

Despite Intel cuts, high-tech surging

By MIKE ROGOWAY
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — Oregon tech employment grew at its fastest rate in a decade last year, according to a new state report that finds those jobs pay unusually well and have an outsized impact on the economy.

“High tech is certainly an important and growing sector in our economy,” said Josh Lehner of the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, author of the new report. “It drives a lot of growth and vitality, certainly in the Portland metropolitan area.”

Oregon had just over 95,000 tech workers in 2015, according to state jobs data, up 4 percent from the prior year. Tech jobs paid an average of nearly \$104,000 a year, more than twice the state average.

Casting a shadow over that growth are layoffs at Intel this week, putting 784 Oregon employees out of work as the chipmaker begins to remake itself for the post-PC era. Intel plans to eliminate hundreds more jobs through buyouts, early retirement packages and project cancellations.

Intel says it plans to reduce its work force by 12,000 jobs throughout the company by the middle of 2017. If those cutbacks are applied evenly across the business, that would cost Oregon — Intel’s largest site — more than 2,000 jobs of the 19,500 the company currently employs in Washington County.

“If we are going to get to that 2,000,” Lehner said, “then we’re talking about something that’s no doubt a setback.”

The Silicon Forest, rooted in electronics manufacturing, is undergoing a broad transition toward software. One embodiment of the change is the arrival of New Relic, a San Francisco software analytics company that employs 300 people in the U.S. Bancorp Tower (“Big Pink”) in downtown Portland. It opened its Portland outpost during the Great Recession, when the



Doug Beghtel/The Oregonian via AP

New Relic lobbied hard to become the first business in the Portland U.S. Bank tower to bring their bicycles to their office space. New Relic is an extremely well funded San Francisco startup that’s decided to put its engineering team in Portland.

regional tech economy was faltering and before the city had become a destination for software developers.

“There were pockets of talent in and around town. When we started, the opportunities in Portland were a little more limited than what they are today,” said Jim Gochee, New Relic’s chief product officer.

Gradually, though, software developers began to coalesce at a handful of well-funded startups and at outposts like New Relic’s. Portland’s emerging reputation as a relatively affordable city overflowing with microbrews, food carts and bike routes is helping draw workers and companies to Portland from other states.

And Gochee said the growth in Portland tech is feeding on itself as technologists and executives in other regions — Seattle and the Bay Area, especially — view Oregon as offering a range of possibilities for coders and executives who want to build a career here.

“That opens up to a whole new category of person who maybe wouldn’t have moved here six or seven years ago,” Gochee said. “Now it seems like there’s plenty of oppor-

tunity in Portland.”

Portland still doesn’t have a single large tech company of its own. The city is dominated by satellite offices like New Relic’s, which outnumber homegrown tech employers. That’s a “risk to the future,” in Lehner’s view, because tech outposts have historically proven less durable than corporate headquarters during tough economic times.

Venture dollars invested in Oregon companies have been steadily rising for several years, though, as investors warm to startups like Zapproved, a legal services company that moved last year from Hillsboro to the Pearl District. Zapproved raised \$15 million last year as Oregon venture activity grew 20 percent to \$226 million.

Zapproved chief executive Monica Enand said the rise of cloud computing has unseated large corporations like Oracle and IBM, giving young companies like hers a chance to jump in with newer products.

“That means startups have

a huge opportunity and level playing field that they’ve never had before,” Enand said. For a state like Oregon, with no big tech companies of its own, she said that’s a big plus.

The growth in Portland tech has come with strains, however.

Nearly all the tech expansion has been in Multnomah County, according to the state data, leaving out rural areas and even some of Portland’s suburbs. That concentration of highly paid tech workers is one factor pushing up housing costs in the city, though the effect isn’t nearly so profound as in San Francisco or Seattle.

Indeed, Enand said Oregon’s affordability remains one of its key advantages. She said investors get a bigger return on their dollar in Portland, and employees’ know their money goes further here.

“This is the most affordable city on the West Coast,” Enand said. “I get calls all the time saying they want to move.”

Sodomy case dismissed in legal fallout after officer’s death

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

A Seaside man accused of sodomizing and sexually abusing a young girl had the charges dropped Thursday, the latest legal fallout from the death of Seaside Police Sgt. Jason Goodding.

The entire case against Ronald F. Flores had to be re-evaluated because Goodding, who was shot and killed in the line of duty in February, was the lead investigator.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Ron Brown said any time someone is unavailable to appear in court — whether it is a witness skipping town or a murdered police officer — their testimony and reports become hearsay, which is inadmissible as evidence.

“It’s a tragic result because of a tragedy that happened,” Brown said.

The District Attorney’s Office has been doing damage control over the past few months, Brown said, trying to prosecute cases where Goodding was the lead or only officer. Felony cases down

to drunken-driving arrests have been influenced.

In the case against Flores, the prosecution was able to get a harassment conviction. However, two counts of first-degree sodomy and two counts of first-degree sex abuse were dismissed.

Flores, 50, pleaded no contest to harassment Thursday in Clatsop County Circuit Court and was sentenced to one year in jail. With credit for a year served while in custody, Flores was released.

Brown said the harassment conviction was not the result he or the victim wanted. Without Goodding’s testimony or any physical evidence, he said, it is the best possible outcome.

“She is not happy with this case,” Brown said. “We, frankly, believe everything she said.”

Flores was indicted in April 2015 after the girl reported multiple sex abuse incidents between 2008 and 2010. The girl, who was in the fifth grade at the time, was a friend of Flores’ daughter.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

Bid request for decked logs removed from OR Highway 245 in Baker County

The Oregon Department of Transportation is accepting bids for fire-killed, processed, and decked ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir timber in Baker County. Log decks are located on USFS property, on the west side of OR245, off USFS Road 11 approximately 0.3 mile from its junction with OR 245 at approximately milepost 29. Both ODOT and USFS-owned logs are present on the site. ODOT-owned logs are located on the east end and are marked with a spot of yellow paint.

Bids are being accepted for ODOT-owned logs.

Tree removal operations are currently active and log decking will be completed May 15. This timber sale will be made on a lump sum basis. A \$5,000.00 bid deposit will be required to be submitted with the bid.

Bid packages will be available AFTER MAY 15.
Bids are due MAY 25. Logs may not be exported.

For more information, or to request a bid packet (available after May 15), call ODOT Forester at 503-508-1346

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