

WHAT'S THEIRS IS MINES

For economic future, Eastern Oregon looks to its past



MORE MINING IN EASTERN OREGON COULD HURT SAGE GROUSE HABITAT

PHOTO: US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Chance Dewitt is sowing grass seed on a farm outside his hometown of Lebanon, Oregon. But this isn't where he makes a living. After a week at home, he'll be flying back to Elko, Nevada, and working 12-hour shifts for two weeks straight mining gold amidst the arid sagebrush landscape there.

For Dewitt and his co-workers, most of whom are from Western states other than Nevada, the gold mines are an excellent opportunity to make good money in a hurry. Dewitt says that for him, "it's not a career, it's just a job that pays a lot." The pay is about \$17 an hour, but the long hours, overtime and per diem all add up to a significant payday.

Jobs like Dewitt's could soon be coming to eastern Oregon, after the passage of Senate Bill 644, which awaits Gov. Kate Brown's signature after passing by significant margins in both houses of the Oregon Legislature last week. The bill streamlines the permitting process for large-scale mines and changes land use laws in Baker, Grant, Harney, Lake, Malheur, Union and Wallowa counties.

However, the new land use regulations set up potential conflicts between mining and agriculture because the regulations allow mining as a pre-approved land use on zoned agricultural land. Conservationists also worry that new mining activities could harm threatened species and pollute an important migratory corridor for many bird species.

Under current rules, mining permits have to go through state and local review. The new legislation combines state and local land use into one process overseen by the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI). While local input will still be part of the process, county planners can no longer deny permits for mines solely because they conflict with agricultural uses.

The legislation stems in part from a 2016 report by DOGAMI that found significant mining potential for gold, silver and other metals in eastern and southern Oregon.

Harlequin
beads
from around the world

2833 Willamette • (541) 683-5903
www.harlequinbeads.com

@chillysgarden

EUGENE GROWN
CHILLY'S GARDEN
PREMIUM CANNABIS FLOWERS

currently available

green dragon
GRAPEFRUIT
WHITE FIRE
CLEMENTINE
SOUTHERN OREGON
PINEAPPLE

PLUS WHOLE FLOWER PRE-ROLLS

CHECK OUT WWW.CHILLYSGARDEN.COM TO FIND THESE GREAT FLOWERS AT AN OLCC REC SHOP NEAR YOU.

WARNING: For use by adults 21 and older. Keep out of reach of children. It is illegal to drive a motor vehicle while under the influence of marijuana.

blu.mist
Restaurant and Bar
An intriguing twist.

An Asian-Fusion concept

OPEN NOW
Happy Hour Daily
4pm- 6pm
& 10pm-12am

www.blumistrb.com

1400 Valley River Dr.
Suite 130
Eugene

541-636-3306
Monday-Sunday
11am - 12am

Walk-Ins Welcome!

Eugene Urgent Care

for all Urgent Care illness or injury

13th & Patterson
27th & Willamette
1800 Coburg Rd
58th & Main

EugeneUrgentCare.com