



SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE

Wear Blue



Child Abuse Awareness Month – A4

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Earliest bloom in decades

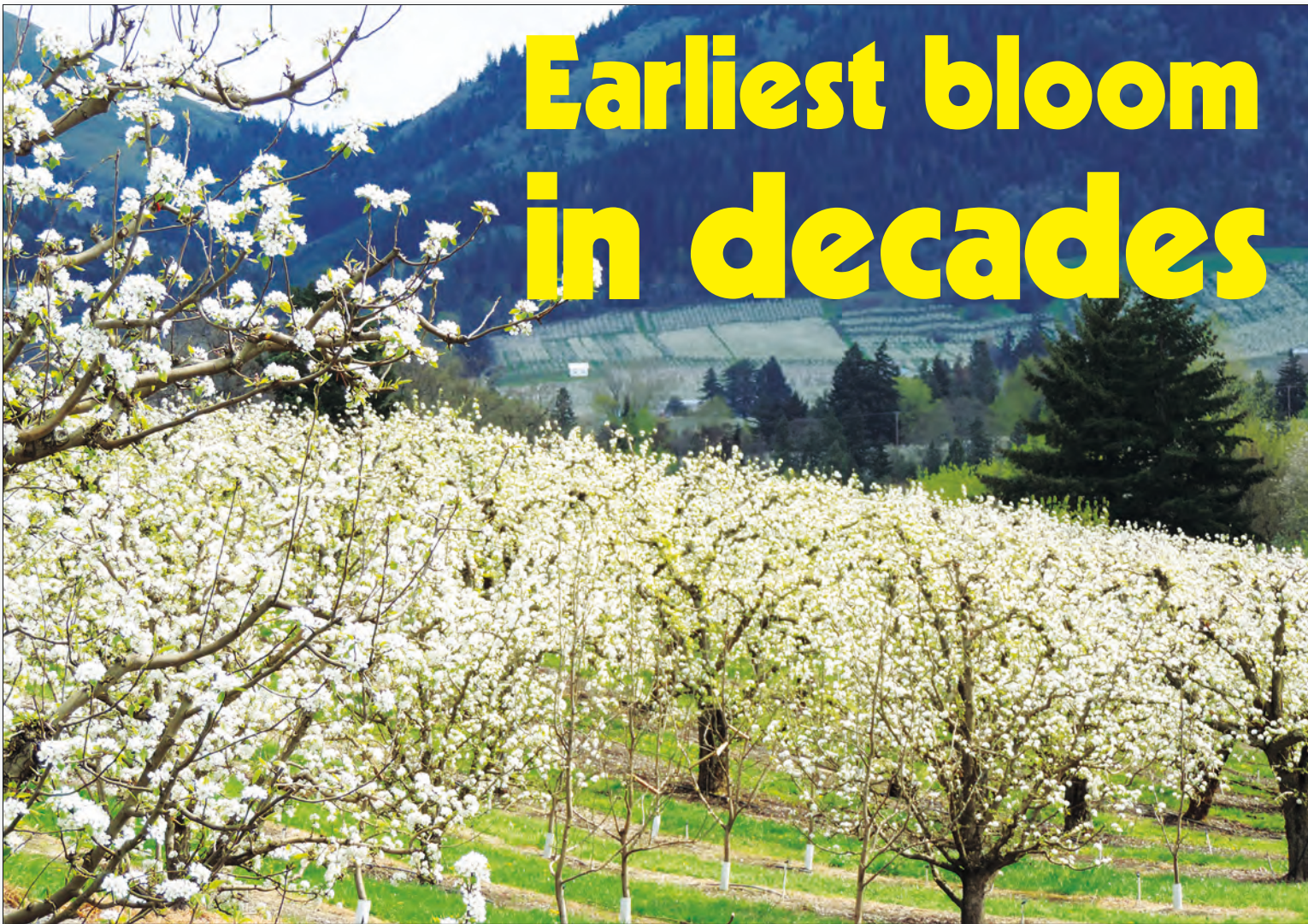


Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

PEAR TREES in full bloom east of Orchard Road, looking toward the bountiful Pine Grove section of Hood River valley.

Horticulturist: fruit should weather well when harvest comes

By KIRBY NEUMANN-REA News editor

Around dawn Friday, the low but steady flutter reverberated in the Hood River Valley.

Orchardists turned on fans for the first time this spring to protect prematurely-developing pear, apple and cherry blossoms, as temperatures hovered close to freezing for the first time in weeks. The fans help distribute upper warm air to the cooler areas near the ground, elevating temperatures around the blossom-bearing branches.

Fruit trees have fully blossomed throughout most of the valley, nearly three weeks earlier than the norm.

“Here at the Experiment Station, the trees blossomed 20 days earlier than average, and that’s considerable,” said Oregon State University horticulturist Steve Castagnoli. He said that according to OSU records dating to 1944, this is the earliest bloom for Anjous and Bartletts, the two mainstay pear varieties in Hood River County, the nation’s premier pear-growing region.

“That means that harvest and everything will be earlier than normal,” said Castagnoli, affecting spraying schedules and other orchard maintenance tasks as well as the labor situation come harvest time.

“The two main outcomes (of

early bloom) is harvest will be earlier and frost season is longer because the frost season probably won’t end any earlier; and since the blossoms developing fruit are vulnerable starting earlier, the process becomes prolonged,” Castagnoli said.

“We’re also seeing that there is not very much separation between the upper valley and lower in terms of crop development, so usually things happen 10-14 days earlier in the lower than upper and that is problematic in terms of labor availability as the peak labor times come so much closer together,” Castagnoli said. Growers in Pine Grove and Parkdale will have “less time than normal” between har-

vest sessions in order to spread workers out.

“Labor availability is an ongoing issue; it’s already on their radar screen. This will just make it harder,” he said.

Two things can happen, in terms of fruit development given early bloom and potentially longer frost season, according to Castagnoli: one is with a prolonged frost comes more potential for frost damage — “not necessarily killing flowers or fruitlets, but it’s far more common to have marking on the fruit, so there is a higher potential for that, but that depends on whether we have frost conditions. We’ll have to wait and see on that.”

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A bigger Bear Mountain

CL Port sells 10 acres to wood pellet plant for expansion

By PATRICK MULVIHILL News staff writer

After two years of discussion, the Port of Cascade Locks sold 10 acres of industrial property in its business park to Bear Mountain Forest Products Tuesday. The wood pellet and bedding manufacturer will be expanding and boosting its production over the next two years.

The Cascade Locks facility currently employs 22 staff. With the upcoming expansions, Bear Mountain plans to add five to 10 new full-time, year round jobs by 2017.

Bear Mountain marks the Port’s first sale in the business park. The deal sets in motion infrastructure investment and job creation on a piece of property that has sat vacant for over a decade.

Bear Mountain has leased acreage from the Port’s business park since 1990, but it will now own its land and expand its operations.

Cascade Locks property manager Holly Howell said Bear Mountain’s geographic “footprint” won’t grow much bigger, but there will be at least one new building, and operations will be shifted around due to the newly drawn legal area Bear Mountain will occupy.

The expansion comes in the wake of Bear Mountain’s merger in February with Lignetics Inc., a wood pellet manufacturer with plants on East and West coasts. The two wood pellet companies, the oldest of their kind in the United States, teamed up to expand and diversify their wood-based products. These include wood and barbecue fuel pellets, wood bricks and several brands of animal bedding.

“We at Bear Mountain are very excited about purchasing our manufacturing site in the Port’s Business Park. Being a long term tenant and now property owner will help

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Spotlight

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A weekly series about a day in the life ...

Jim Dummer ‘lovin’ it’ at McDonald’s

BY TRISHA WALKER News staff writer



Photos by Trisha Walker

JIM DUMMER has been Director of Operations for Gorge-area McDonald’s since 2009, and as such visits each Gorge-area McDonald’s at least once a week. Here, he poses with a Thursday morning crew at the Hood River Cascade Avenue location.

Jim Dummer has been Director of Operations for Gorge-area McDonald’s since 2009, but to get there, he worked his way up through the ranks, from a part-time crew to grill crew to counter to store manager to general manager to supervisor to director — with many steps in between.

And while he’s seen his fair share of changes since beginning at the original The Dalles location in July 1983, freshly graduated from Wahtonka High School, what keeps him coming back are the people and the diversity of the job.

“I have ketchup running through my veins, you might say,” Dummer joked. “McDonald’s is always flowing (with) new and exciting promotions each month, new menu items to learn and try, new equipment to learn and work. The theme song is in my heart: ‘I’m lovin’ it!’”

In a nutshell, Dummer handles “quality, service and cleanliness, people, product and equipment. Every day is a new day; every day there is a new adventure lurking around each corner. It’s up to you how you want to accept the adventure.”

He covers all seven Gorge locations — Hood River, The

See JIM, Page A11

Four To Go

GEM hosts roundtable on immigration

Gorge Ecumenical Ministries (GEM) invites community members to participate in a roundtable presentation and discussion on immigration issues in the Gorge.

The brown-bag lunch event will take place in Hood River on Thursday, April 9 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Asbury Our Redeemer Partnership, 1140 Tucker Rd.

Guest speakers will provide an overview of current immigration laws and policies and highlight their impact on local families. All are welcome.

Study Group looks at Middle East

The Hood River and Wasco counties’ Family and Community Education group will meet April 9 at 11 a.m. at the OSU Campus Classroom at 2990 Experiment Station Drive. (This updates a previous Four to Go item.) At the presentation, titled “Demystifying the Middle East,” guest speaker Mark Cherniak will address the history, politics, religion and cultural factors of the region. The meeting is open to the public. For more information contact OSU Extension at 541-386-3343.

Lila May’s Tutu Trot May 9

Lila May’s second annual Tutu Trot is scheduled for May 9, 2015, at 9 a.m. at the Mark O. Hatfield Twin Tunnels trail. Walkers and runners can participate in a 3K, 5K, 10K or stroller walk at \$20 per entry. Kid race for those 12 and under. Fun, music and medals will be provided for each participant. Wear a tutu!

Lila May is a local four year old who is battling neuroblastoma. She was diagnosed in September 2012 and is currently being treated with radiation at OHSU and by specialists in New York.

To donate or for questions, email dtjennybrown@gmail.com.

Blood drive April 7 at HRVHS

Hood River Valley High School is hosting a blood drive April 7 from 9 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. While HRVHS students and staff will make up the majority of those donating blood, community members can sign up for the 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. slot — traditionally an open hour.

Students must be 17 years old to participate, or 16 with a permission slip. For more info, email niko.yasui@hoodriver.k12.or.us or call HRVHS as 541-386-4500.

