

People & Places

Computer engineer returns to roots

Quinn Jackson puts high-tech equipment to work to help farmers

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

ACEQUIA, Idaho — While his education and chosen occupation qualify him as a technology geek, Quinn Jackson says he is a farm boy at heart.

The information technology manager and software developer for Land View Inc., a company that provides products and services to farmers, ranchers and industrial customers, grew up on a farm in nearby Rupert.

He attended college in Utah and now he's back, not raising wheat and sugar beets on the family farm but advancing food production with a radically different skill set.

"It's an exciting time to be in agriculture with the technology that's coming out," he said.

Following college, Jackson worked for a Utah company developing software directed at public safety and law enforcement. He returned to agriculture four years ago as the IT director at Land View.

He's responsible for all computer networks, computers, cell phones and software development at the company, which also owns Two Rivers Terminal in Pasco, Wash., and employs about 50 people.

Jackson was the lead developer of internal software to track orders. Land View is now beginning to sell that software



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Quinn Jackson, information technology manager and software developer at Land View Inc. near Rupert, Idaho, sets up a drone in his work area. Jackson grew up on a farm and is applying his computer expertise to help farmers monitor and improve their crops.

to other companies, he said.

He was also the lead in creating the company's iView software to facilitate remote sensing of cropland, a service the company provides to its customers.

The remote sensing is currently done from a fixed-wing airplane and allows Jackson and his team to identify stresses in crops using an infrared camera and a visible color camera. The software is an iPad application that allows Land View to input information so producers can gain better insight into what's going on in their fields, he said.

In the near future the company will use unmanned aerial vehicles for remote sensing, he said.

Unmanned aerial vehicles — popularly called drones or UAVs — will make remote

sensing safer and more efficient and allow for Normalized Difference Vegetation Index analysis, known by the initials NDVI, he said.

NDVI was developed by NASA using data from satellite sensors. NDVI images offer potential in assessing a crop's health and its needs — and even estimating yield.

But the use of drones for commercial purposes is limited by Federal Aviation Administration regulations, Jackson said.

"We're waiting for the regulations to lift to do it (remote sensing) with UAVs. Until the regulations are different, there's not a lot we can do in that realm," he said.

The good news is the FAA is working on it, he said.

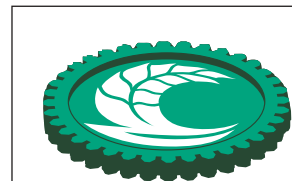
Meanwhile, the company is applying for a Section 333

exemption that would allow it to operate in the national airspace and provide services to growers using UAVs, he said.

It's also selling UAVs to growers and recommending that if they want to use them for anything other than recreation, they should get their own exemption, he said.

"Basically, we sell (UAVs) to them so they can get their feet wet and see the capabilities and what's coming," he said.

The technology holds plenty of potential for agriculture. They could be used in squadrons to survey crops quicker and apply fertilizer and pesticides less intrusively. They could be used to monitor livestock, feed, water and rangeland and even for herding. Land drones could be used for tillage or other



Western Innovator

Quinn Jackson
Company: Land View Inc.

Position: IT manager and software developer

Age: 34

Home: Burley, Idaho

Education: Bachelor of science degree in computer engineering, Utah State University, 2009

Family: Wife, Niki; three young children

groundwork, he said.

"We just recognize as a company this has big potential for agriculture, and we want to be at the forefront of that," he said.

Use of the technology is taking off in China, Japan and Europe. The current domestic delay comes down to concerns over safety, privacy and security — as well as the age-old fear-mongering about artificial intelligence taking over the world, he said.

They are the same issues that come to mind when people think about self-driving cars, he said.

For a technology geek, however, it's thrilling stuff and a cornucopia for modern agriculture.

"I'm excited to be part of the industry. Not a lot of computer engineers have a job in agriculture," he said.

Oregon agricultural teacher honored for his work

By MITCH LIES
For the Capital Press

The Imbler, Ore., High School agricultural teacher has been recognized twice in the past eight years by the National Association for Agricultural Educators.

Most recently, J.D. Cant was recognized as the association's Region 1 Outstanding Agriculture Teacher, one of six regional awards presented annually by the 7,500-plus member NAAE.

Cant received his award Nov. 18 at the association's 67th annual convention in New



Jim Cant

Orleans. He said he views his award as a community achievement. "I have a great community, great administration, great staff, and when you have all those components, inevitably you will have a good program," Cant said. "I think that this award is a reflection of this community."

Cant, who grew up on a cattle ranch outside Imbler and was a charter member of high

school's FFA chapter while a freshman at the school, returned to Imbler as the school's agriculture teacher 14 years ago after obtaining a degree from Oregon State University.

"I was very fortunate the position opened here in Imbler at the exact time that I was ready to be employed," he said.

In 2008 Cant won the National Association of Agriculture Educators Outstanding Young Member award for the 11-state Region 1.

Cant takes pride that the small school consistently

pumps out FFA teams that are competitive.

"That is what I always talk to our kids about," he said. "Make (the other teams) realize that we are here and we are going to compete. I want people to know that if we show up, they know we're prepared and they know it is not going to be an easy win."

More important than fielding winning teams, Cant said, is providing students with meaningful experiences, something that he said comes naturally to him.

"It is easy to do something

that you are passionate about and that you believe in and that you think changes students for the good," he said.

"When you have students that strive to be better than they were the day before, then that is the greatest achievement," he said.

The Imbler FFA Chapter has grown steadily since Cant became the adviser and currently includes 83 percent of the student body. Cant also helped write and received more than \$50,000 in grants last year to help fund class and chapter activities.

Ambassadors share a 'dairy' good day at Washington's Capitol

OLYMPIA — Jan. 27 was a busy day at the Capitol campus in Olympia as dairy farmers, dairy women and dairy ambassadors visited with legislators and handed out ice cream and cheese samples at noon in the Rotunda.

The Washington State Dairy Ambassador Nicole Buell, of Marysville, accompanied by alternate ambassadors Amanda Howe of Bellingham and Lydia Johnson of Ethel, addressed the Senate and House Republican and Democratic caucuses about dairy families and how they are an important part of their communities.

"Dairy farms can be found in 29 of Washington's 39 counties, providing jobs and supporting other businesses in their



Washington's dairy ambassadors visited the state Capitol in Olympia on Dairy Day. From left to right are Pamela Roosma, Whatcom County; Tiana Peterson, King and Pierce counties; Jana Plagerman, Whatcom County; Allyson Carothers, Snohomish alternate; Becca Bartelheimer, Snohomish County; Kaitlyn Meissner, Snohomish alternate; Amanda Howe, state alternate ambassador; Nicole Buell, state ambassador; Lydia Johnson, state alternate ambassador; Grace Kuipers, Skagit County ambassador; Katelyn Banks, Yakima Valley alternate; Jessica Stoutjesdyk, Yakima Valley ambassador; Ashley Hanson, Inland Northwest; Alicia Smaciarz, Lewis County; and Caitlin Meek, Grays Harbor.

communities," Buell said in a press release.

Dairy farming creates a total of about 18,000 jobs, which support Washington's second largest agricultural commodity and contribute \$5.2 billion to Washington's

economy, she said.

In addition, she said, dairy farmers invest in youth, which is why they support programs such as high school sports and scholastic achievements, as well as Fuel Up to Play 60, which encourages a lifestyle of healthy

eating and physical activity.

They also have community outreach programs, such as Northwest Farmers Fighting Hunger and "Give a Gallon" milk drives.

Dairy Day was sponsored by the Washington State Dairy

Products Commission and the State Dairy Federation and is held every year during the legislative session.

More information on the Washington State Dairy Ambassador program can be found at www.wastatedairywomen.org.

Calendar

Saturday, Feb. 6

Klamath Bull & Select Ranch Horse Sale, Klamath County Fairgrounds, Klamath Falls, Ore. www.klamathbullsale.com

Nevada Small Farm Conference, Nugget Casino Resort, Sparks, 775-250-1339, <http://nevadafarmconference.com>

Sunday, Feb. 7

Klamath Bull & Select Ranch Horse Sale, Klamath County Fairgrounds, Klamath Falls, Ore. www.klamathbullsale.com

Thursday, Feb. 18

WAFLA Annual Labor Conference, Central Washington University, Ellensburg. www.wafla.org/

Wednesday, Feb. 24

Southern Idaho Direct Seed Workshop, Shiloh Inn Conference Center, Idaho Falls, (208) 334-2353. www.idahowheat.org/

Saturday, Feb. 27

Mid-Valley Winter Ag Fest, Polk County Fairgrounds Rick-reall Ore., 503-428-8224. Events will promote local ag commerce and education and provide an environment that is fun and informative for the entire family. mvwag-fest.com/

Sunday, Feb. 28

Mid-Valley Winter Ag Fest, Polk County Fairgrounds Rick-reall Ore., 503-428-8224. Events will promote local ag commerce and education and provide an environment that is fun and informative for the entire family. mvwag-fest.com/

Tuesday, March 1

Fruit Ripening & Ethylene Management Workshop, Postharvest Technology Center, University of California-Davis. <http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/>

Wednesday, March 2

22nd Fruit Ripening & Ethylene Management Workshop, Postharvest Technology Center, University of California-Davis. <http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/>

Friday, March 4

Ag Chemical Collection Event, Redwood Transfer Station, Grants Pass, Ore., 541-690-9983. Pre-registration is required by Feb. 18. www.rogueriverwvc.org/

Saturday, March 5

Ag Chemical Collection Event, Rogue Disposal Transfer Station, White City, Ore., 541-690-9983. Pre-registration is required by Feb. 18. www.rogueriverwvc.org/

Saturday, March 12

Spring into Gardening, McMinnville Community Center, McMinnville, Ore., 503-434-7517. This year's theme will be Home Land-

scaping: Small Changes, Big Impact. Presented by Oregon State University Extension and the Yamhill County Master Gardeners Association.

Friday, March 18

Northwest Horse Fair & Expo 2016, Linn County Fair and Expo Center, Albany, Ore. The largest equine expo in the Northwest will feature fancy dancing horses, strutting stallions, clinics by world-class horse trainers and riders, breed and stallion review demos, equine entertainment and a trade show. <http://equinepromotions.net/>

Saturday, March 19

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Sunday, March 20

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Sunday, March 20

California Fresh Fruit Association Annual Meeting, Resort at Pelican Hill, Newport Coast. <http://www.cafreshfruit.org>

Monday, March 21

California Fresh Fruit Association Annual Meeting, Resort at Pelican Hill, Newport Coast. <http://www.cafreshfruit.org>

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EO Media Group
dba Capital Press

An independent newspaper
published every Friday.

Capital Press (ISSN 0740-3704) is published weekly by EO Media Group, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem OR 97301.

Periodicals postage paid at Portland, OR, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Capital Press, P.O. Box 2048 Salem, OR 97308-2048.

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Visa and Mastercard accepted

To get information published

Mailing address:
Capital Press
P.O. Box 2048
Salem, OR 97308-2048

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