

## Gorge Commission, Klickitat County sign pact

By NEITA CECIL  
The Dalles Chronicle

In a historic agreement — nearly 18 months in the making — Klickitat County will devote planning staff time to help the Columbia River Gorge Commission process land use applications within its borders.

A Klickitat County planner will spend at least one day a week at the commission's White Salmon office to process applications, and devote more time to applications at the county's Goldendale planning office, Klickitat County Commissioner Dave Sauter told the commission at its meeting Tuesday in The Dalles.

"We have seen the impact of the (commission) staffing levels as they exist now and their ability to process the permits," Sauter said. There are actually "significant impacts to economic development" in the county, he said.

"This doesn't solve everything, it is a first step," he said.

To get a sense of how much of a shift in thinking this is for Klickitat County, Sauter quipped that everybody would know when the agreement had been signed later that day by the county due to the sight of

the "mushroom cloud over Goldendale."

Klickitat County has long maintained the most resistance of the six Gorge counties to the scenic area land use regulations. It is the only county to not adopt its own rules for developments in the federally-protected Gorge corridor. Consequently, land use applications within the scenic area in Klickitat County have been handled by the Gorge Commission.

The commission started experiencing deep staffing cuts in 2009, eventually dropping from 4.5 planners to 1.6, but the recession also slowed applications to a trickle. Even so, by 2013, there was a year-long backlog for getting permits.

The recession ended and the applications started to flow again, but staffing hasn't increased.

The wait time has crept up to about 18 months, and the amount of applications has grown significantly, from about 12 in the queue in September 2013, to 37 today, Gorge Commission Executive Director Darren Nichols said.

Gorge Commissioner Bowen Blair, an Oregon governor appointee from Portland,



Photo by Mark Gibson

**COWS IN DALLES** express curiosity about the presence of a photographer. The land on which they graze lies in Klickitat County where officials have agreed to help process Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area land-use applications in an historic agreement.

said of Klickitat County's decision, "I think it's a real step forward." He hoped more changes were coming.

At earlier meetings, Sauter has cautioned hopeful Gorge Commissioners to not expect the next step to be Klickitat County adopting its own land use rules. He said that possibility was very much off the

table.

Sauter told the Chronicle he expects up to half of Klickitat planners' time to be spent on the permit backlog. He understands there is some flexibility on which permits will be tackled and in what order.

One concern has been whether the easiest ones would be done first, or the old-

est ones. He understands it will be a mix.

Commissioner Dan Erickson, an Oregon governor appointee from The Dalles, and a former Wasco County commissioner, said he understood the trials Sauter was going through by shepherding a politically divisive agreement through.

Sauter acknowledged the challenges he faced, saying, "This is not without cost."

Gorge Commissioner Carl McNew, representing Klickitat County, said the agreement would not have happened without Sauter. "I can't thank you enough. It's a big deal."

Then Commissioner Jim Middaugh, a Multnomah County appointee from Portland, lightened the mood by saying that, as a liberal member of the commission, "I'm tempted to vote no to help you out politically, but I'm going to vote yes."

The Gorge Commission first approached Klickitat County in September 2013, asking for help to process land use applications. It asked for a full-time county planner to work on permits.

Negotiations hit some snags. A June 2014 letter from

the Klickitat County planning department said having one of its staff work out of the commission office — which is what the just-signed agreement calls for — would be "impractical."

Sauter told the commission, "Sometimes, in seemingly intractable situations you can see forward consensus."

Another issue was the county planner's access to confidential information in the commission office. The agreement states the planner will keep that information confidential.

Klickitat County felt that was "kind of a given to us, but they wanted some assurance," Sauter said.

Planners work with confidential information all the time, he said.

Sauter said the county at this point expects its planner to work up to half-time on the backlog "until we get caught up."

Only once the work is started, however, will the needed resources be known, he said. The agreement calls for monthly and quarterly updates on progress.

Sauter said the county's senior planner was ready to start working right away at the commission office one day a week.

## Columbia Gorge gluten free baker uses chemistry background



Photo by Amber Marra

**TERESA LANGEN** has struggled with wheat intolerance for years and is opening a bakery in Bingen that will provide gluten-free goodies to those with similar intolerances and allergies. Columbia Gorge Gluten Free will offer wholesale and eventually retail orders of pies, muffins, cookies, and more out of its new location, but Langen's gluten-free muffins are currently available at Doppio in Hood River.

By AMBER MARRA  
The Enterprise

At the age of 17, Teresa Langen received some devastating news regarding her favorite hobby.

The prognosis was wheat intolerance. Langen, an avid baker, tried to ignore the fatigue and discomfort she experienced when she ingested wheat for a few years, but finally came to terms with it shortly after moving to the area in 2000.

"At the time there wasn't much going on in the gluten-free market and I've always loved to bake, so I was really sad because nothing bakes like wheat bakes," she said.

The denial of something she loved so much led her to pursue baking sans-wheat. Her pies, muffins, breads, and other tasty creations will soon be available for wholesale at the new Bingen location of Columbia Gorge Gluten Free.

"Wheat is very common for people to be allergic to, so I think it's something that's here to stay and if you can make things taste really good people don't mind buying it and eating it instead of their typical gluten-type products," Langen said.

Located in what was previ-

ously Big River Diner and Big T's, Columbia Gorge Gluten Free is set for a soft opening in March with wholesale and retail online orders available at [www.columbiagorgeglutenfree.com](http://www.columbiagorgeglutenfree.com) beginning in April.

This isn't Langen's first business venture. Her other business, Bio-Creations, produces a line of soaps, candles, and cosmetics and she works with the company her husband founded, EZkem, as well.

Through it all, Langen's background in chemistry and biology has helped. Prior to moving to the Gorge, jobs in quality assurance in the food industry paved the way for successfully putting together gluten-free goodies.

"Baking is a science. It all has to do with chemistry and the way foods interact with each other and baking, probably more than other cooking, is really affected by the way things react, so understanding chemical reactions and acids and bases has helped me to understand baking and when something doesn't work out to be able to analyze why," Langen said.

That said, Langen recognizes the challenge of her business in that it lacks "the thing that is best for baking, which is

gluten," leading her to use white rice flour, potato flour, and tapioca starch in everything from her pie crusts to red velvet muffins with cream cheese icing.

While she recognizes that finding gluten-free options on restaurant menus and in grocery stores has gotten easier over the years, Langen said she also knows how difficult it can be to make gluten-free baked goods at home.

"The difficult part is that gluten-free baking requires you to have a lot of ingredients. You don't just buy a bag of flour like you do when you're making regular muffins. You have three or four different flours that go into the mix, so having the space to store everything is difficult if you're baking for yourself," she said.

Sourcing as many of those ingredients as possible from the Gorge is important to Langen. Her chickens provide her with eggs and orchards throughout the Gorge will give her the apples or other fruit

that fill her tarts.

"My intent is to use as many local ingredients as I can, which is also getting easier. You can get everything from eggs to honey here. You can't get rice flour, but you can get all the good stuff that goes in the pie or muffin," Langen said.

Eventually, Langen would like Columbia Gorge Gluten Free to be certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but that process takes time and there is still a lot of work to be done to her new facility, which will be 100-percent gluten free with no potential for contamination since she will be the only one baking there.

"I'm hoping to bring some good alternatives to wheat in the baking world and maybe give more people a chance to try it and see if they feel better if they go on a wheat-free or gluten-free diet," she said.

## BNSF plans to spend \$189 million on Washington railways this year

By SVERRE BAKKE  
The Enterprise

BNSF Railway Company announced last Friday that it plans to spend about \$189 million this year on capital improvements and system maintenance in Washington.

Right now, traveling mechanized crews of 200 personnel and equipment are replacing rail and surfacing track on the 220-mile Columbia Gorge main line between Bingen and Wishram, on their way to BNSF facilities in Pasco.

"These are high-production crews that perform track surfacing to ensure a proper alignment, and to ensure the track is raised to the proper level for that geometry," BNSF's spokesman, Gus Melonas, told The Enterprise.

The Columbia Gorge main line has been in operation since 1908, and plays "a key role in moving local, national, and international freight," Melonas said. "A critical component of that is a strong track structure."

This spring, tie crews will make their way along the main line, replacing ties and adding ballast to hold the track in

place. Finally, crews will come in to perform undercutting work to clear stray rock and give the rail bed its proper trim to enhance water drainage.

"We invest in this kind of maintenance work to keep our trains safe and running at the optimum speeds set for us by the federal government and by BNSF to meet our engineering standards," Melonas noted.

BNSF has spent \$500 million in Washington in the past three years to keep its more than 2,000 miles of track here in tip-top condition. But the Columbia Gorge line is a point of emphasis for the company.

"We're investing in this line to ensure the safe, reliable, and efficient movement of freight from A to Z that moves through the corridor," Melonas said, and added, "We're a common carrier, so we don't control how we haul. But we do control what we haul it."

The company's Columbia River Gorge line runs directly along the southern edges of Klickitat and Skamania counties. The route is one of the busiest in the Northwest; 35 to 40 trains a day carry all sorts of cargo, from fuels like crude oil

from North Dakota to coal from Wyoming, to consumer goods like lumber and vehicles, to Washington agricultural products. Amtrak also runs two trains a day between Portland and Chicago.

"This year's substantial investments in Washington are a clear reflection of how important our operations in the state are to our overall network and our unwavering commitment to always operate safely, for people and the communities in which we operate," said Daryl Ness, BNSF's general manager of operations, Northwest Division.

"We know our customers are competing in a fast-paced global economy where a smooth, efficient supply chain can be the difference between winning and losing in the marketplace."

Ness said this year's planned expansion and main-

tenance projects will help BNSF achieve the capacity flexibility it needs to support its customers' growing demands and connect their products to the marketplace.

Moreover, the company is trying to be conscientious about rail safety in response to growing public concern about the wisdom of trafficking crude oil and coal through the Gorge and the communities that line BNSF's main track.

BNSF's maintenance program for Washington will include 1,011 miles of track surfacing and undercutting work, and the replacement of nearly 50 miles of rail and about 203,000 ties, as well as signal upgrades for federally mandated positive train control, a system of functional requirements for monitoring and controlling train movements as an attempt to provide increased safety.

**Gas Appliances**  
**Electrical Repair**  
**Get your RV road ready!**

RV Doc — Bruce Henderson

Mobile Service & Repair

State Fire Marshal Certification #001242-08

**RV Mobile Doctor**  
Service & Repair. I come to you!  
BRUCE HENDERSON  
**541-993-5982**  
LICENSED & CERTIFIED

## WEEKLY SUDOKU

This week's Sudoku presented by:

### YOUR BUSINESS NAME

Answers on Page A8

				1		
2	3	4	5			1
1		6	7		4	8
	1	9	8		7	
5						6
	4		1	2		3
9	7		6		8	4
	8		4	7		9
		5				

Fill in all 81 squares on the puzzle with numbers 1 to 9. You can use each number 1-9 only once in each nine square section, in each horizontal line of nine squares, and in each vertical column of nine squares. The puzzle is completed when you correctly fill every square.

**Advertise Your Business or Service Here**  
**call 541-386-1234**

**Mortgage Advice**  
5¢

**Need some Mortgage Advice?**  
**Call Jeff**

Home Purchases • Refinances • Equity Lines

**Jeff Sacre**  
Sr. Mortgage Specialist  
NMLS 140302, MLC 140302

(541) 436.2662 Office  
806.1556 Cell

**DIRECTORS**  
Mortgage

Mortgage Advice does not cost 5 cents and this image is used for advertisement purposes only. Mortgage advice is free to all interested borrowers. This is not a commitment to lend. Information deemed reliable but subject to change without notice. Call for details. Consumer Loan License NMLS 5240, CI-3240

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

**SIS!!**

**WELCOME TO THE 80'S**