

\$30,000 stock dogs create buzz at Red Bluff Bull Sale

By **TIM HEARDEN**
For the Capital Press

RED BLUFF, Calif. — While much of the buzz in the Don Smith Pavilion on Jan. 27 centered on a pair of \$30,000 cattle dogs auctioned the day before, the record spending spree didn't extend to this year's bull sales.

Bidders in the finale of the five-day Red Bluff Bull and Gelding Sale shelled out nearly \$1.2 million for the 305 bulls that paraded through the arena — an average of nearly \$3,923 per bull.

The total topped last year's \$1.1 million paid for 288 bulls — for an average of \$3,819 — but fell short of the nearly \$1.49 million collected in 2016. The 305 bulls auctioned two years ago averaged \$4,885, down from the



Tim Hearden/For the Capital Press

A bull is auctioned Jan. 27 in the Tehama District Fairgrounds Don Smith Pavilion, capping off the five-day Red Bluff Bull and Gelding Sale. Bidders spent nearly \$1.2 million on 305 bulls.

2015 average of \$6,554 amid a record \$1.56 million haul.

Rancher Larry Stone of Canyonville, Ore., sat in the

bleachers with his catalog in hand and was prepared to make an offer "if the right bull comes along," he said.

By late morning, he remarked that the prices were about average, but he was impressed with this year's choices.

"Good quality," he said. "Really good quality."

The top-selling bull was the show's supreme champion, a Charolais sold by Cardy Ranches of Turlock, Calif., to Gary Silva of Herald, Calif., for \$10,000.

The runner-up in terms of price was an Angus bull sold by Cardy to Shufelberger Ranch of Millville, Calif., for \$8,000.

The 77th annual bull sale was the last of four auctions held at Red Bluff's fairgrounds. The highlight of the week was the Jan. 26 stock dog sale, which took in \$143,500 for 16 dogs — an average of \$8,968 per dog.

The Lightning 7 Cattle

Co. in Preston, Idaho, and the Lazy T Ranch in Leona Valley, Calif., tied for a record by paying \$30,000 apiece for female border collies Gurdy and Rose, respectively.

"They were all really, really good," sale manager Adam Owens said of the dogs.

Last year's sale of 14 cattle dogs fetched a total of \$85,750, an average of \$6,125 per dog.

The top dog in 2017 sold for \$20,000 to El Rancho de Casey in Jarrell, Texas.

Last week's bidding began with the 10th annual online feeder and replacement heifer sale on Jan. 25, in which nearly 80 lots were sold.

Lot prices in the Western Video Market-hosted sale topped out at \$171.50 per hundredweight for weaned heifers and \$199 per hundredweight for weaned steers,

above last year's \$143 and \$173, respectively.

Two years ago, winning bids topped out at \$287 and \$299, respectively.

The 65 geldings auctioned on Jan. 26 generated \$771,700, with an average price of \$11,892.

This was an improvement over last year, when 69 geldings brought in \$682,750, or an average of \$9,895 per horse.

James Butler of Center, Texas, paid the top price this year at \$29,500.

For the first time this year, all of the auctions included online bidding.

The sales were held amid a packed week that also included a trade show with 175 vendors, a Western art contest, a kickoff breakfast, beef forums and seminars and a bull riding competition.

New housing option may meet needs of farmers, workers

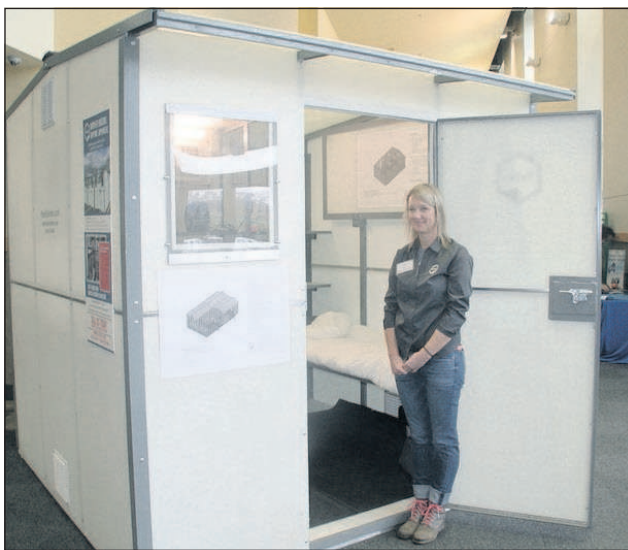
By **DAN WHEAT**
Capital Press

WENATCHEE, Wash. — A Seattle startup company that makes small shelters for disaster victims and the homeless is pitching its units for farmworker housing.

Pallet, a Social Purpose Corporation, displayed its product at industry meetings this winter.

As a result of those meetings, 70 to 75 growers in Washington, Oregon and Canada have expressed interest and some will place orders when the units are approved by the state Department of Health, which should be soon, said Amy King, Pallet CEO.

"It's great for growers to grow their housing capacity quickly," King said. "If they have a common area



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Amy King, CEO of Pallet, displays a housing unit at a labor conference in Wenatchee, Wash., on Jan. 17. A slightly larger model meets requirements to house two H-2A-visa guestworkers.

(of kitchen, eating area and restrooms) and want to add housing for 20 more work-

ers, they can put that up in a day." Pallet has been in business

18 months. It sold 40 of its 8-by-8-foot units to the city of Tacoma several months ago, half for the homeless and half for disaster preparedness, King said.

A Utah tribal community bought one unit.

"Our original design was for disaster survivors and first responders but since then we branched into the homeless and agricultural workers," she said.

A company employee tested a unit in the Wenatchee area last summer and growers became interested, King said.

Four bunks per unit meet code for disaster relief and the homeless but 50 square feet per person is the requirement for H-2A-visa farm guestworker housing.

Pallet has designed a

100-square-foot model for two workers, she said.

Units are lightweight, durable and portable and come with their own structural floors so they don't require foundations or concrete slabs, she said.

They have a 10-year lifespan and come with heating, air conditioning, electrical wiring and bunks.

The polypropylene honeycomb core and fiberglass siding are built by Plascore, in Zeeland, Mich.

Pricing is competitive with manufactured and stick-built housing that many tree fruit companies have turned to for H-2A housing, King said.

The 100-square-foot, two-person unit sells for \$5,950 and a larger seven-person model is \$13,000, she said.

Oregon Hazelnut Industries CEO quits

Geoff Horning says he will pursue private business

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Capital Press

After just five months on the job, Geoff Horning is stepping down as CEO of the Oregon Hazelnut Industry.

Horning, who was hired Sept. 1, 2017, will instead go into private business and is in the final stages of acquiring a full-service association management company based in Portland.

Horning declined to name the company until the deal is completed. He said it was an opportunity he simply could not turn down.

"This is a game-changer for my family's future," said Horning, a native Oregonian and graduate of Linfield College.

Before joining the hazelnut organization, Horning directed Oregon Aglink, a nonprofit organization that promotes Oregon agriculture and seeks to bridge the urban-rural divide, for 11 years. Before that, he managed trade shows and publications for the Oregon Association of Nurseries.

Horning said the hazelnut business is entering an exciting time in Oregon, and experiencing unprecedented growth.

"My only regret is that I didn't get a chance to put my mark on an industry that I think is about to explode and be amazing over the next 20 years," he said.

The Oregon Hazelnut Industry offices are in Aurora, Ore., including the Hazelnut Marketing Board, the Oregon Hazelnut Commission, the Nut Growers Society of Oregon, Washington and British Columbia, and the Associated Oregon Hazelnut Industries.

Former CEO Polly Owen intended to retire when Horning arrived, though she stayed on to help with the transition. She said it is too early to know if they will hire a new replacement.

In the meantime, Owen said the industry is not going to slow down in the least.

"We wish (Horning) well, and we are ready to keep going," Owen said.

Oregon hazelnut growers have more than doubled their acres in the last seven years, Owen said, thanks in part to research and development of new disease-resistant varieties. The added volume has helped Oregon hazelnuts be more competitive in the global market.

The overwhelming majority of all U.S. hazelnuts — 99.9 percent, according to Owen — are grown in Oregon.

Oregon judge refuses to dismiss \$1 billion timber class action

Ruling allows case to proceed, but is likely to be appealed by state

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

A judge has refused to dismiss a class action lawsuit seeking more than \$1 billion from Oregon's government for insufficient logging of state forestlands.

Linn County filed a complaint in 2016 accusing Oregon's forest managers of breaching a contract to maximize timber harvests from forests donated to the state by county governments.

According to the lawsuit, Oregon began prioritizing environmental protection and recreational values over logging due to a policy change in 1998.

The lawsuit was certified as a class action by Linn County Circuit Judge Daniel Murphy. The lawsuit included

14 counties and more than 100 taxing districts as plaintiffs in the case.

Attorneys for Oregon raised several grounds for dismissing the lawsuit that have now been rejected by Murphy.

The judge has ruled against the state on a particularly controversial point during the litigation: Whether the doctrine of "sovereign immunity" prohibits county governments from suing the state of Oregon.

Initially, Murphy allowed the case to proceed despite the state's sovereign immunity claim, but later issued a ruling that it's a valid defense.

The judge withdrew that opinion and has now again rejected Oregon's motion to dismiss, referencing his original ruling that counties can enforce their contract rights against the state government in court under these circumstances.

"He's back to where he's historically been in the case," said John DiLorenzo, attorney for the county

plaintiffs.

As part of the ruling, the judge also threw out Oregon's argument that counties can't seek to "maximize timber revenues" because that term wasn't included in their contracts.

Oregon's government is required to manage the forestland for the "greatest permanent value," but this term is ambiguous and may be interpreted based on the circumstances under which the contract was made, Murphy said.

The judge also disagreed with Oregon's attorneys that future damages in this case were "too speculative" to be decided, since "forestry experts make these estimates all the time," and dismissed other motions filed by the state.

Frank Hammond, an attorney representing Oregon, said he cannot comment on pending litigation.

DiLorenzo, the plaintiffs' attorney, said he's pleased with the ruling, which removed the remaining obstacles standing in the way of a trial.

For much of the litigation, Oregon's Board of Forestry — which oversees the defendant Oregon Department of Forestry — has treated the case with derision, DiLorenzo said.

"This should be a signal to state policymakers the court is taking this case quite seriously," DiLorenzo said. "I hope this is a wakeup call the Board of Forestry might very well lose this case."

The plaintiffs are amenable to Oregon filing an "interlocutory appeal" to challenge Murphy's most recent ruling before the Oregon Court of Appeals, DiLorenzo said.

That way, the Court of Appeals can ensure that assumptions about sovereign immunity and other legal issues are correct before the beginning of trial, which may last a month, he said.

"From an efficiency perspective, it makes sense to get direction from the Court of Appeals first," he said. "Everybody is going to invest a lot of time and effort in this case."

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