## **OVERTIME**

Continued from Page A1

"We will not be paying overtime." Cornerstone, which largely grows wheat and hay but also has other crops, has six to eight employees during the peak season. They have only a few fulltime employees year around.

But there are times Cornerstone has people working long hours, such as during the peak planting and harvest seasons.

"It hurts," Melville said of HB 4002. "There are times we've had people working over 60 hours a week. By the time we get down to 40 hours in a couple years, it's going to hurt."

#### How to get around it?

He said he and brother Kurt have been discussing how to get around the regulations. One way is to become more mechanized, chiefly by installing more automated center pivots for irrigation to eliminate the need for the handmoving of wheel lines.

Another way would be to give up valuable farmland, which he said was virtually out of the question.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Russ Eoff, an employee of Cornerstone Farms Joint Venture, works on a tractor at the Melville family-owned operation just outside of Enterprise on Thursday, March 10, 2022. Eoff is one who will be negatively affected by the passage of HB 4002, which will limit the number of hours he can work.

Dan Butterfield, of Butterfield Farms, which raises mostly hay and wheat east of Joseph, agreed.

"We will be mechanizing more. We'll put more pivots in," he said. "The equipment will get bigger so less hired help is needed for that, but that's been going on the last 50 years or so."

He employs four to five workers during the peak summer season, but has worked things around to avoid overtime.

'We try keep it down," he said.

"But it will definitely harm some people."

near Enterprise.

He and others interviewed said the producers in Oregon the law will most likely hurt are dairies, which require 24/7 care of cows, and row-crop producers, which are labor intensive.

Coppin said another option would be to change the way workers are paid, such as putting them on salary rather than an hourly wage.

"That's one way everybody's talking. There are other ways

the Melville family-owned Cornerstone Farms Joint Venture around it," he said. "It's just a regulation that's been thought up by bunch of city people who are not business people."

Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Dakota Bly, an independent mechanic, left, helps Kurt Mel-

ville replace wiring on a tractor Thursday, March 10, 2022, at

Or, Butterfield said, split the

work between more workers. "We'll have to hire two people to do one person's job," he said. "I don't know as the employees will be happy about that."

### Can't pass along costs

Melville said agricultural producers can't just pass along their increased costs, as they have to accept whatever the market offers.

"Oregon's already a highlabor state. That's another thing that puts an Oregon producer at a disadvantage," he said. "I have to take whatever price they

offer." Butterfield said lawmakers just don't seem to understand rural life.

"The problem with farming is it's so seasonal. If they could, we could average the time out, but there are times they have to work more than 40 hours a week," he said. "It's too bad they don't understand that when they pass these laws."

Melville and the other producers agreed they don't want to see their workers put at a disadvantage because of the new law.

"You want to make sure your workers are well paid," Melville said. "I think it's going to work out a little differently than most people expect."

Russ Eoff, one of Cornerstone's few year-round, full-time employees, agreed with his boss.

"It's not right," he said, adding that it hurts both the farmers and their employees.

# **ADVENTURE**

Continued from Page A1

or the Tri-Cities in Washington. Sizer noted that the business shifted from focusing on day-trip visitors coming through Eastern Oregon toward interested individuals from out of town looking for an extended visit.

Sizer and his team of four focus on guiding the trips throughout treasured spots in Eastern Oregon. The crew helps the clients have the most ideal outdoor experience, by providing services such as transporting equipment, teaching fishing lessons and serving high-end campfire meals.

The business often helps beginners or inexperi-



Go Wild: American Adventures/Contributed Photo

Go Wild: American Adventures owner Dan Sizer, right, gives a fishing lesson during the summer of 2021. Sizer started the business to showcase the outdoor spectacles of Eastern Oregon, while focusing on environmental education and community partnerships.

enced campers submerge themselves in a full-on backpacking experience that otherwise might be out of their comfort zone. Sizer noted that many car

campers look to Go Wild: American Adventures for a more immersive camping and hiking experience.

"My thinking is that if I can provide a really fun,

comfortable experience for folks if it's their first time sleeping in the wilderness, then those people have a greater understanding and appreciation for the outdoors," Sizer said. "Ultimately, I think they become better caretakers of nature."

Environmental education is an important aspect of Go Wild, showing clients how to make the most out of an outdoor experience while appreciating the land.

"That component I think is a big part of the narrative," Sizer said. "We talk about growing up on this land and how we use it, how important it is to use it in a certain way so that we protect this resource for generations to come. In Eastern Oregon, you're connected to the value of the land."

Pat Vaughan joined Sizer in 2017 with the primary focus of crafting a gourmet food experience for travelers. Vaughan has since moved on to nursing school, but the culinary services he introduced carry on in the company. Go Wild: American Adventures partners with local businesses, such as Glacier 45 Distillery, Terminal Gravity, Copper Belt Wines and other local restaurants and businesses.

"What I think makes a memorable trip is the people you meet, the food you eat and the experiences that push the boundaries," Sizer said. "We've tried to instill really cool things that you might not do by yourself."

Sizer and his crew have a slate of summer events

already planned, while custom trips can be scheduled on the Go Wild: American Adventures website, www.gowildusa. com. According to Sizer, the business is planning to partner with a mule packer this summer, elevating the potential for high-end food experience as well as helping with accessibility for those who may not be able to carry a backpack

On top of showcasing the natural treasures of Eastern Oregon, Sizer noted that Go Wild: American Adventures has helped create lasting connections among participants and crew members.

"I think one of the coolest things," Sizer said, "is the community it fosters within people."

## **GOLF**

Continued from Page A1

reputation. Several renovations to the facilities at the course are paving the way for the 2022 season.

A big part of last year's success was hosting the Oregon Junior Golf Association Amateur Championship this past summer. The tournament drew more than 100 of the state's best youth golfers and provided a major boost to local business and

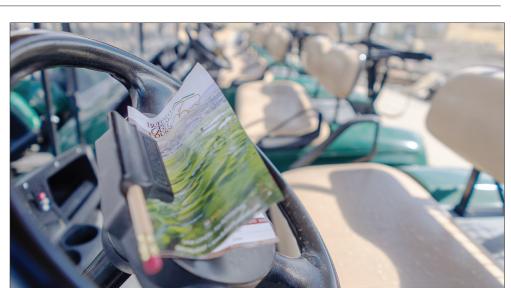
After positive feedback from the tournament's competitors and organizers, Buffalo Peak is slated to host the Oregon Junior Golf Association's first major of the year for the next five years.

"The exposure that we got from hosting that major was amazing," Londin said. "The kids loved the golf course so much that they pushed forward for them to come back."

Tournaments are set to be a regular occurrence this season, opening with the April Fools Scramble on Saturday, April 2. Events are scheduled throughout the spring and into October.

A key new component of the Buffalo Peak Golf Course this season is the newly renovated golf shop, which will help golfers stay in tune with the top equipment in the game. Community members donated the materials for the renovation, which included new wood paneling and revamped shelves — the store stocks top golf brands such as Ping, Callaway, Cleveland, Titleist, Evnroll Putters, Asics shoes, Puma, Cobra and more.

"My goal in the golf shop is to be recognized as a place where we can supply



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

Golf booklets sit in on the wheel of a golf cart on Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at Buffalo Peak Golf Course, Union.

anything from high-end to beginner stuff," Londin said. "Both myself and my assistant are certified fitters with every company that we sell products for, which makes a big difference when you get fitted for equipment. That's important to me."

The golf shop has the potential to supply food to golfers, an idea that Londin and the crew have flirted with. The shop now includes new counters and three sinks, opening the door for Buffalo Peak to have some food available for special events and test the waters before being fully functional.

The revamped shop is also drawing in endorsement opportunities at the course, with several of the biggest golf companies planning to demo their products at Buffalo Peak this spring. Buffalo Peak is set to host six different demo days throughout May and June, allowing participants to try out new golf

equipment from top brands. "It's a nice opportunity to try some product that you might not normally get to

try," Londin said.

The course also will host its second Thunder at The Peak Independence Day firework show, which drew a crowd last summer.

"It was a huge success last year — it was awesome," Londin said. "With me still being new, we're just trying to see what we can actually do here as far as golf goes and beyond."

The course is working to draw in interested golfers from out of the area, as the amount of traveling golfers is beginning to increase. Local stay-and-play partnerships with the nearby Lodge at Hot Lake Springs and Grande Hot Springs RV Resort as well as Baker City's Geiser Grand Hotel promote the golf course to golfers from outside the area, benefiting local businesses who host the visitors.

"People used to travel from Boise and their main stop was Wildhorse,' Londin said. "We're definitely getting some of those people stopping here now, for sure."

As Buffalo Peak looks to keep raising the bar, Londin noted that the improvement extends past the facilities available. Caddies this summer will play a big role in greeting golfers, running the bag drop, getting the golfers set up and creating an overall welcoming environment.

"It's about the experience," he said. "The golf shop is up and running and people know they can get stuff, but now it's about the experience."











### **Union County Business Grants Available**

The 2022 Union County Business Assistance Grant Program is currently accepting applications from small businesses financially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible applicants may receive up to \$10,000. Applications, eligibility requirements, and additional information is available on the Union County website at www.union-county.org or by calling 541-963-1001. Completed and signed applications packets must be received via email at bizgrant@union-county.org or hand delivered to

1106 K Avenue by 12:00 noon on Friday, April 1, 2022. This grant program is being made available due to federal funding received from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund.