

Heinz ends contracts with some Oregon, Idaho potato farmers

By AMANDA PEACHER
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Potato farmers in Eastern Oregon have lost an important contract with Heinz, the company that owns the Ore-Ida brand.

Many potato growers in Malheur and Baker counties have had contracts with Heinz for 20 or 30 years, but Heinz recently announced that they're dropping contracts with farmers in Eastern Oregon and southwest Idaho.

That means that some potato farmers must now find a new buyer, or plant a differ-

ent crop. Mark Ward leads the Malheur Potato Bargaining Association and is a second-generation farmer. "We grow some very nice potatoes up here," he said. "We would like to continue to do this. It's a big change. It's uncharted territory. This has never happened before. We are unsure if this is long-term."

Heinz will now contract with the Ontario Potato Company for its potato supply.

"This will allow both Heinz and OPC to take advantage of economies of scale to improve efficiency

and productivity and further strengthen the Ore-Ida brand, while continuing to deliver the best quality and value to consumers," wrote Heinz spokesman Michael Mullen in an email to OPB.

"This was a difficult decision for Heinz because it will affect many long term relationships with growers in Oregon, Idaho and Washington," he added.

Ward says his group has started talking with that company. In Baker County, potatoes are the second most valuable agricultural product.

Umpqua Bank hires Pendleton native as sales specialist

PENDLETON — Pendleton native Jami Overstreet has been hired by Umpqua Bank as a sales support specialist in the Home Lending division.

Overstreet, who has 17 years of local experience in the finance industry, will work from Umpqua's offices at 112 S. Main St. in Pendleton, and report to Sales Manager Elaine Anderson.

"Jami will be an asset in helping us to grow our

business in Eastern Oregon," said Umpqua Bank Senior Vice President and Regional Manager Jered Helton. "She has deep roots in her community."

Headquartered in Roseburg, Umpqua Bank is a subsidiary of Umpqua Holdings Corporation and has locations across Oregon, Washington, Idaho, California and

northern Nevada. The bank's Home Lending division

offers a variety of home loan options for purchase and refinancing, including first-time homebuyer, investment, custom construction and government financing programs.

For more information, visit www.umpquabank.com.



Overstreet

State issues fines in 2 worker deaths in Eastern Oregon

PENDLETON — Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division issued fines for two work-related deaths in 2014 in Eastern Oregon. Oregon OSHA classified both violations as "serious."

Oregon OSHA cited Diversified Concrete Cutting Inc., Salem, \$840 for not ensuring safe work conditions, which led to the death of Glen Warren McCoy, 64, of Sparks, Nevada.

The Oregon Department of Transportation contracted Diversified Concrete Cutting, to install rumble strips at the paving project on Interstate 84 about six miles west of Boardman. According to Oregon OSHA's report, McCoy on the night of July 23 was outside a one-ton 1999 Dodge flatbed truck towing a piece of equipment when the vehicle, operated by another employee, moved forward at about 1 mph and the rear dual tires rolled over him.

The work safety agency reduced the fine from \$2,100

to \$840 because the company is small.

The day before McCoy died, ODOT employee Don Kendall, 54, of Pendleton, died at a chip seal paving project on Highway 320/Oregon Trail Road just west of Echo. According to Oregon OSHA's report, Kendall was working to remove a temporary cover

from a catch basin grate when a fully loaded, 10-yard dump truck backed over him. Coworkers tried to alert the truck driver just before hitting Kendall, the report said, but the driver was not able to stop the big vehicle in time.

Oregon OSHA fined the Oregon Department of Transportation \$3,500.

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

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The Umatilla County Historical Society Museum

Lunch topic highlights rural economics

HEPPNER — Bruce Sorte, OSU Extension Service economist, will give a presentation about rural economics during the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group's annual luncheon.

The event is Thursday, Feb. 19 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the St. Patrick's Senior Center, 190 N. Main St., Heppner. There is no charge for the lunch, but reservations are required by Tuesday, Feb. 17 to ensure there's enough food.

Sorte invites people to send specific questions in advance to bruce.sorte@oregonstate.edu. He plans to incorporate information into his discussion.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Sheryl Bates at 541-676-5536, heppnerchamber@centurytel.net or Marcia Kemp at 541-676-2100, mmkemp@fs.fed.us.

Hospital foundation administrator to address Irrigon chamber

IRRIGON — Bob Green, executive director of the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation, is the guest speaker for the upcoming Irrigon Chamber of Commerce meeting.

The no-host luncheon gathering is Wednesday at noon at Stokes Landing Senior Center, 195 N.W. Opal Place, Irrigon. The meal is \$8 for members and \$10 for non-members.

For more information, contact Phyllis Danielson at irrigonchamber@irrigonchamber.com or 541-922-3857.

Chamber luncheon includes United Way presentation

BOARDMAN — Information about people being helped and local services provided by United Way of Umatilla-Morrow Counties is planned for the February Boardman Chamber of Commerce meeting.

Kricket Nicholson, executive director, will share during the no-host luncheon gathering Wednesday, Feb. 18 at noon at the Port of Morrow, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman. Catered by Pudding on the Ritz, the cost is \$12 per person.

An RSVP is required by Monday, Feb. 16 by contacting 541-481-3014 or info@boardmanchamber.org.

M-F chamber seeks feedback

MILTON-FREEWATER — The Milton-Freewater Chamber of Commerce is making plans for its annual Business & Community Showcase.

Held in March, the event provides a networking and marketing opportunity for business professionals. During the past four years it has seen a steady increase in participation, both with vendors and citizens attending.

The chamber asks people to take a few minutes to complete a survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/NWWHQG8

For more information, contact mfmfdfrog@mfchamber.com or 541-938-5563.

Business briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to business@eastoregonian.com

Submit Your Pictures!

The East Oregonian and Hermiston Herald are looking for wedding photos to showcase in our Bridal Planner that publishes March 7, 2015.

Deadline Wednesday Feb 18th.

By mail: 211 SE Byers, Pendleton, OR 97801
By email to ajacobs@eastoregonian.com
Please include the names of the Bride and Groom!
Any questions, please call Amanda 541-278-2683

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