

# St. Charles tops list for Central Oregon top employer

BY SUZANNE ROIG  
The Bulletin

St. Charles Health System led the pack of Central Oregon top employers, a position its held for the past two decades, according to the Economic Development for Central Oregon annual survey.

Each year the nonprofit, Economic Development for Central Oregon, ranks the top employers in the region. The top five employers in 2021 include St. Charles with 4,626 employees, Bright Wood Corp. regional office with 1,093 employees, Sunriver Resort with 1,000 and Les Schwab Headquarters and tire centers regional with 890 employees, according to the annual list.

| Central Oregon's top employers in 2021 |       |
|--|-------|
| By number of employees                 |       |
| St. Charles Health System              | 4,626 |
| Bright Wood Corp.                      | 1,093 |
| Sunriver Resort                        | 1,000 |
| Les Schwab Tire                        | 890   |

Source: Economic Development for Central Oregon

"As the Central Oregon region grows, so grows the demand for health care services\_ and that trans-

lates into jobs," said Jenn Welander, St. Charles' chief financial officer. "Health care is a labor intensive business, with our caregivers' salaries accounting for about 60% of our operating costs."

The semi-isolation of Central Oregon sets up the region for just one hospital system, said Roger Lee, Economic Development for Central Oregon CEO. St. Charles has four hospitals each located in Bend, Redmond, Prineville and Madras.

The number of employees in Central Oregon has been tracked for the past 20 years and is used to paint an economic picture to lure new business to the area by EDCO.

"Similar sized regions adjacent to

other metros may have multiple hospital systems serving a broader region, which has the effect of splitting that employment up over multiple employers so perhaps they don't end up being at the No. 1 spot, but still very much being high on the list," Lee said.

Except for the No. 1 and 2 place, the list shows a lot of movement up and down. For example Les Schwab at No. 4 in 2021 was the third largest employer in 2019. And Lanza went from No. 14 in 2019 to 10th largest employer in Central Oregon.

What the list does show is that many companies lost employees over the past year due to shut downs from efforts to contain the

COVID-19 pandemic.

One example is Rosendin Electric in Redmond went from the eighth largest employer in 2019 to the 16th.

With restrictions lifting when the county moved from high to moderate risk for spreading COVID-19, more businesses are able to open and add employees in Central Oregon, according to Damon Runberg, Oregon Employment Department regional economist's February employment report. Around seven out of every 10 jobs lost during the initial COVID-19 shock were added back across the region in February, Runberg reported.

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## FLASHBACK

# 1971: Forest Service helicopter expert assigned to Redmond

100 years ago

### April 7, 1921 — 9-year-old Boy Loses Tips Off 2 Fingers in Explosion

Russel Snyder, nine-year-old Powell Butte school boy, temporarily lost the sight of one eye and had two fingers and the thumb of his right hand blown off at the first joint when a giant dynamite cap exploded in his hand Friday night.

The dynamite cap was picked up, his parents say, in the road in front of the Powell Butte community hall while the boy was on the way home from school.

After he arrived home, he took his pocket knife and began to cut the cap open. It exploded.

The boy was hurried to the Redmond hospital where it was feared Saturday that he might not regain the sight in one of his eyes. When he left the hospital Tuesday, however, he had partially regained use of the eye, and it is believed there will be no permanent defect in his sight.

Investigation is being made to determine who left the cap in the road, and, it is said, the persons responsible may be sued for damages.

75 years ago

### April 11, 1946 — Food Program To Reduce Meals For Cafe Diners

Oregon restaurant diners are going to find that meals a la carte will include less bread, pies, pastries and fried foods, according to a report from the Oregon Food for Famine Relief committee.

Cooperation of public eating establishments in the emergency program to conserve wheat and fats for shipment to famine-stricken countries has been pledged by state leaders of their trade associations. Letters urging full compliance with the saving measures recommended by the famine emergency committee have been sent to all members by the Oregon Hotel association and the Oregon Restaurant association.

Adoption of the measures will mean no more toast garnishes flanking bacon and eggs, lamb chops and similar dishes; one slice of bread or one roll served with meals; corn and buckwheat cakes instead of wheat cakes; fruit, ice cream and puddings for desert instead of pie and cake, and boiled or broiled fish instead of fried fish.

Restaurant operators have been advised that OPA requirements will be met by attaching a notice to each menu that the restaurant is cooperating with the famine emergency program by serving wheats and fats, and that any patron who objects will be given a regular serving.

Praising the willingness of the restaurant trade to cooperate with the food conservation program, E. Harvey Miller, state emergency food program manager, called upon housewives to adopt similar wheat-and-fat saving measures in the home.

"We are not asking anyone to make a great sacrifice, as there are plenty of other nutritious foods we can substitute for wheat products," Miller declared. "Every pound of wheat and ounce of fat that we can

spare will help save the lives of starving people. It's a case of 'spare a little and save a lot.'"

50 years ago

### April 7, 1971 — 'Copter expert, testing center added at RAC

Redmond Air Center is gaining the U.S. Forest Service's regional helicopter management specialist and the nucleus of a regional equipment development testing center.

Helicopter expert Carl Yeust, a veteran of 25 years with the USFS, was reassigned to the Redmond facility last month from the Deschutes National Forest Supervisor's Office in Bend, where he had for a year carried the dual responsibility of regional helicopter management and assistant forest dispatcher on the Deschutes.

From RAC, he will be responsible for helicopter training for the region, be in charge of equipment development testing, and when available, serve as alternate dispatcher for the center. And when a really big fire breaks out in the region, Yeust will be the man directing the helicopter--an offensive that may include the 25 birds contracted to the region plus others that may be brought in from other areas.

Although the region only owns one chopper, it has become increasingly involved in the business of helicopters over the past five or six years, according to Yeust. And in on the effort from the beginning was Yeust, who developed the first helitack crew on the Umpqua National Forest during his 12 years as fire control officer there with the Diamond Lake District.

Yeust also was the man behind the testing and modification of the retardant bucket used with 'copters--the subject of a demonstration staged several years ago at Redmond Air Center.

This ties in with Yeust's second responsibility--the testing of new equipment. Although this region, comprised of Oregon, Washington and a portion of Idaho, has no equipment development center, a certain amount of testing has been done "by bits and pieces," according to RAC information officer Tony Percival. With the arrival of Yeust and the current bringing in of equipment, RAC will become a nucleus of testing activity for the region.

Already on tap for this summer is a fire resistant suit that will be tested by RAC smokejumpers and suppression crew members.

But "helicopters are my hobby," in Yeust's words, and probably most of his time will be devoted to that area. Like his current two-day trip to Mt. Rainier National Park, he will be training USFS personnel throughout the region on helicopter safety and how to best utilize them for transporting cargo, personnel and fire retardant.

Although helicopter operation can be an expensive proposition, running from over \$100 per hour for the small three-man models used by the USFS to \$700 or more for the 14-man models for big fires, they serve some extremely vital functions in fighting fires.

While Yeust notes that the birds are being used more and more for fire retardant drops, Percival points out the time-saving they represent, whether moving men, equipment or retardant. By operating out of a highway intersection near the fire and eliminating the need for an airport, turn-around time is reduced substantially.

So far helicopters have been used only limitedly on the eastern side of the Cascades, and the closest available machine to RAC now is at Bend. But Yeust emphasizes that all national forests and national parks are

beginning to develop helitack crews.

On the smaller blazes, the choppers land two or three men where they can walk into the fire and make equipment and retardant drops, while on larger blazes they pool together to perform much the same functions.

Last year by utilizing helicopters to return smokejumpers to RAC off the Deschutes, considerable time was saved--enough in some cases to allow the same jumpers to make another jump or two the same day.

Yeust makes his home at Meadow View Estates in Bend with his wife, Dorothy, and children, Carla, 15, and Craig, 12.

25 years ago

### April 10, 1996 — Donation a tribute to Jaqua

John Jaqua likes the view from his front window of a soccer field that covers and acre of so of his farm near Eugene, and he likes his nephew,

Dave Jaqua, who lives in Redmond and coaches youth soccer.

That seemed reason enough for the elder Jaqua to make an unsolicited donation -- of \$100,000 -- to support his nephew's efforts to provide more sports fields for local youngsters.

It may seem astonishing that someone would donate such a large sum of money to a project in a town far from where he lives, but John Jaqua doesn't think so.

"I'm very fond of David," John Jaqua said, explaining his decision to help fund development of three soccer fields, a baseball field and a softball field on land across the street from Hugh Hartman Middle School.

"I just decided that would be a good place to pay tribute to my nephew, and it would be a benefit to Redmond."

John Jaqua hoped the project would be named in honor of his nephew, who has been battling cancer since last fall, and last week the Redmond

School Board approved. A community group is working on raising funds to build the David Jaqua Sports Complex, and once it is finished the school district and user groups would provide maintenance of the fields.

Dave Jaqua, a prominent attorney in his community as is John, said he was overwhelmed by the donation from his uncle, who watches his grandkids play soccer on the field at his farm.

"He's obviously a very generous individual," Dave said, "and athletics and kids are really that important to him."

As president of Redmond Youth Soccer Association and the father and soccer coach of two daughters, Dave Jaqua began planning the sports field a year ago. Despite his illness, he continues to work on the project and said he's honored by the name chosen for it.

"I couldn't be more pleased to have my name associated with a youth athletic facility," he said. "To have this happen is just tremendous for me."



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