

**MALHEUR COUNTY**



Greg Smith, the former Malheur County economic development director, was contracted to create up-to-date marketing materials but after his departure last month county leaders found some materials were outdated.

Anna Reed/Salem Statesman Journal, File

# Team's material markets county to employers considering move to area

By PAT CALDWELL  
Malheur Enterprise

VALE — The box of folders delivered to the Malheur County Court last month seemed to be just a bland set of documents transferred from the economic development department as its director, Greg Smith, closed up shop.

The folders, crafted by the team managed by Smith, were designed to market Malheur County to employers considering relocating to the local area.

But information in the marketing material was significantly outdated, listing people in public office long gone and providing information about bank branches closed years ago.

County officials couldn't explain when the material was produced or who it had been handed out to.

Smith, operating through his private company, had been under contract since 2013 to provide economic development services.

For his fee of \$9,000 a month, Smith was supposed to "develop current flyers, brochures and materials to market and promote Malheur County" and "ensure that information provided for incentives such as tax incentives, enterprise zone and wage incentives is accurate and complete."

Smith didn't respond to recent questions from Malheur County Judge Dan Joyce on how many marketing brochures were given out in the 2021-2022 fiscal year that ended in July — or whether the brochures were the most recent version.

Any employer relying on that material could run into dead ends.

Each folder contained an undated letter of greeting from the county commissioners. The letter was signed by Joyce and commissioners Don Hodge and Larry Wilson.

Wilson hasn't been a county commissioner since January 2021. He was replaced by Ron Jacobs.

Other outdated references included:

- Listing the director of the Malheur County Planning Department as Alvin Scott. Scott retired from that position more than two years ago.
- For the county road department, Richard Moulton is listed as the road master. Moulton also retired more than a year ago.
- Jacobs is still listed as the state watermaster, a position he retired from in 2019.
- The Adrian School District superintendent is listed as Gene Mills, who died in 2018.
- Listed as the Nyssa School District superintendent is Jana Iverson. She retired in 2019.
- Branch information is listed for Umpqua Bank outlets in Vale and Nyssa. They closed in 2019.

County officials excused the folders despite the requirements of Smith's contract.

"It doesn't surprise me if the information is dated. Greg was running around with so many

irons in the fire I don't think he was keeping close tabs on what he was doing," said Hodge.

Joyce said last week the information in the folders was outdated because the Covid pandemic forced the economic development department to shift its outreach efforts online. Joyce said the folders were not handed out because there was a fear, early on in the pandemic, that people would be exposed to the infection from the documents.

Joyce said that as long as the economic development department was handling its contacts online then Smith was following his contract to have updated marketing materials.

"If it is online, it's updated," he said.

The county's economic development department website, however, doesn't contain any such marketing materials. Instead, it provides links to three city websites — and no direct information about key officials in county government.

## BARBERSHOP

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"We will do whatever someone wants. It is about them, not us," Hutchison said.

In addition to cuts, hot towel shaves are provided. Such shaves are a bit nostalgic.

"They are more a thing of the past but people still enjoy them," Hutchison said.

The staff providing cuts and shaves has a combined 74 years of experience. Wilson has worked as a barber for 31 years, Hutchison for 15 years and Trotter for 29 years.

Hutchison said he was driven to become a barber because of how good he felt after getting a good haircut.

"It gave me confidence because I looked better," he said, adding he also wants other people to experience what he did.

Hutchison said he feels responsible for all of his customers after they leave.

"When they walk out, my reputation is on their head," he said.

Hutchison, Bond and Trotter strive to create a comfortable environment. The three barber chairs all face toward those waiting to have a haircut, making it easier for people to enjoy each other's company.

"When people are face to face they are more likely to engage in conversation," Wilson said. "We want our customers to have fun and to be relaxed."

Hutchison said the format is working in terms of getting everyone in the shop to interact with entertaining banter.

"Some really good conversations come out of here," he said.

To enhance the barbershop experience all adults are offered free complimentary drinks, including Tequila Sunrises and Bloody Marys and Oregon Fog from Side A Brewing in La Grande. Complimentary coffee and bottled water is also provided.

All customers are walk-ins and no appointments are taken.

"We do not want people to have to plan the day around an appointment. We want to do what works for him," Wilson said.

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## CROSSWORD PUZZLER

**ACROSS**

- Squeeze oranges
- PBS supplier
- Poet's tributes
- Swit co-star
- Search engine find (abbr.)
- Weak, as an excuse
- Longish skirt
- Chimp abode
- Arizona city
- Baker's meas.
- Outback marsupial
- Vice —
- Take a snooze
- Christina's pop
- "When We Was —"
- Poker fund
- Nail the quarterback
- "NYPD Blue" role
- Breezy greeting
- Outer space

**DOWN**

- NFL player
- Yale grad
- Throw in
- Damsels
- Beehive sound
- Slangy pal

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

ROUE	VEST	NET
NUTS	ECRU	OLE
STEP	STOOL	MIL
RI	IDEAL	
YOGIS	YIPE	
ARAT	TED	EKED
LAO	ALL	EAU
ELLS	PLY	BERT
NACHO	HOT	
OHO	MOMENTARY	
DOM	PRAM	OGEE
EYE	HOOP	RASP

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