

# Your Business

## A sweet business opportunity

Redmond welcomes new owners of the Chocolate Company

BY NICK ROSENBERGER  
Redmond Spokesman

The smell of warm chocolate, sugar and caramel wafted out of The Chocolate Company on Nov. 4 as the Redmond Chamber of Commerce and members of the community welcomed new owners Stephani Falcone and Stephanie Hinkle to the city's business community.

Falcone, a former personal trainer and fitness instructor, said she and Hinkle were looking to buy a restaurant or cafe. Instead, they found The Chocolate Company after it went on the market in May and thought about how fun it would be to run a confectionary shop.

Falcone's family was involved in restaurants growing up in Newberg. Her family owned J's Restaurant and



Candy, sweets and chocolate fill the inside of The Chocolate Company located at 895 SW Rimrock Way in Redmond.

Lounge and said she had a hankering to get back into the food industry. And chocolate fit her just find.

*"We've been floored with how much we love Redmond."*

— Stephani Falcone, co-owner of The Chocolate Company in Redmond

"I have a big time sweet tooth," Falcone said.

The duo moved from the outskirts of Portland for Redmond's chocolate com-

pany and its sunshine. They said it was a smooth transition with the help of the previous owners.

Falcone said she feels like the community has taken them in as one of their own.

"I've been really thankful and surprised," she said. "We've been floored with how much we love Redmond."

Hinkle said she likes it better down here and the small-town feel.

"We just see the same people everywhere," she said.

Aside from creams from a local distributor, nearly everything in the store is made from scratch, Falcone said, adding that they use all-natural ingredients and no chemicals.

"The ganache is this perfect



Community members and the Redmond Chamber of Commerce welcomed new Chocolate Company owners Stephanie Hinkle (holding scissors) and Stephani Falcone (right) at 895 SW Rimrock Way on Nov. 4 with a ribbon cutting.

moist (inside) of the harder chocolate shell," she said. "The perfect softness."

Falcone said their truffles are fantastic and that all their caramels are made in-house as well, boasting that they have the best caramel apples around.

The gooey, warm and but-

tery chocolate chip cookies are Hinkle's mother's recipe and are baked fresh every Friday.

Falcone said it's been a lot of fun since they took over the business last month. They've been eating a lot of chocolate, since they have to taste test new recipes. She added that mess-ups are tough — that means

they have to eat them, too. "I'm just excited to do this," Falcone said.

The store is located at 895 SW Rimrock Way in Redmond and is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Reporter: nrosenberger@redmondspokesman.com

## Piping project delivers water savings amid drought

BY GEORGE PLAVEN  
CO Media Group

A \$30 million pipeline between Redmond and Smith Rock has succeeded in saving water for fish and wildlife, though not as much as originally anticipated this year due to intense drought in the region.

After five years of planning and construction, the Central Oregon Irrigation District finished piping 7.9 miles of open laterals and canals north of Redmond in April.

Funding was provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to make more efficient use of water from the Deschutes River, minimizing leaks, seepage or evaporation losses normally seen in open canals.

COID has agreed to deliver conserved water from the pipeline to the neighboring North Unit Irrigation District in Madras. In exchange, NUID will forego an equal amount of stored water each year from Wickiup Reservoir, which can then be kept in-stream to improve habitat for vulnerable fish and the Oregon spotted frog.

This season, the districts expected 30 cubic feet per second of saved water, adding up to between 10,000 and 14,000 acre-feet of increased storage available in the reservoir.

An acre-foot is 325,851 gallons, or the amount of water it



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

FILE — Craig Horrell, General Manager of Central Oregon Irrigation District in a section of canal pipe in Bend in 2021.

would take to cover an acre of land — about the size of a football field — one foot deep.

Instead, the pipeline delivered 21 cubic feet per second, or roughly 8,000 acre-feet of savings. This is because COID was forced to curtail water use from the Deschutes River amid extreme drought, said Craig Horrell, the district manager.

Despite this, and working through several other kinks in

the system — including an early season canal breach — Horrell said the project worked as intended.

"We accomplished what we set out to do by converting canals to pipes," he said. "Our goal has always been to help our neighboring farmers, increase winter flows in the Deschutes (River) and enhance Oregon spotted frog habitat."

Dubbed the Smith Rock Proj-

ect, COID spent the last two years converting just under 5 miles of its J-Lateral to 48-inch pipe, and 3 miles of the Pilot Butte Canal to 8-foot steel pipe.

Both are located near Smith Rock State Park, hence the name.

It is the largest piping project to date funded by the NRCS Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, Horrell said. Eventually, COID plans to

pipe all 25 miles of its Pilot Butte Canal over the next 10 years.

"The frequency and intensity of drought events highlight the urgency to update antiquated irrigation infrastructure through water conservation projects like the one we completed," Horrell said. "COID is committed to piping open canals and improving on-farm efficiencies to build a resilient future for agriculture, the river, fish and wildlife habitat."

Drought prompted COID to curtail water deliveries from the Deschutes River this summer for only the second time in the district's history, Horrell said. By the end of the irrigation season, patrons were receiving just 67% of their normal water, he said.

While the project didn't deliver as much water as hoped, Mike Britton, NUID manager, said farmers and ranchers in his district did benefit.

"Every little bit of water helps," he said.

The Deschutes Basin Habi-

tat Conservation Plan, finalized in 2020 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, calls for eight irrigation districts and the city of Prineville to provide more water in the Deschutes River for salmon, steelhead, bull trout and the Oregon spotted frog, which was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 2014.

Kate Fitzpatrick, executive director of the Deschutes River Conservancy, said piping projects such as the COID's are already paying off in a tangible way.

"Even in a year of extreme drought, one piping project in COID generated significant water for farmers in North Unit and is restoring 7,029 acre-feet to the Upper Deschutes River," she said. "We look forward to continuing to support the irrigation districts in this coordinated effort to balance water and improve river conditions in the basin."

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