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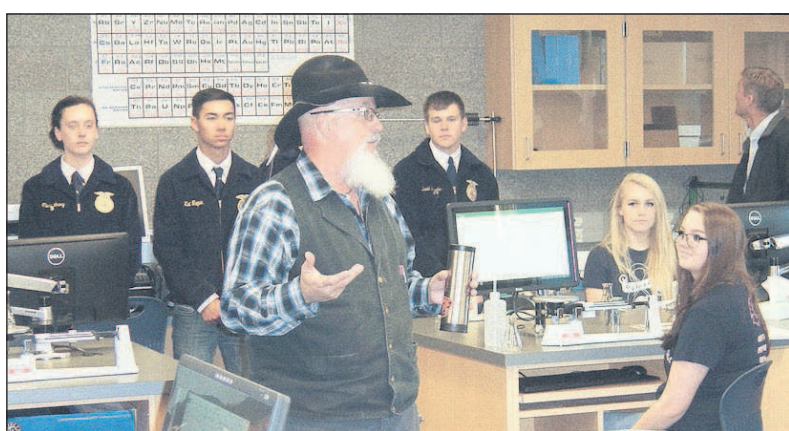
OUR VIEW

Klamath Falls creates ag opportunities at home

Klamath Falls, Ore., is in the same position as many rural communities in the West — too few opportunities to keep young people from running off to the city.

Also like most communities, farmers and agribusiness owners in the Klamath Basin hope to pass on local agriculture to future generations. But in Klamath Falls, they're doing something about it and their example is worth other towns with similar resources emulating.

Klamath Community College has an agricultural sciences program that offers classes that can go toward a bachelor's degree from Oregon State



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

Keith Duren, center, who leads the agriculture program at Klamath Community College in Klamath Falls, Ore., discusses the advanced equipment in the campus' chemistry lab during a tour. A program at KCC enables students to obtain a four-year degree without leaving the campus.

University.

The program boasts equipment that would

make many four-year universities jealous. Its chemistry and biology labs

have such equipment as a gas chromatography-mass spectrometry device for identifying different substances within a test sample. There's an atomic absorption monitor and a DNA synthesizer.

The 21-year-old campus also offers support for students who are finishing their degrees at OSU online.

"Studies have shown there's a probability of kids staying in the community if they graduate (from college) in that community," said Keith Duren, who leads KCC's ag program. "We're going to die if we don't have that next generation."

Despite decades of disputes

over water in the basin, there are still ample opportunities for young people to get into the area's \$300 million ag industry. Efforts by the college and growers to introduce both the community and high school students to the opportunities that exist at home appear to be paying off.

"There's been a concern for years about kids who go off to college not coming home," said Scott White, executive director of the Klamath Water Users Association. "But there's been a change. Some of the kids are wanting to stay. ... It's a pretty exciting thing."

Indeed.

OUR VIEW



Wood construction becomes sexy again

These are exciting times for the timber industry.

Government forest managers and their political bosses finally appear to recognize that more effective management of public forests is needed to help prevent future wildfires and reduce their severity.

Beyond timber management, however, are innovations that promise new uses for timber in construction. Among them is "mass timber" that is used in "tallwood design." As an example, a credit union in Hillsboro, Ore., is using glulam beams to construct its new five-story, 150,000-square-foot headquarters building.

Another building planned for Portland will be 12 stories tall and constructed of cross-laminated timber, called CLT. It will dwarf the seven-story

building in Minneapolis, Minn., that is currently the tallest mass timber structure in the nation.

To explore the uses and design possibilities of mass timber, the University of Oregon architecture program is combining efforts with Oregon State University's forestry and engineering programs to create the Tallwood Design Institute.

In other words, wood construction is sexy again. Once relegated to home construction and one- or two-story projects, lumber was seen as an excellent material for relatively small structures.

Then came cutting-edge projects such as the Metropol Parasol in Seville, Spain. It is among the largest wooden structures in the world. Made of laminated lumber coated in polyurethane to protect it from the weather, the ethereal design

of six interconnected "mushrooms" soars 85 feet tall and covers an area that is 490 feet by 230 feet.

Built in 2011, it shades the entire city square and houses a restaurant, museum, farmers' market and a walkway that allows visitors a bird's-eye view of the historic city.

The future of mass timber is nearly unlimited. Larger mass timbers such as CLTs made by DR Johnson Lumber Co. in Riddle, Ore., and mass plywood panels made by Freres Lumber Co. in Lyons, Ore., offer architects and engineers possibilities that didn't even exist a few years ago.

Better-managed forests, combined with innovative products, designs and structures demonstrate that the timber industry's future is brighter than it's been in a long time.

ABOVE: The Metropol Parasol in Seville, Spain, is one of the largest wooden structures in the world.

Wikimedia Commons

'No' crowd opposes strong U.S. farm policy

By PHILLIP HAYES
For the Capital Press

Guest
comment
Phillip Hayes



For decades, agriculture's adversaries have said "no" to almost any policy that helped farmers.

When farm policy was reformed to be more free-market-oriented, critics said it wasn't enough. When the agricultural sector stood alone and volunteered funding cuts to help close America's budget deficit, critics said it wasn't enough. When farmers began contributing to their own safety net through crop insurance to offset risk to taxpayers, critics said it wasn't enough.

And now that the 2014 Farm Bill has come in tens of billions under budget, critics still say it isn't enough.

"No" appears to be the only message the Environmental Working Group, Her-

itage Foundation, U.S. Public Interest Research Group, Club for Growth and other perennial farm policy opponents are capable of delivering.

And they set a "national summit" in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 4 to discuss new ways to say no.

Could farmers or the public attend this summit?

No. But if it were an open meeting, some tough questions would likely follow. For example:

Do EWG, Heritage and others think it's awkward to advocate the elimination of tools like crop insurance that farmers will need to rebuild following the hurricanes?

No. The crowd was to hear opening remarks from a senator who introduced legislation to effectively dismantle crop insurance just after Hurricane Harvey decimated the Gulf Coast and Irma was bearing down on Florida.

Will Heritage rethink its "Blueprint for Agricultural Policy" now that a former USDA official called out the group for cherry-picking USDA data and including non-farm income to distort agriculture's financial picture?

No. In fact, Heritage just doubled down on its analysis and accused the former USDA official of opposing "freedom in agriculture," whatever that means.

Will groups like the American Enterprise Institute stop paying professors with conflicts of interest to prepare its advocacy materi-

als ... especially after Politico exposed AEI's "American Boondoggle" series, which was released during the last farm bill?

No. These papers are a big source of fundraising, and the American Enterprise Institute is planning to release a follow-up series later this month.

Do free-trade advocates like Club for Growth recognize the hypocrisy of lobbying to dismantle U.S. farm policy while saying nothing of increased ag subsidies and trade roadblocks in other countries?

No. Not even after a top trade attorney in D.C. took critics to task for ignoring foreign subsidies and weakening America's ability to advance free trade in agriculture on a global scale. As the attorney noted, unilateral disarmament is not a sound farm policy; it's a recipe for

foreign dependence.

Do extreme libertarian members of the anti-farm crowd mind working with EWG, which recently proposed a slew of costly environmental regulations for rural America? Conversely, do extreme environmentalists like U.S. PIRG mind that their libertarian counterparts support cutting Farm Bill projects that promote conservation, education and nutrition?

No. Apparently, ideology can be malleable when it is expedient, which explains the meeting. With that, here's one final question to consider:

Does anyone actually agree with the "no" crowd that America is better off without strong policies that defend our country's food security?

No. Thankfully, most

Americans are far more sensible. According to a 2016 poll, 8 in 10 Americans believe agriculture is critical to the country's security, and 92 percent said it was important to provide farmers with federal funding.

Yes, that makes a lot more sense.

Phillip Hayes manages Farm Policy Facts, a national coalition dedicated to educating lawmakers about the benefits of a strong farm policy. Members include the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, American Sugar Alliance, Minnesota Corn Growers Association, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Cotton Council, National Crop Insurance Services, Southwest Council of Agribusiness, and USA Rice Federation.