

Business in Brief

Columbia Bank in Oregon establishes Pass It On Project

CLATSOP COUNTY — Columbia Bank, with branches in Astoria, Warrenton, Seaside and Cannon Beach, has created the Pass It On Project (www.PassItOnProject.com), which aims to put small businesses throughout the Northwest back to work with a focus on those struggling the most as a result of the pandemic.

Through the program, the bank will pay small businesses, collectively, more than \$500,000 to perform services for people whose lives have been adversely impacted by the pandemic or the economic downturn it caused. These services range from food deliveries and home maintenance, construction, salons, to dental work, animals, medical and auto body repair.

The bank is currently helping more than 350 small businesses and many more individuals and families in the Northwest through the initiative.

“We have small business owners in Oregon who are working to provide free services to locals in need and help revive local economic activity all available to speak about how much giving back means during these tough times,” the bank said in a press release.

“Small businesses are the lifeblood of our communities, and the hope is that this project will inspire others in our communities to do what they can to help small businesses recover,” said David Moore Devine, EVP, chief experience officer at Columbia Bank.

Pacific County EDC announces leadership changes

RAYMOND — The Pacific County Economic Development Council (pacificcdc.org), with facilities in Raymond and Ilwaco, has completed some major leadership changes.

Susan Yirku is the EDC’s incoming executive director. Yirku’s 25 years of nonprofit experience most recently includes working at the Pacific County Tourism Bureau, where she focused on business development and outdoor recreation development. She has particular interest in leadership development and dedicates time to coaching young professionals and advancing leadership and empowerment in the community.

Yirku takes over from Jim Sayce, who led the organization starting in late 2018 after a long career in government and planning. As local liaison between the Washington Historical Society and the National Park Service, Sayce coordinated expansion and development of Lewis and Clark sites. He now serves as director of the Port of Willapa Harbor. Allie Bair led the EDC on an interim basis, but accepted a job with the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce.

In addition, the EDC announced that Guy Glenn Jr., manager of the Port of Ilwaco, is rotating out of the board presidency, and that Jamie Judkins is taking on board leadership. Judkins joined WBE in December 2015 where she practices her skills in tribal government, accounting, event planning, networking and hospitality.

GHC launches new degree in hospitality and ecotourism

ABERDEEN — Grays Harbor College is offering a new associate of applied science degree track this fall focused on hospitality and ecotourism. The two-year program can be accessed entirely online and some partially in-person, depending on covid-19.

The goal of this program will be to prepare students for a variety of jobs along Washington’s coast and tourist attractions, “especially the region’s beautiful natural resources, hotel/motel management, and promotion of seasonal festivals and adventuring.”

“The curriculum, based on employer feedback and needs across the peninsula, blends hospitality, facilities management, event planning, tourism marketing, leadership, adventure travel, and guiding outdoor experiences,” Dr. Lucas Rucks, dean for Workforce Education, said.

To earn the associate degree, students will complete 91-95 credits of college coursework, depending on their culminating internship experience.

“We know tourism season is just getting started this year and we are excited to begin this new program that employers in Grays Harbor and Pacific counties have been requesting, with course access in Grays Harbor and Pacific counties, as well as online,” added Rucks. “We are getting started right away. This past spring we offered a new Human Resources course as well as several of the elective opportunities, all available online. By Fall, we will add even more courses as students learn of the new career opportunity.”

To learn more about the online Hospitality & Ecotourism program, visit www.ghc.edu/academics/degrees-and-certificates/professional/hospitality-and-ecotourism.

Blue Sky renewable energy program marks 20 years

CLATSOP COUNTY — Blue Sky, a customer-powered, opt-in program offered by Pacific Power, a division of PacifiCorp, is celebrating 20 years of helping local residents, small businesses, and municipalities support renewable energy and environmental stewardship in their communities and throughout the West.

Nearly 3,000 Clatsop County residents, together with the cities of Astoria, Arch Cape, Cannon Beach, Gearhart, Hammond and Warrenton, the county, and many local businesses including Fort George Brewing and Buoy Beer, invest in renewable power through the program each year.

The Blue Sky program and its participants across PacifiCorp’s six states have supported 9.2 million megawatt-hours of renewable energy (enough to power around 938,000 homes for one year). Additionally, in Oregon, Pacific Power Blue Sky participants have helped support 110 community-based renewable energy projects for deserving local organizations and helped restore 90 native fish habitat projects across hundreds of miles of the state’s rivers.

“Blue Sky celebrates the power of community and the real change that comes from neighbors helping neighbors. Whether it’s new solar panels going up at a community center or a local wind project coming on-line, we are growing sustainable, renewable energy for generations to come,” said Stefan Bird, president and CEO, Pacific Power. “For 20 years, our customers have come together to support renewable energy and our communities, and it’s remarkable to see the tremendous difference their support has made.”

Launched in the spring of 2000, Blue Sky allows customers to match their energy usage with the purchase of renewable energy credits (RECs). It’s a simple way for participants to support new renewable energy in the West, above and beyond PacifiCorp’s substantial and growing commitment to renewables.

In Oregon, more than 12 percent of all Pacific Power customers take part in Blue Sky, and the number continues to grow each year. To participate, customers select from three program options and the amount of renewable energy they want to support, then pay that extra amount on their monthly bill, starting at \$1.95 per month. Depending on the program selected, participants can support community-based renewable energy projects for local nonprofits, schools and civic groups, native fish habitat restoration projects along Oregon rivers, or the development of new utility-scale renewable energy facilities in Oregon.

Larcin Realty Group welcomes new broker

SEASIDE — Andrew Hammond, born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, has moved to Seaside and joined Larcin Realty, Inc.

“Hammond has a passion for sales and a background in real estate,” according to a Larcin press release. “Always a go-getter, Andrew started and ran his own catering business for four years before moving to Seaside He looks forward to making connections with clients and coworkers and has a passion for closing deals and loves to assist clients through the process of becoming homeowners.”

Along with his wife and four small children, Hammond enjoys a variety of hobbies such as crabbing, fishing and hiking. He is a jack of all trades, and there is never a dull moment in the Hammond household as Andrew is currently fixing up his motorcycle, and dabbles in catering events in his spare time.

Larcin Realty Group, with Cindy Hawkins Colley as owner/principal broker, is located at 810 Ave. G, Seaside.



Andrew Hammond

Portland Army Corps welcomes new commanding colonel

PORTLAND — The Portland District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a new leader. Col. Michael D. Helton, the district’s 63rd commander, pledged to serve the Northwest and the nation in a virtual change-of-command ceremony broadcast live on YouTube from the district’s downtown Portland headquarters.

“I am devoted to tackling the tough issues we face and finding practical, innovative and revolutionary solutions,” said Helton, a Texas native.

Brig. Gen. Peter D. Helmlinger, the Northwest Division commander, said Helton brings the right blend of technical skills, leadership and experience that are the hallmark of the U.S. Army Engineer Regiment.

“I am confident he will lead the Portland team to new heights,” said Helmlinger, who presided over the first-of-its-kind virtual ceremony for the district.

Helton replaces Col. Aaron L. Dorf, who guided the district through the 2017 Eagle Creek wildfire, high water events on the Willamette and Rogue rivers and the 2019 emergency Bonneville Lock & Dam navigation lock outage. During Dorf’s command, the district also celebrated the rehabilitation of Jetty A and North Jetty in Pacific County, two of the three jetties the district is restoring as part of the mouth of the Columbia River Jetties Rehabilitation Project.

“Aaron Dorf is an excellent example of the kind of leadership we have today and the kind we will need as we enter these unpredictable years ahead,” said Helmlinger following the traditional passing of the unit’s colors. “For three years, he has handled the pressures of command at Portland district extremely well. In the process he has helped forge an even stronger bond between our customers’ needs and our capability.”

Some of the challenges Helton faces include maintaining aging infrastructure, navigating water-use agreements, leading the discussion on the divestment of fish hatcheries as well as defining the skills and competencies of the future workforce in a telework environment. Rehabilitation of the South Jetty in Clatsop County is currently underway.