending on number of qualifying applicants) for I-84 in the Umatilla County area, primarily between La Grande and Pendleton; and the District 14 office in Ontario will issue two permits for I-84 west of Ontario in Malheur County.

Interested parties have until Oct. 31 to contact the appropriate ODOT district office for details and application requirements (such as appropriate safety vests, training and more). Each ODOT office will hold random drawings Nov. 1 to determine who will have an opportunity to get a permit. Tom Lapp, ODOT permit specialist, said drawing winners will have one week to complete the permit application and return it to the district office.

Only persons who have the chain-up permits can provide this service to truck drivers in designated chain-up areas.

"This is a safety issue," Lapp said. "Limiting the permits for each district is necessary to help control the number of people working along state highways during winter weather conditions."

The permits will be valid between Nov. 1, 2020 and April 1, 2021.

For more information, contact Lynn Elliot at the ODOT District 13 Office, La Grande. at 541-963-8407.

'Business Foundations' video conference coming up

ENTERPRISE — Northeast Oregon Economic Development District announced it is offering a free, six-week workshop series to help entrepreneurs and small-business owners build the basis for a successful business.

"Business Foundations" takes place 6-9 p.m. Tuesdays, Oct. 13 through Nov. 17, according to the announcements on the district's website. An afternoon class also is under consideration. Classes are conducted via videoconference. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/y6noozkl>.

Lisa Dawson has taught Business Foundations for more than 10 years, and her students include existing and aspiring entrepreneurs in Baker, Union and Wallowa counties. This hands-on class covers the basics of running a successful business, from overhead and inventory costs to marketing and taxes, and brings it all together in a business plan.

The classes are free thanks to a Community Development Block Grant through the city of La Grande. The program gives preference to people with low-to-moderate incomes and requires income verification.

The workshops last six weeks, with the following topics:

- Gaining Perspective: Consider your business concept.
- Laying the Foundation: Define line of business and analyze financial essentials, from overhead costs to break-even point.
- Getting into the Flow: Cover the financial essentials of cash flow, sales forecasting, and financial documents.
- Mission & Markets: Revisit mission, discuss market research, and identify competitors in order to align with target markets.
- Get the Word Out: Creative marketing strategies and give peer feedback on marketing materials.
- Goodbye and Good Luck: Present your business plan, share final pitch and plan for next steps.

Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce board nominations open

ENTERPRISE — Nominations for the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce 2021 Board of Directors remain open until 5 p.m. Oct. 31.

Director positions include: Joseph, Wallowa/Lostine, education, tourism, arts and culture and heritage.

Anyone interested in serving on the board can call the chamber office. A nominee must be a member of the chamber in good standing.

Nomination forms are available at the chamber office or at <https://tinyurl.com/wallowachamberboard>. Include the full name and phone number in a nomination. Nominators also must be members of the chamber in good standing.

Submit nominations via mail, email or directly to the chamber office. For more information, call the chamber at 541-426-4622.

Study of farmworkers shows difficulties of avoiding COVID-19

Wildfires make social distancing impossible for people who lost homes

By Jade McDowell
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — A survey of Oregon farmworkers indicates a majority of farms are taking precautions for COVID-19, but conditions in the fields and at home can make it difficult for workers to avoid exposure to the virus.

The Oregon Farmworker COVID-19 Study team, a partnership of researchers at Oregon universities and organiza-

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Graphic shows what parts of the state the study surveyed and how many farmworkers were interviewed, Page 2B.

tions that serve farmworkers, released preliminary findings after conducting 214 in-depth interviews of Oregon farmworkers, including some in Northeastern Oregon. The team plans to interview 300 in total before releasing the final report.

"When PPE and masks are available, farmworkers take necessary precautions and safety procedures at home and in the workplace to minimize exposure to

COVID-19," survey organizer Jennifer Martinez said during a news conference in September. "These are all what farmworkers told us, that they were changing their practices. But still, 39% of farmworkers reported moments during the day where they could not maintain 6 feet of distance in the workplace."

Of the 214 workers surveyed so far, 77% reported their co-workers wear masks at all times on the job, 57% reported washing their hands at least five times during the work day and 68% reported they or their foreman had received training on how to stay safe from

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Dick Mason/The Observer

The Dutch Bros. stand in La Grande supplies early morning drivers with beverages on Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2020. A recent survey ranked the Grants Pass-based coffee company as the best mid-sized business in the state.

Dutch Bros. rises to the top

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Dutch Bros. Coffee, which has one of its many drive-thru stands in La Grande, is percolating on the employee satisfaction front.

The Oregonian/OregonLive has named Dutch Bros. the top spot for mid-sized companies in Oregon and southwest Washington. The award is based on employee feedback that Energage, a Philadelphia-based company, gathered through an anonymous survey, which measured 15 factors critical to the success of any organization, according to a written statement to The Observer from the Dutch Bros. employee engagement team.

The team also stated Dutch

"During this time of unknowns, uncertainty and change we've worked to continue to provide our employees with support. We're so happy to see those efforts recognized."

— Kelsey Hopper, director of engagement at Dutch Bros.

Bros., which has locations throughout the west, strives to be a company employees are proud to work for, excited to talk about and makes them feel like they are a part of a family.

"During this time of unknowns, uncertainty and change we've worked to continue to provide our employees with support. We're so happy to see those efforts recognized. The feedback we get from the survey is

essential in creating an atmosphere and culture to help our employees thrive," said Kelsey Hopper, the director of engagement at Dutch Bros.

Dutch Bros. has its headquarters in Grants Pass and was founded in 1992. It has 172 locations in Oregon and southwest Washington and 330 employees in the region, according to The Oregonian.

The survey had 24 questions, including about how

the company encourages employee development, how appreciated it makes employees feel, retention and pay and benefits.

The Oregonian/OregonLive has partnered with Energage to rank the top workplaces in Oregon and southwest Washington for the past nine years.

The other category winners were Comcast Cable in the large company division and the private co-ed Delphian School in Yamhill County in the small category.

The large category is for companies with more than 500 employees, the midsize division is for those with 100 to 499 employees, and the small category is for those with 99 or fewer employees. The results ranked a total of 95 companies.

State projects Oregon's employment to grow 9% by 2029

Heath care tops Oregon's list of fastest-growing jobs

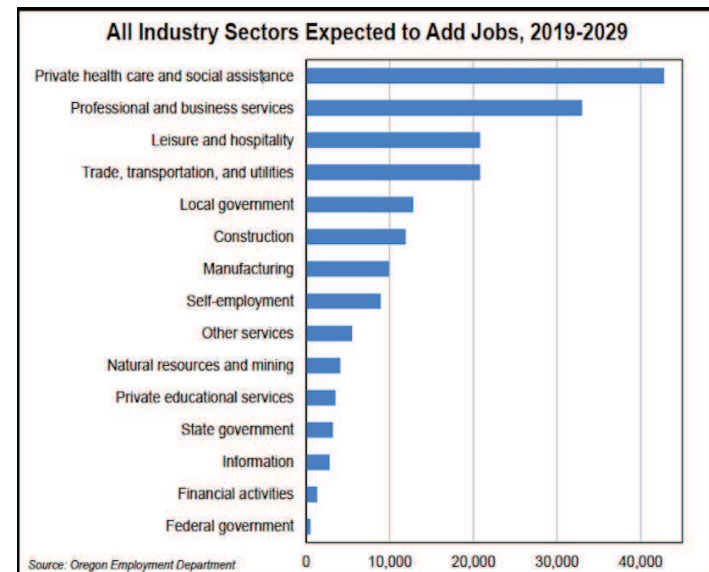
The Observer

SALEM — Oregon's total employment will grow by 181,800 jobs between 2019 and 2029, according to new projections from the Oregon Employment Department.

In 2019, there were 2,120,000 jobs in Oregon, according to a news release from the department. The 9% increase in employment between 2019 and 2029 includes private-sector gains of 156,400 jobs, growth of 16,500 jobs in government and an additional 8,900 self-employed Oregonians.

Beyond gains from economic growth, another 255,300 job openings will result on average each year through 2029 as workers retire, leave the labor force for other reason, or make a major occupational change. Together, the number of job openings due to economic growth and replacements will total an annual average of 273,500.

All private sectors in Oregon are expected to add jobs by 2029. Private health care and social assistance will lead all industries in new job growth. Heath care will gain 46,300 new jobs (15% growth) due to the growth and aging of the Oregon's population.



Oregon Employment Department/Contributed Graphic
Health care tops job growth in Oregon from 2019-29, according to new projections from the Oregon Employment Department.

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