

THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

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Worker Shortage



Editor's Note: This is the second in a five-part series by EO Media Group looking at the issue of the lack of workers for jobs in Central and Eastern Oregon — why workers are not returning to previously held jobs and how businesses are pivoting to function without being fully staffed.

Employee shortage leads to altered business models

Businesses remain flexible to survive worker scarcity during pandemic

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH** and **ALEX WITTWER**
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — Enterprise isn't the largest town in Eastern Oregon, with a population of 2,052. But it's just a few miles from the ever-popular town of Joseph and its vistas across Wallowa Lake to the peaks of the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

In a normal summer, Terminal Gravity Brewing in Enterprise would be busy all days of the week serving local, handcrafted beers to patrons and traditional brewpub fare. But due to a labor shortage this summer the company had to cut hours during its lunch rush, and close altogether on Tuesdays.

Natalie Millar, chief executive officer of the Wallowa County brewery, said it's an inevitability that they'll have to close for even more days as their skeleton crew of cooks, servers and hostesses return to school — high school, to be exact.

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Reflecting on a tragedy



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Steve Ruth poses for a portrait at his Perry home on Wednesday, Sept. 8, 2021. Ruth was one of the many Salvation Army volunteers who went to New York City to provide support to victims, families and first responders after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Steve Ruth looks back at time spent volunteering at ground zero following Sept. 11 attacks

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Steve Ruth remembers the horrors of 9/11 all too well.

The Perry resident, a member of the Salvation Army, assisted in day-to-day operations at the on-scene morgue at ground zero and provided counsel to workers and family members of the casualties. Ruth does not consider his actions heroic, but he was one of the many volunteers who put their life on hold to assist at the site of the World Trade Center attacks in Lower Manhattan, New York, after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

"I just see it as what we're called to do," he said. "We dealt a lot with the public that was coming in to pick up the remains of their loved ones. The counseling stretched to many areas of the gamut."

Nearly 3,000 people were killed in the attacks that day when 19 al-Qaida terrorists hijacked four commercial airplanes in a plot orchestrated by Osama bin Laden. Two planes, American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, crashed into the towers of the World Trade Center before American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon. The passengers and crew of United Airlines Flight 93 fought back against the hijackers before the plane

crashed into a field, missing its intended target in Washington.

Ruth, a Salvation Army business administrator and emergency disaster coordinator, flew in from St. Cloud, Minnesota, to assist in the day-to-day operations at ground zero. He spent 17 days on the scene in March 2002 as the cleanup efforts extended for nearly a year after the attacks.

During his time at ground zero, Ruth worked primarily at the on-scene morgue providing grief and trauma counseling to families, first responders and other workers on the scene.

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Robert Giroux/Getty Images/TownNews Content Exchange

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, a coordinated terrorist attack saw two hijacked commercial airplanes crash into New York City's Twin Towers, a third plane into the Pentagon, and a fourth into a field in western Pennsylvania. In the Manhattan crashes alone, 2,753 people were killed, and an additional 244 people died in the other two locations. The attacks were the most devastating terrorist activity to ever take place on American soil.

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WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section

 Tonight 46 LOW Mainly clear	 Sunday 74/46 Partly sunny
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Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com. More contact info on Page 4A.



TUESDAY

BID FAREWELL TO SUMMER WITH A BARBECUE

Online at lagrandeobserver.com