

**BOARDMAN**

# ConAgra plans \$30M expansion

## Facility expected to add 50 jobs

EAGLE, Idaho — ConAgra Foods, Inc. announced Friday that its Lamb Weston processing facility will expand operations in Boardman.

The \$30 million investment will add additional processing capacity for making formed products such as hash brown patties and potato puffs. The addition of the line at the company's existing facility is expected to add 50 jobs to the 390 people already employed by the company in Boardman.

With continued increase in demand for frozen potato and formed products, this capacity expansion is necessary to fulfill



Lamb Weston's global growth projections, according to a press release from the company.

Construction on the processing line is expected to begin this spring, with completion in 2017. The added line will increase processing capacity by approximately 50 million pounds.

"With the frozen potato category growing globally, we have tremendous opportunity to support our customers' growth in the U.S. and around the world," said Lamb Weston President Greg Schlafer in a press release. "To capture that growth, we need to make more products. Expanding our operations in the Columbia Basin — with access to great potatoes, people and ports — just makes sense."

The facility in Boardman is close to growing, storage and shipping operations, with easy access to

the Port of Morrow. The company opened an initial expansion of the facility in June 2014, adding 300 million pounds of capacity with a new fry line. That \$200 million project included plans for the addition announced Friday.

"Lamb Weston's planned expansion shows their continued commitment to the Port of Morrow, Boardman and the Mid-Columbia region as the right place to do business," said Gary Neal, general manager of the Port of Morrow. "Their ongoing investments add good paying jobs to our region and we are fortunate to have such great partners at the Port."

Lamb Weston employees approximately 4,500 people at a corporate office and seven manufacturing facilities in the Columbia Basin, and operates 22 manufacturing facilities in North America, Europe and China.

**BRIEFLY**

### Chamber cancels social media sessions

UMATILLA — A pair of business social media workshops in Umatilla have been canceled.

Due to lack of timely response, the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce canceled the March 16 sessions.

For more information, contact Karen Hutchinson-Talaski at 541-922-4825 or karen@umatillachamber.net.

### Business lunch builds bridges

HERMISTON — Consultant John Audley will discuss building bridges to promote a healthier and more self-reliant rural Oregon during the upcoming Hermiston Chamber of Commerce B2B Luncheon.

Audley owns a consulting business and will share information about his work for the Oregon Business Council and Craft 3, a nonprofit financial institution dedicated to investing in people, their communities and healthy natural systems.

The no-host luncheon gathering is Tuesday, March 22 with networking starting at 11:45 a.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395. The meal, which is catered by Ixtapa, is \$10 for members and \$13 for non-members.

For more information or to RSVP, contact 541-567-6151 or kelly@hermistonchamber.com.

### Workforce board seeks service proposals

LA GRANDE — The Eastern Oregon Workforce Board posted a Request for Proposal (RFP 16/9-1) for the delivery of services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for adult dislocated workers and youth programs.

It targets the employment and training component of the eight Eastern Oregon counties of Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa. Those interested in providing a bid are requested to attend a conference in person or by phone Wednesday, March 16 at the WorkSource Center in La Grande.

The RFP is available at [www.easternoregonworkforce.org](http://www.easternoregonworkforce.org). Organizations may bid to provide the services in Area 1: Morrow and Umatilla counties; or Area 2: the other six listed counties; or the bidder may apply for the entire area. Proposals will be accepted through Friday, April 15.

For more information about the process or to attend the conference, contact [eowb@easternoregonworkforce.org](mailto:eowb@easternoregonworkforce.org) or 541-963-3693.

### ODOT District 12 recognized as WeatherReady Nation Ambassador

PENDLETON — The National Weather Service has recognized District 12 of the Oregon Department of Transportation as a WeatherReady Nation Ambassador. The presentation to ODOT District Manager Marilyn Holt was made by Mike Vescio and Dennis Hull of the Pendleton NWS office at a recent meeting of district supervisors in Pendleton.

ODOT District 12 maintains roads in several heavy snow areas including Weston Mountain, Cabbage Hill, Meacham, Battle Mountain, Spray Mountain and freezing fog-prone areas from Milton-Freewater to Pendleton, Hermiston and Boardman. Blowing dust also threatens travelers in these areas during the dry season. ODOT's close cooperation with the National Weather Service has allowed more efficient management of resources and road maintenance.

The WeatherReady Nation Ambassador initiative is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's effort to formally recognize partners who are improving the nation's readiness, responsiveness, and overall resilience against extreme weather, water and climate events.

*Business briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email [press\\_releases\\_to\\_business@eastoregonian.com](mailto:press_releases_to_business@eastoregonian.com)*

### Oil price appears to have 'bottomed out'

PARIS (AP) — The organization that represents major oil-consuming nations said Friday that signs of a market that has "bottomed out" are emerging.

U.S. crude prices jumped to a high for the year. Brent crude, used as a global benchmark, hit a high for the year Tuesday and rose 1 percent Friday.

Energy companies have been shutting down rigs and laying off thousands of workers as oil prices plunged to around \$30 per barrel, from well over \$100 per barrel just two years ago.

A broad retreat by the energy sector played out again Friday on both fronts.

The number of oil and natural gas rigs active in the U.S. fell for the 12th consecutive week, according to Baker Hughes on Friday, to 480. That's the lowest level in decades, and perhaps the fewest since the earliest days of the oil drilling industry.

Texas driller Anadarko Petroleum Corp. said it would cut 1,000 workers, 17 percent of its work force. The pain may finally be translating into a reduction of a massive and global oversupply of oil, the International Energy Agency said.

## Feds deny permit for liquefied gas port, pipeline in Coos Bay

COOS BAY (AP) — Federal regulators denied permits Friday for a liquefied natural gas terminal in the southern Oregon coastal town of Coos Bay.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued the 25-page ruling, saying the Jordan Cove Energy Project would hurt landowners, The World reported. The ruling also said there's little evidence to support the need for a pipeline and not enough evidence of a public benefit.

The 230-mile pipeline route from the farming town of Malin east of the Cascades just north of the California border to Coos Bay has been opposed by private landowners and conservation groups. It crosses rivers, mountain ranges and a mix of private and public lands.

Regulators said in the ruling that the Pacific Connector Pipeline would affect nearly 160 miles of privately owned lands and about 630 landowners.

The planned port facilities to be built include a shipping channel, berths for LNG tankers and tugboats and refrigeration facilities to turn the gas into a liquid. The \$7 billion project is led by Calgary, Alberta-based Veresen Inc.

Citizens Against LNG said

Friday's decision marked an important victory against eminent domain.

"CALNG is pleased that FERC recognized that private landowners should not lose their land for the benefit of a private company," Citizens Against LNG President Katy Eymann told The World. "Landowners were threatened with loss, and this decision ensures that for the time being, they won't face that threat."

Supporters have touted jobs and an economic boost in the billions for Oregon.

Mark Wall with Boost Southwest Oregon, a group advocating for the project, said his group was disappointed in the ruling. But Wall called it a bump in the road.

"The project's not dead. This is not a deal-killer," he told The World.

Regulators said the companies involved in the project are free to reapply in the future and that the commission would consider their plans if they can demonstrate "a market need" for their product.

A spokesman for Gov. Kate Brown's office who was asked for a reaction told *The Oregonian* Friday afternoon they were still reviewing the ruling.

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