



A CHANGE OF

FORTUNE

Courtesy photo
A Gebbers Farms truck with a Gold Digger Apples trailer. Gebbers has bought out much of the bankrupt packing plant.

Two companies buy portions of a bankrupt tree fruit cooperative, saving jobs and helping a small U.S.-Canadian border town

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

OROVILLE, Wash. — As buds swell for a new tree fruit season, this small town on the U.S.-Canadian border is also getting a new beginning.

One of the town's main employers, Gold Digger Apples Inc., went bankrupt last year, putting 450 seasonal and year-round jobs in jeopardy. With a population of about 1,600, Oroville and its economy would have been devastated had the Gold Digger plant shut down permanently.

But last December, Northco LLC, which is owned by the Gebbers family of Brewster, purchased the packing lines, some fruit storage and orchards from the bankruptcy court for \$4.55 million. Gebbers Farms is one of the largest tree fruit companies in the state.

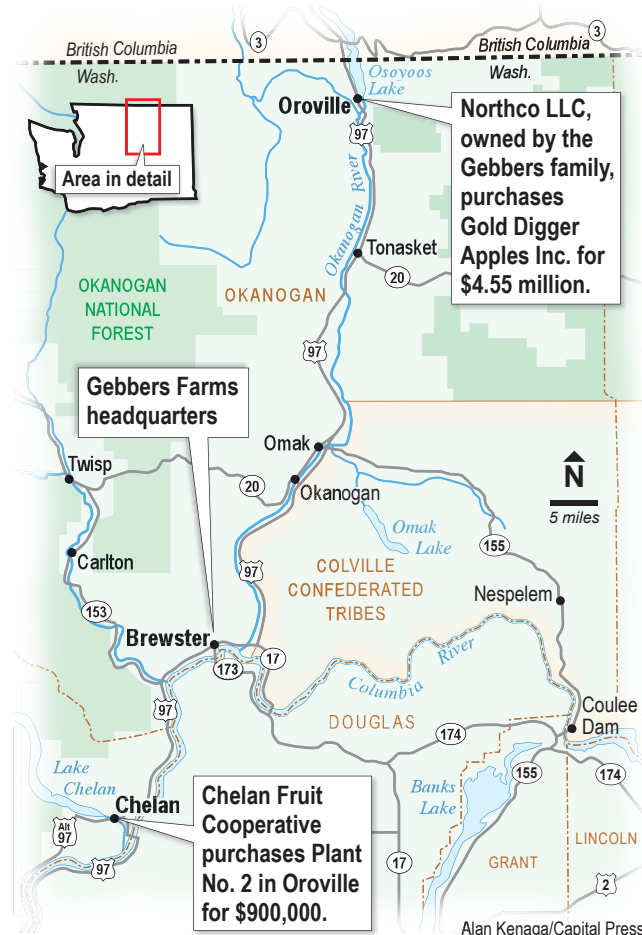
Chelan Fruit Cooperative, also a large tree fruit business, bought a storage shed, known as Plant No. 2, for \$900,000.

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Dan Wheat/Capital Press

From left, Cass Gebbers, president and CEO of Gebbers Farms; Welcome Sauer, business development manager; Greg Moser, plant manager and former Gold Digger general manager; and Bob Grandy, risk management and food safety manager, at Gebbers' Oroville, Wash., plant, formerly Gold Digger Apples.



Northco LLC, owned by the Gebbers family, purchases Gold Digger Apples Inc. for \$4.55 million.

Chelan Fruit Cooperative purchases Plant No. 2 in Oroville for \$900,000.

Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

Trump: National monuments a 'massive federal land grab'



President Donald Trump

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
and JILL COLVIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Slamming what he called "a massive federal land grab," President Donald Trump signed an executive order Wednesday directing his interior secretary to review the designation of dozens of

national monuments on federal lands.

The action could upend protections put in place in Utah and other states under The Antiquities Act of 1906, which authorizes the president to declare federal lands as monuments and restrict how the lands can be used.

The order comes as the president is trying to rack up accom-

plishments in his first 100 days.

During a signing ceremony at the Department of the interior, Trump said the order would end "another egregious abuse of federal power" and "give that power back to the states and to the people where it belongs."

Trump accused the previous administration of using the act to "unilaterally put millions of acres

of land and water under strict federal control" — a practice he derided as "a massive federal land grab."

"Somewhere along the way the Act has become a tool of political advocacy rather than public interest," said Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke ahead of the signing. "And it's easy to see why designations in some cases

are viewed negatively by those local communities that are impacted the most."

Former President Barack Obama infuriated Utah Republicans when he created the Bears Ears National Monument in late December on more than 1 million acres of land that's sacred to

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Conflict brewing between oyster farm, Tillamook dairies

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit accusing Oregon regulators of allowing dairies to contaminate Tillamook Bay to the detriment of an oyster company.

However, the underlying conflict isn't going away and the case is expected to be re-

vived in the near future.

Last year, the Hayes Oyster Co. filed a complaint arguing the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality insufficiently regulated fecal coliform bacteria from dairies in the Tillamook area.

Due to the low threshold of allowable bacteria levels in shellfish waters, DEQ's regulatory shortfall has greatly

reduced harvests on Hayes' 600 acres of oyster plats in the bay, the lawsuit said.

Oyster harvesting is entirely prohibited on about 250 of those acres and closed for extended periods on the remaining 350 acres, according to the complaint.

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Courtesy Jesse Hayes

Bags of oysters are pulled from Tillamook Bay before they're graded and packaged by a worker with the Hayes Oyster Co.

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