

# Walla Walla, Columbia County grain co-ops merge

New company will handle over 30 million bushels annually at 37 locations

By **ANDY PORTER**  
*Union-Bulletin*

Members of two Walla Walla-area grain cooperatives have approved a merger of their operations.

The merger, to go into effect May 1, will unite Northwest Grain Growers, based in Walla Walla, and Dayton-based Columbia County Grain Growers into a single company under the name of Northwest Grain Growers.

Ballots were counted on Jan. 7 during special meetings of boards for both cooperatives held in Walla

Walla and Dayton. Forty-eight percent of the ballots sent out to NWGG members, a total of 666, were returned and of that number 654 voted for the merger, said Chris Peha, NWGG general manager. Less than 2 percent of ballots returned, a total of 12, voted against the merger.

A total of 214 ballots, 72 percent of those sent out, were returned by Columbia County Grain Growers members with 192 members, or 90 percent, voting in favor of the merger, said Mitch Payne, CCGG general manager.

According to both companies,

25 percent of each cooperative's members had to vote on the proposal and two-thirds of those voted had to approve the plan of merger for it to pass.

In a joint release, company officials said the merged cooperatives will serve about 1,700 members. Peha will manage the combined operations and Payne will become chief operating officer. The company headquarters will be in Walla Walla, but the Dayton office will remain open to service customers in the Dayton and Waitsburg areas.

Officials said the new company

will generate more than \$2 million in gross sales and handle a combined volume of 30-35 million bushels annually at 37 locations, including four barge loading terminals on the Columbia and Snake rivers.

Board members with both companies began discussing the merger last February. One of the specific reasons for unification included the possibility of improving members' marketing power. Officials said late last year consolidation of grain cooperatives through mergers or marketing agreements have altered the sourcing of grain delivered to terminals in Portland, where it is shipped to overseas markets.

"In short, the size of your marketing deck impacts the prices quoted for your grain by Portland exporters," officials said in December in an online posting explaining the reasons for the merger.

Other reasons are the enhancing of the merged companies ability to provide additional grain marketing information and adding depth at key positions in the organization, as well as reducing voids created through retirements that will occur over the next few years, officials said.

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## HERMISTON

# Relay gets ready to paint town purple

Hermiston kick-off event is Thursday

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**  
*East Oregonian*

Uniting communities across the globe, Relay for Life celebrates those who have battled cancer, remembers loved ones lost to the disease and fights back by raising money to support research and help those afflicted by the illness.

The signature fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, the event is often an overnight activity — signifying that cancer never sleeps — held in communities across the world. A kick-off event for Hermiston Relay for Life is Thursday from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Hermiston Church of the Nazarene, 1520 W. Orchard Ave. The summer fundraiser begins June 25 at the Umatilla County Fairgrounds.

The kick-off rally will feature information tables — including how to start a team, fundraising ideas and general information about cancer. Also, food will be available for purchase and there will be a silent auction. There is no fee to register a Relay for Life team.

Having the kick-off event helps in spreading the word about the summer fundraising effort, said Miranda Hunt, publicity chairwoman for the Hermiston event. Money raised, Hunt said, not only helps with cancer research, but also provides resources



EO Media Group file photo

**The Cancer Commandos, a Hermiston Relay for Life team, cheer during their introduction at a past American Cancer Society fundraiser in Hermiston. The kick-off event for the 2016 Hermiston Relay for Life is Thursday at the Hermiston Church of the Nazarene.**

for those fighting the disease. Those with cancer can receive assistance with travel expenses for treatment, wigs and other programs that help with their overall well-being and spirits while fighting the disease.

Initially involved through community service hours while in high school, Hunt has continued to support Relay for Life for more than a decade. In addition to participating in Hermiston's event, she was involved in Polk County while attending Western Oregon University.

"Volunteering and giving back is why I got involved in the first place," Hunt

said. "Some good friends in my life got cancer, so that made me want to get more involved."

In addition to being on a team, Hunt has volunteered as the youth chairperson, luminary committee and team development.

Hunt encourages people to get involved early. The months leading up to the summer event provide an opportunity to raise more money to help in the fight against cancer.

This year's theme is "Paint Your Town Purple." Hunt explained purple is the overall color associated with cancer and she hopes people

will help raise awareness by wearing purple clothes, putting up purple signs and lights.

The Hermiston Relay for Life committee is seeking suggestions for its 2016 grand marshal. Hunt said nominations are being accepted during the kick-off event.

For more information about Hermiston Relay for Life, contact Hunt at 541-720-0369 or [mlhunt06@gmail.com](mailto:mlhunt06@gmail.com).

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at [tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com](mailto:tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4539

## UMATILLA

# Fire chief would be desk bound if he returns to post

By **PHIL WRIGHT**  
*East Oregonian*

Umatilla Rural Fire District Chief Mike Roxbury remains out on medical leave, and if he comes back to work he might not be permitted to leave the office.

Roxbury, 50, took a break from his job back in September 2015. He said the years of responding to gruesome deaths and trauma took its toll. But he also is 12 months away from retirement.

The fire district's board of directors in response to the situation created a list of responsibilities for Roxbury if he returns. No. 1 on that list: "No responding to calls of any nature."

The *East Oregonian* obtained the list through a public records request. Roxbury said the list came out of his discussions with the board. He asked about the possibility of working his last year as an administration chief, handling the budget, overseeing money from the bond that district voters approved in 2014, and the like.

The board's list includes plenty of work Roxbury

could do at a desk, from developing a maintenance schedule for vehicles to updating the policy and procedure manual to having a transition plan in place by the end of the year.

The *EO* was not able to reach board members for comment.

Roxbury also said he has two doctors appointments in the next 10 days that will help him develop a clearer picture

of whether he should finish out the year or retire now. Those appointments, he said, are a follow-up to the critical five days he spent in October at the On-Site Academy in Gardner, Massachusetts. On-Site is a nonprofit residential treatment and training clinic that provides professional counseling and therapy for police, fire and other emergency service workers suffering debilitating stress.

"It was a brutal week of reliving things I tried to forget," he said. "They helped me learn how not to let that destroy my life."

Contact Phil Wright at [pwright@eastoregonian.com](mailto:pwright@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0833.



Roxbury

## BRIEFLY

### Hermiston man injured in dui crash

PASCO — A Hermiston man was injured in a drunk driving crash over the weekend in Pasco, according to the Washington State Patrol.

Joseph D. Sanders, 31, was taken to Kadlec Medical Center in Richland following the crash Sunday about 3:35 a.m., the state patrol said.

Sanders was driving a Hyundai Scoupe north on Highway 395 to Interstate 182 when the car went off the road, troopers said. The Hyundai rolled and came to a rest on its roof.

Troopers say Sanders was cited for duii. Sanders was reportedly wearing a seat belt. The Hyundai was totaled. — *Tri-City Herald*

### Officer to graduate from police class

PILOT ROCK — Daniel Badal cleared a major hurdle on his way to becoming Pilot Rock's newest police officer. Badal is one of 36 members of the basic police class graduating Friday, Jan. 22, from the Oregon Public Safety Academy, Salem.

The basic class is 16 weeks long and covers dozens of training areas from survival skills and firearm use to ethics and community policing. Officer Brian Love with the Umatilla Tribal Police Department also is among the graduates, as is officer Ralph Graffunder with La Grande police.

Badal and other new officers will need to complete field training before the state grants them certification. Badal is going to receive his training under the supervision of Pendleton police Chief Stuart Roberts and Cpl. Ryan Lehnert.

Pilot Rock continues to contract with Pendleton for police services while searching for a new chief and officer. Badal will train in Pilot Rock and Pendleton to get him ready to work solo.

### Two cities getting traffic light upgrades

PENDLETON — Oregon Department of Transportation crews will upgrade traffic signals in Milton-Freewater and then in Pendleton this week.

A written statement from the state road department said the work will begin Tuesday in Milton-Freewater, then crews will move on to Pendleton and should wrap up by the end of the week. The project will improve traffic flow and bring the signals into compliance with statewide policy for signal operation.

"Travelers are advised to watch for crews working near signals and to pay attention to the new signal operations," ODOT advised in the statement.

The work includes removing signals using a night time yellow flash operation during late evening/early morning hours. Workers will change those signals to "operate with a full signal cycle (green, yellow, red) at all times," according to the statement.

Additional changes will take place to signals in Pendleton at Southwest Dorion Avenue and 10th Street and the Dorion and Southwest Fourth Street intersections to improve traffic flow. Crews also will adjust timing on signals for the

Southwest Court Avenue and 10th Street signal, the statement said, to improve flow when motorists are "traveling the posted speed limit" along Court.

### City to discuss employees in executive session

STANFIELD — Stanfield City Council will discuss the senior and community center property when it meets Tuesday night. The council also will meet behind closed doors to discuss dismissal or disciplining employees and to evaluate the performance of employees.

Stanfield City Council meets Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, 150 W. Coe Ave., Stanfield.

The notice of the meeting did not specify who the council would discuss, though Stanfield has two employees on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of a Oregon Department of Justice investigation for misconduct: Chief of Police Byron Zumwalt and police Lt. Monte Toombs.

Larsen has said he did not anticipate criminal charges to come from that investigation.

The council at the Jan. 5 meeting held an executive session to review records that were not public, but instead discussed the police situation. The council in the session agreed to have Mayor Tom McCann, a former Stanfield police chief, update the police department's policy manual.

The council in the same closed-door meeting talked about the possibility of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police reviewing the department and making recommendations for improvements and placing Zumwalt on probation until he meets those recommendations.

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Anderson Land & Livestock, Umatilla County Cattlemen's Association, and the Oregon Cattlemen's Association will pay a cash reward not exceeding the sum of \$6,000 for information and evidence resulting in the arrest and conviction of any person or persons responsible for the shooting, butchering, and mutilation of an Anderson Land & Livestock cow near Feedville Road on the evening of January 14, 2016

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CenturyLink participates in a government benefit program (Lifeline) to make residential telephone service more affordable to eligible low-income individuals and families. Eligible customers are those that meet eligibility standards as defined by the FCC and state commissions. Residents who live on federally recognized Tribal Lands may qualify for additional Tribal benefits if they participate in certain additional federal eligibility programs. The Lifeline discount is available for only one telephone per household, which can be either a wireline or wireless telephone. A household is defined for the purposes of the Lifeline program as any individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address and share income and expenses. Lifeline service is not transferable, and only eligible consumers may enroll in the program. Consumers who willfully make false statements in order to obtain Lifeline telephone service can be punished by fine or imprisonment and can be barred from the program.

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**\*CenturyLink Internet Basics Program** – Residential customers only who qualify based on meeting income level or program participation eligibility requirements, and requires remaining eligible for the entire offer period. First bill will include charges for the first full month of service billed in advance, prorated charges for service from the date of installation to bill date, and one-time charges and fees described above. Qualifying customers may keep this program for a maximum of 60 months after service activation provided customer still qualifies during that time. Listed High-Speed Internet rate of \$9.95/mo. applies for first 12 months of service (after which the rate reverts to \$14.95/mo. for the next 48 months of service), and requires a 12-month term agreement. Customer must either lease a modem/router from CenturyLink for an additional monthly charge or independently purchase a modem/router, and a one-time High-Speed Internet activation fee applies. A one-time professional installation charge (if selected by customer) and a one-time shipping and handling fee applies to customer's modem/router. **General** – Services not available everywhere. Have not have subscribed to CenturyLink Internet service within the last 90 days and are not a current CenturyLink customer. CenturyLink may change or cancel services or substitute similar services at its sole discretion without notice. Offer, plans, and stated rates are subject to change and may vary by service area. Deposit may be required. Additional restrictions apply. **Terms and Conditions** – All products and services listed are governed by tariffs, terms of service, or terms and conditions posted at [centurylink.com](http://centurylink.com). **Taxes, Fees, and Surcharges** – Applicable taxes, fees, and surcharges include a carrier Universal Service charge, carrier cost recovery surcharges, state and local fees that vary by area and certain in-state surcharges. Cost recovery fees are not taxes or government-required charges for use. Taxes, fees, and surcharges apply based on standard monthly, not promotional, rates.

