



**GREG SMITH**  
BUSINESS BANTER

## Finding people who want to work

It seems that everywhere we go there are “Help Wanted” signs. Worse yet are those flyers hung in the window that say, “We’ve had to reduce our hours because we are short-staffed.”

What’s going on?

There are a variety of answers, but perhaps a more pertinent question is, “Where can I find people who want to work?”

Of course, there are the traditional means like posting a job with the Employment Department or utilizing online platforms such as Indeed, but employers may want to take a closer look at their neighborhood community colleges, universities, and yes, even high schools to fill vacancies.

There are often stereotypes about this group of people regarding their perceived work ethic, difficulty with attendance, keeping them off their cellphones, etc. However, several employers have successfully utilized the skills of many college and high school students and have found them to be excellent employees.

Yes, there is a learning curve (for both the employer and employee) and time will need to be spent outlining expectations and perhaps teaching or reinforcing basic soft skills which, for whatever reason, are not always taught to students. But hiring any employee is an investment and Generation Z has important skill sets which can be beneficial to a company.

First, interns or recent graduates can bring energy and creative problem-solving techniques to your team. Certainly, their in-depth knowledge of technology is something nearly every company can benefit from. Perhaps most importantly, they can provide necessary insight into what young consumers are looking for and how they think.

The oldest of Generation Z is 25. According to an article in Business Insider, “Gen Z currently earns \$7 trillion across its 2.5 billion-person cohort. By 2025, that income will grow to \$17 trillion, and by 2030, it will reach \$33 trillion, representing 27% of the world’s income and surpassing that of millennials (the oldest of whom are now 40) the following year.”

In short, they’ve got a lot of money to spend and knowing what they want no doubt can help a business’s bottom line.

Here is some interesting information about those in Generation Z shared in the same article from Business Insider:

According to a recent study, money isn’t the single most important way to attract them. They are interested in opportunities to advance. Valuable career experiences and even unpaid internships so they can build on their career can definitely pique their interest. Taking the time to mentor them and offering things like employee health and wellness programs as a reward for their dedication are important. They are seeking opportunities for growth.

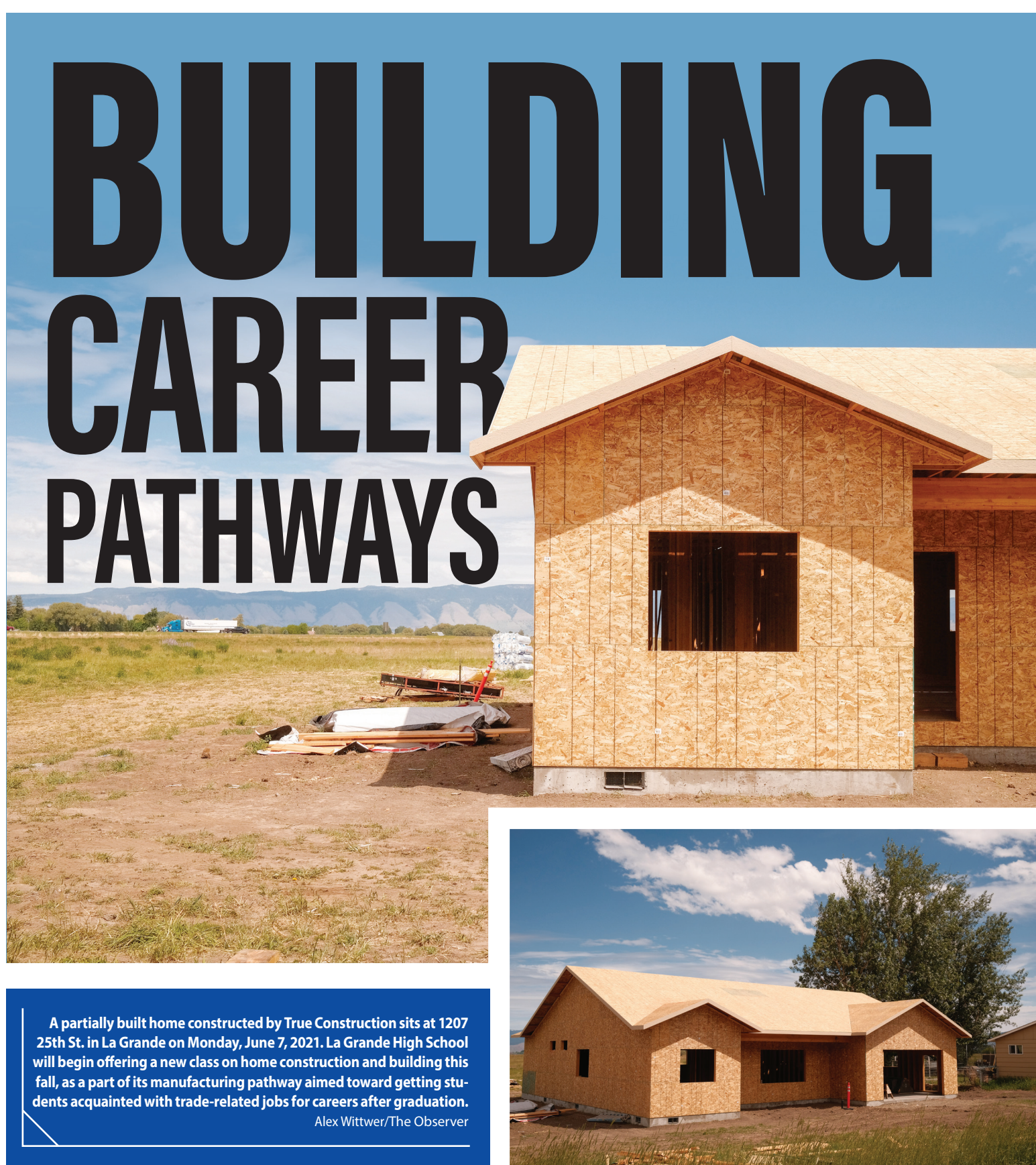
While millennials thrive in teams and love collaboration, Gen Z’ers work more autonomously.

They grew up with technology and know how to access information quickly and because of this, they do not like to waste time. They are used to having information at their fingertips and for this reason, they may be found (and prefer) working at odd times.

They are highly efficient at multi-tasking.

Big projects are something they like to be a part of.

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A partially built home constructed by True Construction sits at 1207 25th St. in La Grande on Monday, June 7, 2021. La Grande High School will begin offering a new class on home construction and building this fall, as a part of its manufacturing pathway aimed toward getting students acquainted with trade-related jobs for careers after graduation.

Alex Wittwer/The Observer

## LHS construction class sets sights on building homes

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**  
The Observer

**L**A GRANDE — La Grande High School is set to offer a construction/career and technical education class this coming fall. The end goal of the program is to construct a home in the La Grande area within the next few years.

The class will offer students the opportunity to learn the many facets that go into home building as they work with licensed subcontractors. With the addition of the construction pathway, La Grande High School will now offer nine different pathway programs.

“This is just another component for us

to continue growing and adding another layer to those opportunities for kids,” Assistant Principal Eric Freeman said.

The school district altered the manufacturing pathway that it offers to compensate for a pathway centered more on home building. The manufacturing pathway focuses more around wood-working and welding.

Darren Hendrickson takes the lead as the full-time construction teacher for the new program. Hendrickson has worked as a fifth-grade teacher at Island City Elementary, and the district has contracted with him in the past to do construction on various facilities.

“Just the way that he works with kids, I think he’s going to bring some real

organization and ownership to this position,” Freeman said. “He’s one of the most talented men in terms of what he brings as far as knowledge in the field of construction.”

Hendrickson has previously worked on projects creating shelving and other maintenance improvements to the school district.

### Home building

Hendrickson and the school district are planning to secure land in La Grande for the program with potential space for up to two homes. While the program starts in the fall, the actual home building likely takes place several years from now.

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## Commissioners still concerned over drought

### Irrigation district chief not so much

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

**ENTERPRISE** — As Wallowa County moves into warmer weather, the outlook for the drought declaration the county commissioners approved May 21 isn’t getting any brighter.

Commissioner Todd Nash said the county has a “D1” drought designation, which is not nearly as severe as some neighboring counties.

“In Union and Baker counties, they’ve tripped into D3 in one little portion of their counties in the southern portion. They’re already there,” he said. “The north end of Wallowa County did not get those last rains that we got. Most of the county got nine-tenths to 2 inches and the north end got about a tenth and they’re extremely dry. We’re looking at what the next weeks in the Drought Monitor might show.”

The U.S. Drought Monitor daily updates the drought outlook for regions all over the country.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

**Wallowa Lake is less than 5 feet from filling to its maximum level, said Dan Butterfield, president of the Wallowa Lake Irrigation District, on Wednesday, June 2, 2021. The district owns the dam, which Butterfield said should show the lake is full by July 1.**

Nash said a 90-person board reads the Drought Monitor weekly and rotates its members “so there’s a fresh set of eyes on it.”

But, he said, online maps don’t always tell the whole story on the ground.

“One of the things in our conversations with (the USDA’s Farm Service Agency) is they’re not equating all the cold nights we’ve had for grass growth. A lot of these guys

have been through their pastures one time. Now we’re getting to a point where it doesn’t grow back anymore,” he said. “I was just talking to a guy from Wallowa and some of Wallowa didn’t get those rains. Now he’s going out to the Divide country and it’s been so cold up there he’s still got snow. He said there isn’t any feed.”

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### COVID-19

## Workplaces may soon relax COVID safety measures

### OSHA plans to relax the state’s COVID-19 workplace rules

By **ERIN ROSS**  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

**SALEM** — Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced plans on Friday, June 4, to lift mask mandates and physical distancing requirements in most settings once 70% of adults in Oregon have received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. She and her advisers have said they expect that to happen by June 21.

Since the initial lockdown in 2020, many workplaces have remained closed or operating with limited staffing. Others have changed workplace practices to accommodate Oregon OSHA’s ever-shifting COVID-19 guidance. And others have chosen

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