

Water from NE Oregon data centers reused for farms

Amazon has two campuses built, two more on the way

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**
Capital Press

UMATILLA, Ore. — The tiny city of Umatilla, Ore., and the internet giant Amazon have come up with a unique use for the cooling water from the company's massive server farms.

They are using it irrigate the region's other farms — the kind that grow crops.

Perched along the Columbia River in northeast Oregon, Umatilla is a haven for irrigated agriculture where farmers grow everything from hay and wheat to high-value potatoes, onions, carrots and melons.

In 2009, Amazon broke ground on its first campus of data centers in Umatilla. Data centers are large warehouses filled with computer servers. All the information gathered by websites like Amazon and Facebook is stored in the server farms.

Amazon was attracted to the Columbia Basin, in part, by the availability of clean water that could be used in cooling systems



Wikimedia

Umatilla, Ore., and Amazon have built a system for using cooling water from the internet giant's server farms to irrigate the region's farms.

for all those servers. A single data center consumes between 250,000 and 1 million gallons of water per day in the warmer summer months, when outside temperatures can top 100 degrees.

That water is still mostly clean once it comes out the other end, said Umatilla city manager Dave Stockdale.

With two data center campuses now online and another two being built, Stockdale said it didn't make sense, nor was there capacity, to treat all that mostly clean water at the city's sewer plant.

Both the city and Amazon began pondering ways they could reuse the water, adding benefit for the community.

The answer, they decided, was to deliver the water to the same farmers that have powered Umatilla's economy for decades.

"To take this new age technology and sort of marry it to our traditional roots, especially in Umatilla which has always been an agricultural community ... in reality, they actually worked out in a great symbiotic relationship," Stockdale said.

The cooling water from Amazon is piped to an irrigation canal run by the West Extension Irrigation District, which serves 10,400 acres of farmland.

The project broke ground in 2019, with roughly 7 miles of pipe that run from the data center campuses to a new headworks on the district's canal at the northeast end of the city.

From there, the water flows about 1,200 feet allowing it to mix with the district's water pumped directly from the Columbia River, diluting any excess salts and reaching a suitable pH level before it can be used for irrigation.

Stockdale said the infrastructure cost a little more than \$5 million. So far, Amazon is the only customer on the new system, though that could change with future developments.

Water deliveries began in 2020. This year, Stockdale estimated they provided enough water for farmers to grow an additional 1,000 acres of crops, all with existing water rights.

"Technically, it's the city's water in the irrigation district's canal," Stockdale said. "If a farmer wants access to additional water, they have additional water capac-

ity available to them through this system."

The value of agriculture in arid Eastern Oregon grows exponentially with water.

Dryland wheat grown without irrigation yields roughly \$100 per acre. Adding 1 acre-foot of water increases the crop's value to \$500 per acre. Add 3 acre-feet of water, and farms can earn up to \$5,000 per acre growing higher value specialty crops.

An acre-foot covers an area about the size of a football field with 1 foot of water, or about 325,851 gallons.

As more data centers come online in the coming years, Stockdale said the city is examining other potential uses for the water in addition to irrigation, such as repairing wetlands in the area for wildlife.

"We continue to look at ways to be good environmental stewards of our resources," Stockdale said.

A spokesperson for Amazon Web Services said the project is the first of its kind in Oregon and for the company, and the goal is to increase water reuse at its northeast Oregon data centers to 100%.

WDFW quits search for cattle-attacking wolf pack

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has stopped searching for wolves attacking cattle in the Kettle River Range, the fourth time the department has failed to cull the Togo pack after saying it would try.

Two Fish and Wildlife biologists, aided by one working radio collar in the pack, spent parts of three days looking for wolves. On the second day, one employee shot at a wolf, but missed.

Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Staci Lehman said Sept. 15 that the pack went to a different area. Although the department can't be certain, wolves may have moved in response to the search, she said.

The department has not confirmed any depredations by the pack since Aug. 17, two weeks prior to the department calling off the search. "At this point, we're not actively going out," Lehman said.

State Rep. Joel Kretz, who represents northeast Washington, called the department's failure "another broken promise."

"I'm seeing the same things from the same people and I'm seeing the same results," he said Thursday.

Ferry County sheriff's wildlife deputy Jeff Flood

said that Fish and Wildlife didn't set traps or use a helicopter and quit too soon.

Flood said the department's "half-hearted" operation belied promises the department made to step up its efforts if ranchers stepped up theirs to break the cycle of wolf-livestock conflicts in the Kettle River Range.

"There's tremendous distrust up here, and frustration," Flood said. "All the time, the ranchers are told to do more and more. When it comes time for the department to do something, they don't do it."

Flood said the wolves have not moved away from cattle. The pack — five adults and four pups — continues to harass cattle, scattering and separating cow-calf pairs, he said.

"How can the department pull off this magic trick — shoot their gun once and the wolves run away?" Flood asked. "How can they have such great luck doing that, but our range riders chasing them like jack rabbits don't?"

Lehman said the department won't talk about its tactics.

The Togo pack started a pattern of attacking cattle in the fall of 2017, according to Fish and Wildlife. The department killed one wolf in 2018, but otherwise has been

unsuccessful in four other tries.

The department designates the Togo pack territory a "special focus area," the only one in the state, because of the number of attacks on livestock. The designation raised expectations on ranchers to use more range riders and try other non-lethal ways to prevent depredations.

The Togo pack again crossed the threshold for lethal control Aug. 17 by attacking a third calf in 30 days. The attacks occurred on private and public lands and to cattle belonging to three different ranchers.

Fish and Wildlife said all three employed non-lethal deterrents, and Director Kelly Susewind authorized the department on Aug. 26 to kill one wolf or two wolves.

The department said the order was in place until Sept. 26 or until wolves were killed, whichever came first. By Aug. 31, the department had stopped trying to remove wolves.

Scott Nielsen of the Cattle Producers of Washington said the department's decision was "outrageous."

"It definitely looks to us like a very limited effort," said Nielsen, who organizes the cattlemen's state-funded program to prevent conflicts between wolves and livestock.



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Nate Kazemier, whose family owns a dairy farm, started the Rickreall Meat Co. to sell ground beef.

Oregon dairy diversifies into direct marketing ground beef

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

RICKREALL, Ore. — Lackluster demand at livestock auctions has convinced the owners of an Oregon dairy farm to directly sell the ground beef from its culled cows to the public.

Last month, Nate Kazemier, whose family owns Rickreall Dairy, started the Rickreall Meat Co. and has already sold 500 pounds of ground beef to visitors.

Culled cows are sent to a slaughter facility a half-hour away in Carlton, Ore., and the meat is sold at the dairy, though Kazemier plans to find wholesale grocery and restaurant buyers as well.

"It makes great ground beef because we (use) the whole cow," he said. "All the steaks and stuff are in it, and that makes it really lean and flavorful."

The dairy usually gets about 20-30 cents a pound for culled cows, while direct-marketing the ground beef fetches about 80 cents per pound after expenses, Kazemier said. "More than doubling our margin on cer-

tain animals is worth the effort."

The company charges \$6 apiece for one-pound packages, which are vacuum-sealed and frozen. Kazemier is considering including them in a food box delivery program that specializes in blemished or misshapen food items.

"This fits that mold pretty well because it's old dairy cows," he said.

So far, the company has relied on buzz generated on social media and from motorists who drive by advertisements near the dairy.

"We're off to a pretty good start for just putting two signs on the highway," said Louie Kazemier, Nate's father.

A culled dairy cow typically yields about 300 pounds of ground beef and the dairy sells up to 700 cows per year at auction, so the meat operation has room to grow.

Ground beef from the dairy's cows already proved popular last year, when the company celebrated its 30th anniversary by giving away food to 450 families early in

the coronavirus epidemic.

Eventually, Rickreall Meat Co. would like to build its own slaughter facility on-site, which would face a lower regulatory burden because the dairy is already permitted to process solid and liquid waste, Nate Kazemier said.

At this point, constructing such a plant would be prohibitively expensive but the company is hopeful that state and federal programs may reduce that cost or provide financial assistance, he said.

For now, the company is focused on exposing customers to its ground beef, Kazemier said. "The goal is to put out a good quality product to get our name out there."

The dairy is currently getting paid about \$15 per hundredweight for its milk, which is about \$2 below the cost of production due to high feed costs, said Louie Kazemier.

"This is all about trying to stay in business because milk marketing isn't doing us any favors," he said. "This is one other way we're looking to diversify."

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2017 AUDI Q3 4DR
VIN = WA1GCCFSXHR09063
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
LARRY H MILLER TOYOTA PEORIA

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2019 JEEP CHEROKEE 4DR
VIN = 1C4PJMCB9KD141225
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
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IOSIA F OFOIA
NAVY FEDERAL C.U.

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2001 UTIL REEFER TRL
VIN = 1UYV535321U250405
Amount due on lien \$1575.00
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UTILITY TRAILER SALES OF OREGON LLC

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
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2018 HYUNDAI ELANTRA 4DR
VIN = 5NPD74LF0JH327426
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
WILLIAM A CARR
MARY SAADIQ

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2020 TOYOTA COROLLA 4DR
VIN = JTDDPRAE2LJ043829
Amount due on lien \$1415.00
Reputed owner(s)
GEICO

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2014 DODGE CHARGER 4DR
VIN = 2C3CDXCT2EH338054
Amount due on lien \$1415.00
Reputed owner(s)
JOSE & JOSE LEIVA
TD AUTO FINANCE LLC

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2019 HYUN ELANTRA 4DR
VIN = 5NPD74LF7KH452621
Amount due on lien \$1435.00
Reputed owner(s)
BRENDA L GONZALES
HYUNDAI MOTOR FINANCE CORP

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2017 HONDA CIVIC 4DR
VIN = SHHF7H2XHU403692
Amount due on lien \$1435.00
Reputed owner(s)
S NARANJO-PEREZ & A KLUTZ
JPMORGAN CHASE BANK NA

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2014 TOYOTA SIENNA VAN
VIN = 5TDYK3DC1E5524085
Amount due on lien \$1435.00
Reputed owner(s)
TIFFANY & JOSHUA FLANAGAN
TOYOTA MOTOR CREDIT CORP

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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2017 HONDA CIVIC 4DR
VIN = 2HGFC2F78H545678
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
EDUARDO PANCHE MARTINEZ
WELLS FARGO AUTO

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
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2011 NISSAN LEAF 4DR
VIN = JN1AZ0CP8BT004224
Amount due on lien \$1555.00
Reputed owner(s)
UNITED AUTO SALES LLC

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2012 ACURA TSX 4D
VIN = JH4CU2F65CC021033
Amount due on lien \$1655.00
Reputed owner(s)
SHELLY JOYCE AVERILL
CENTRAL WILLAMETTE COMMUNITY C U

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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2007 TOYOTA PRIUS 4DR
VIN = JTDKB20U677632276
Amount due on lien \$1515.00
Reputed owner(s)
AUTOS OF PORTLAND

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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2018 DODGE GRA 4D
VIN = 2C4RDGCGXR253573
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
HANNA ALLEN & BRANDEN WALTERS
MECHANICS BANK

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2013 INFINITI JX35 LL
VIN = 5N1AL0MM5DC320567
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
CASEY DIXON & JUAN MANZO
TOYOTA MOTOR CREDIT CORP