

Tiller: A tiny Oregon community for sale

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Associated Press

TILLER — In the tiny, dying timber town of Tiller, the old cliché is true. If you blink, you might actually miss it.

But these days, this dot on a map in southwestern Oregon is generating big-city buzz for an unlikely reason: Almost the entire town is for sale.

The asking price of \$3.5 million brings with it six houses, the shuttered general store and gas station, the land under the post office, undeveloped parcels, water rights and infrastructure that includes sidewalks, fire hydrants and a working power station. Tiller Elementary School, a six-classroom building that closed in 2014, is for sale separately for \$350,000.

Potential buyers have come forward but are remaining anonymous, and backup offers are still being accepted.

At a crossroad

The listing represents a melancholy crossroads for Tiller, a once-bustling logging outpost that sprang up after the turn of the last century deep in what is now the Umpqua National Forest, about 230 miles south of Portland. The post office opened in 1902, and miners, loggers, ranchers and farmers flocked to the community along a pristine river.

By the 1940s and 1950s, there were three timber mills running, and the town expanded the elementary school and built a new general store.

Then, nearly three decades ago, logging on the federal forest lands that encircle Tiller came to a near standstill because of environmental regulations. The mills closed, and families moved away. One longtime resident began buying up properties. When he died three years ago, the family owned much of the town.

Then the Tiller Elementary School closed and was up for sale, as well as a small market, and the man's estate bought those too — and the potential became clear.

The listing includes more than 256 acres in 29 distinct parcels, water and timber rights, and a variety of zonings, from residential to industrial.

About 235 people still live in the unincorporated area around Tiller, and have long relied on the buildings now for sale along historic Highway 227 as a gathering spot and one of the only places to shop for groceries in miles.

"Between the dying economy and the dying owners, Tiller became a new opportunity that had never been available before," said Rich-



Nick Swartzendruber/LandandWildlife.com

Almost all of the downtown in Tiller, a dying timber town in remote southwestern Oregon, is for sale for \$3.5 million and the elementary school is for sale separately for \$350,000. The asking price of \$3.5 million brings with it six houses, the shuttered general store and gas station, the land under the post office, undeveloped parcels, water rights and infrastructure that includes sidewalks, fire hydrants and a working power station.



AP Photo/Gillian Flaccus

Longtime Tiller resident Paula Ellis plays with her dogs outside her home in Tiller. Ellis spent her childhood in Tiller hunting and riding horses and now worries about what will happen to the tiny, dying timber town.



AP Photo/Gillian Flaccus

Resident Sarah Crume holds her daughter, Hallie, as siblings Patricia and Thomas Doolittle color nearby at the local church in Tiller. The church is one of the few buildings in downtown Tiller that is not for sale.



LEFT: A potential buyer of Tiller has come forward but is remaining anonymous — and back-up offers are still being accepted. RIGHT: A crew of forest workers in Tiller in the 1930s.



U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

ard Caswell, executor of the estate. "I started getting inquiries from all over the world, essentially, 'What was it? And what could you do with it?' It's the buyer and their imagination that's going to determine what Tiller can become."

The potential buyers have said through the seller's broker that they intend to turn the school into some type of campus and create a "perma-

culture" development that respects the town's remaining residents and its picturesque setting in a bend in the emerald-tinted South Umpqua River. They want to make reopening the market a priority.

"The buyers understand that they only have one shot at a first impression," said Garter Zoller, principal broker for LandandWildlife.com, the seller's realtor. "They want to

address this project with the community in mind."

Future is a mystery

Beyond that, Tiller's future remains shrouded in mystery.

The downtown is a ghost town, but plenty of people still live tucked into the mountains in a region where bears wander onto porches and where picking up a cellphone signal takes a 30-minute drive.

Residents gather at the

church for coffee and cinnamon rolls on Fridays and collect their mail at the one-room post office — when it's open. Some have a sense of humor: A small, weathered sign affixed to the defunct market reads, "Last one out of Tiller turn out the light."

Sarah Crume and a few other mothers cling to a sense of community by meeting with their young children for playtime at the church,

one of the few places not for sale. She's raising five daughters here and had to send her younger children to school in the next closest town when Tiller Elementary shut down.

"It is a little scary, especially raising our kids in this place that we love," Crume said. "I'm just wondering what kind of impact it's going to have on the people."

Paula Ellis grew up in Tiller on a ranch and spent her childhood hunting and riding horses here. Her daughters' beds are decorated with the skins of bears they killed when they were teenagers, and the antlers of the first deer Ellis bagged hangs on a wall near the front door.

She met her husband at the elementary school and recalls the annual end-of-the-year contests for the children that were dubbed the Tiller Olympics.

A giant cross rises over her home from an adjacent hilltop, and Ellis lately has found herself praying.

"If you do choose to live here and raise kids here, it's a community you fall in love with," Ellis said, wiping away tears. "And we don't want to lose that."

For Rosemary Klep, news of the sale brought on strong emotions. Her parents built the market that's now for sale in 1947, and she grew up camping and roaming the forests near town. Her family had the only telephone in Tiller and, for a while, the only TV.

"This town has been in dire straits for many, many years," said Klep, 72, who now lives near Olympia, Washington. "But we loved growing up there. To us, it was a paradise."

THE DAILY
ASTORIAN

TV LISTINGS

Evening listings
THURSDAY

THURSDAY EVENING												APRIL 27	
A	L	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
2	KATU	(2) KATU News at 6		Jeopardy!	Wheel of Fortune	Grey's A. "Don't Stop Me Now" (N)	Scandal "Mercy" (N)			The Catch "The Knock-Off" (N)		KATU News at 11	(35) Jimmy Kimmel
3	KOMO	(4) KOMO 4 News		Jeopardy!	Wheel of Fortune	Grey's A. "Don't Stop Me Now" (N)	Scandal "Mercy" (N)			The Catch "The Knock-Off" (N)		KOMO 4 News	(35) Jimmy Kimmel
4	KING	(5) NBC Nightly News	KING 5 News	Evening	Superstore (N)	Powerless (N)	Chicago Med "Deliver Us" (N)			The Blacklist "Philomena" (N)		KING 5 News	(35) Tonight Show
6	KOIN	(6) KOIN 6 News at 6	CBS Evening News	Extra	Ent. Tonight	Big Bang Theory	Great Indoors (N)	Mom (N)	Life in Pieces (N)	The Amazing Race (N)		KOIN 6 News @ 11	(35) Colbert
7	KIRO	(7) KIRO 7 News	CBS Evening News	The Insider	Ent. Tonight	Big Bang Theory	Great Indoors (N)	Mom (N)	Life in Pieces (N)	The Amazing Race (N)		KIRO News	(35) Colbert
8	KGW	(8) KGW News at 6:00 p.m.		Live at 7	Inside Edition	Superstore (N)	Powerless (N)	Chicago Med "Deliver Us" (N)		The Blacklist "Philomena" (N)		KGW News at 11	(35) Tonight Show
9	KRCW	(3) Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Modern Family	Modern Family	Supernatural "The Future" (N)	Riverdale (N)			KGW News at 10	Two and a Half	Two and a Half	Met Your Mother
10	KOPB	(10) Born to Explore	Business (N)	PBS NewsHour		Art Beat (N)	Oregon Guide	Midsomer M.	(45) Midsomer Murders		DCI Banks "Undertow"		
12	KPTV	(12) 6 O'Clock News		Family Feud	Family Feud	MasterChef "An Extra Serving" (N)	Kicking "Survival of the Fittest" (SF) (N)			10 O'Clock News		11 O'Clock News	2 Broke Girls
13	KPDQ	(13) Mike & Molly	Mike & Molly	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	FOX 12's 8 O'Clock News on PDX-TV	FOX 12's 9 O'Clock News on PDX-TV			Family Guy	Family Guy	American Dad	Cleveland Show
14	KCPQ	(14) Modern Family	Modern Family	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	MasterChef "An Extra Serving" (N)	Kicking "Survival of the Fittest" (SF) (N)			Q13 News at 10		Q13 News	The Simpsons
20	TBS	(20) Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld Pt. 1 of 2	Seinfeld Pt. 2 of 2	Seinfeld	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Conan (N)	
22	KZJZ	(22) Two and a Half	Two and a Half	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Modern Family	Modern Family	Q13 News at 9		Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Friends Pt. 2 of 2	Friends
29	ESPN	(29) (5:00) NFL Draft "Round 1" (L)					SportsCenter	The day's news in the world of sports.		SportsCenter		SportsCenter	
30	ESPN2	(30) (4:30) NCAA Baseball	Louisiana State University at Alabama (L)	SportsCenter			SportsCenter	SportsCenter	SportsCenter	Jalen & Jacoby	Hey Rookie	Hey Rookie	Hey Rookie
31	NICK	(31) Henry Danger	Henry Danger	The Thundermans	The Thundermans	★ ★ ★ The Last Airbender (2010, Action)	Dev Patel, Jackson Rathbone, Noah Ringer.			Full House	Full House	Friends	Friends
32	DISN	(32) Bunk'd	Bizaardvark	K.C. Undercover	Good Luck Charlie	Stuck in Middle	Good Luck Charlie	Liv and Maddie	Liv and Maddie	Bunk'd	Tangled-Series	Jessie	Jessie
34	FAM	(34) ★ ★ ★ Burlesque (2010, Drama)	Christina Aguilera, Alan Cumming, Cher.				★ ★ ★ The Perks of Being a Wallflower (2012, Drama)	Emma Watson, Ezra Miller, Logan Lerman.		The 700 Club			
35	FMC	(35) (5:00) Super 8 (2011, Sci-Fi)	Elle Fanning.	(20) ★ ★ ★ Super 8 (2011, Sci-Fi)	Amanda Michalka, Kyle Chandler, Elle Fanning.		(35) FXM Presents	★ ★ Hide and Seek ('05) Dakota Fanning, Robert De Niro.	(55) FXM Presents				
36	LIFE	(36) Wild's A. "Good Mourning/ Goodbye"	Married at First Sight "Wedding Prep"	Married1stSight	(45) Married (N)	Married "The Wedding Night" (N)				(15) Married Sight Second "So Many Dates, So Little Time" (P) (N)			
38	ROOF	(38) Grey's Anatomy	Mariners Access	MLB Baseball						Post-game	NCAA Lacrosse ACC Tournament Women's Quarter-final		
39	FS1	(39) (4:55) FIFA B.Soccer	UFC Knockouts (N)	UFC Unleashed "Diaz vs. Miller"		MLB Whiparound (L)		Speak for Yourself		Skip and Shannon: Undisputed Opinions on the biggest sports topics of the day.			
43	SPK	(43) (4:00) Yes Man	★ ★ ★ The Hangover	(2009, Comedy) Bradley Cooper, Zach Galifianakis, Ed Helms.				Lip Sync Battle	Lip Sync Battle	Lip Sync Battle (N)	Lip Sync Battle	The Hangover (2009, Comedy) Ed Helms.	
44	COM	(44) Futurama	Futurama	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	Tosh.0	Tosh.0	South Park	South Park	The Daily Show (N) Pres. Show (N)	
45	HIST	(45) Swamp People "Busting Chops"		Swamp People "Stranded"		Swamp Pp. "Brutus the Cannibal" (N)	Swamp "Time's Running Out" (N)			(10) JFK Declass. "The Iron Meeting"		(10) Swamp "Time's Running Out"	
46	A&E	(46) The First 48		The First 48 "Bad Tempered/ The Bully"		The First 48 "The Other Wife"	60 Days In "Code Red" (N)			60 Days In "The Marine Test" (N)		(05) The First 48 "Blood on Bourbon"	
47	TLC	(47) N.J. By Design "Classic American"		My 600-lb Life "Teretha's Story"		My 600-lb Life: Supersized "Teretha and Chad" (N)				My 600-lb Life "Christina's Story"		My 600-lb Life "Teretha and Chad"	
48	TRC	(48) Street Outlaws		Street Outlaws "Start Me Up"		Street Outlaws "Doom and Gloom"	Chad (N)			Street Outlaws (N)		Outlaws "The Empire Builds Back"	
49	NGEO	(49) The Jungle King		Tiger Wars		Wild Sri Lanka "Monkey in the Clouds"		Wild Sri Lanka "Sea of Giants"		Wild Sri Lanka "Wake of the Leopard"		Wild Indonesia "Lost Worlds"	
50	TNT	(50) (4:00) NBA Basketb. NBA Basketball Playoffs						Inside the NBA		NBA Basketball Playoffs			
51	AMC	(51) (5:30) ★ ★ ★ Lethal Weapon 2 (1989, Action)	Danny Glover, Joe Pesci, Mel Gibson.			★ ★ ★ Young Guns (1988, Western)	Kiefer Sutherland, Charlie Sheen, Emilio Estevez.			★ ★ Young Guns II ('90) Kiefer Sutherland, Emilio Estevez.			
52	USA	(52) Law & Order: S.V.U. "Pretend"		Law & Order: S.V.U. "Criminal Hatred"		Law & Order: S.V.U. "Monster's Legacy"	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Secrets Exhumed"			To Be Announced		Modern Family	Modern Family
53	FOOD	(53) Chopped "Sweet Heat"		Chopped "Million Dollar Baskets"		Chopped "Star Power: Grand Finale"	Chopped "Wild Times"			Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay
54	HGTV	(54) Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	FlipFloVegas (N)	Flip or Flop		House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	House Hunters	House Hunters
55	FX	(55) (5:30) ★ ★ ★ Captain America: The First Avenger ('11) Chris Evans.		★ ★ ★ Captain America: The Winter Soldier (2014, Action) Scarlett Johansson, Sebastian Stan, Chris Evans.						Captain America: The Winter Soldier			
57	CNN	(57) The Lead "The First 100 Days"		Soundtracks "September 11th" (N)		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon	CNN Tonight With Don Lemon			Soundtracks "September 11th"		Anderson Cooper 360	
58	FNC	(58) Tucker Carlson Tonight		Hannity		The O'Reilly Factor		Tucker Carlson Tonight		Hannity		The First 100 Days	
61	CNBC	(61) Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Filthy Rich Guide	Filthy Rich Guide	Filthy Rich Guide	Filthy Rich Guide	Paid Program	Paid Program
63	BRVA	(63) Beverly Hills "Reunion Part 1" Pt. 1 of 3		Beverly Hills "Reunion Part 2" Pt. 2 of 3		Beverly Hills "Reunion Part 3" Pt. 3 of 3		Housewives Atlanta "Reunion Part 1"		Housewives Atl. "Reunion Part 2" 2/4		WatchWhat (N)	Southern Charm
64	TCM	(64) (5:00) The Opposite Sex June Allyson.		(15) ★ ★ ★ Our Miss Brooks (1956, Romance) Gale Gordon, Don Porter, Eve Arden.				★ ★ ★ Please Don't Eat the Daisies ('60, Com) David Niven, Janis Paige, Doris Day.		(15) Bells Are Ringing Judy Holliday.			
65	SYFY	(65) ★ ★ ★ The Matrix (1999, Action) Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss, Keanu Reeves.				★ ★ The Matrix Reloaded (2003, Sci-Fi) Carrie-Anne Moss, Laurence Fishburne, Keanu Reeves.							
162	RFD	(162) SF Machinery	Small Town	Rural America 'Live'		Steve Lantvit	Rural Eve. News	Market Journal	GA Farm Monitor	SF Machinery	Small Town	Time Life Library	