

HERMISTON

Mid Columbia Producers takes over PGG fuel business

By **GEORGE PLAIVEN**
East Oregonian

New name. New building. Same familiar faces.

Following the dissolution of Pendleton Grain Growers last year, fellow agricultural co-op Mid Columbia Producers has arrived in Umatilla County to carry on the former PGG fuel division, setting up shop at a new location in Hermiston.

Based in Moro, Mid Columbia Producers was established in 1988 with the merger of two neighboring cooperatives. Mid Columbia purchased PGG Energy last December, which delivers gasoline and diesel to customers as well as bulk and packaged lubes.

The sale did not include PGG propane, which went instead to Morrow County Grain Growers — effectively splitting PGG Energy into two companies.

All 16 PGG Energy employees did keep their jobs, including Bryan Bailey, who spent 27 years with PGG and oversaw the entire fuel operation. Bailey now heads up the eastern fuel division for Mid Columbia from their new satellite office in Hermiston.

“It has been a very smooth transition,” Bailey said. “Customer retention has been very high.”

For years, PGG Energy was located on Southwest Dorion Avenue in Pendleton next to the main co-op offices and retail store. But that building was never included as part of the sale, which left Mid Columbia looking for a new venue.

“Initially we wanted to stay in Pendleton,” Bailey said. “But we could not find a building that suited what we needed.”

After searching around



Staff photo by George Plaven

Mid Columbia Producers has opened its new location in Hermiston after purchasing the former Pendleton Grain Growers fuel division.

Pendleton for several weeks, Bailey said they found the perfect spot at 345 N. First Place in Hermiston, which used to house Stoneway Electric Supply. Bailey said the space is plenty big, which will allow them to expand their selection and volume.

For one thing, Bailey said Mid Columbia will introduce a multitude of new fuel suppliers, and a larger supply chain means more competitive prices.

“The fuel business is a business of pennies,” he said. “Any advantage you can get with pricing really helps with your success.”

Mid Columbia is also part of the Pacific Pride and CFN networks, providing additional options for commercial fueling.

More than anything, Bailey said the retention of employees has allowed Mid Columbia to retain PGG customers. A lot of trust goes into building those relationships, and he said farmers are pleased to see the same truck drivers making their deliveries.

“It was very comforting to our customers that the faces

they saw out there are the same,” Bailey said.

Jeff Kaser, Mid Columbia manager, said the co-op has steadily built its fuel business since 2011. Mid Columbia made a big splash in 2012, purchasing Bend Oil, and Kaser said PGG Energy was another good fit.

“We want to be in markets where farmers can benefit from doing business with us,” Kaser said.

As a fellow farmer-owned co-op, Kaser said Mid Columbia also shares the same values as PGG in terms of service and community involvement.

“If we can do that, we’ll be successful,” he said.

Nobody wanted to see PGG dissolve, Bailey said, but he is pleased with the direction of the business going forward.

“(PGG) put these businesses in the hands of people who can run them and continue to grow them,” Bailey said. “To me, that’s a success story.”

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

Wreck on reservation injures two

East Oregonian

One adult male and one juvenile male were injured Wednesday evening in a single-vehicle crash on South Market Road, south of Lloyd Road, on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

The adult was flown via air ambulance to Kadlec Regional Medical Center in the Tri-Cities, while the juvenile sustained non-life threatening injuries and was taken by ambulance to St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton. Neither victim has been identified.

Both individuals were in a 2000 Jeep Grand Cherokee when the vehicle crossed



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Tribal police secure the scene of a single-vehicle rollover Wednesday on Mission Road south of Mission.

into the northbound lane and ended up along the east side of the road, ultimately crashing into a utility pole.

The cause of the crash is currently under investigation by the Umatilla Tribal Police Department.

BRIEFLY

Marchers host science fair

PENDLETON — The Blue Mountain Marchers plan to take to the streets again, this time for science.

Following the Women’s March on Pendleton in January, the group has organized a March For Science that will culminate in a science fair at Roy Raley Park April 22, Earth Day.

The event is being used to spotlight the “importance of partnerships formed between scientists and the broader community.”

The fair will feature science demonstrations from Future Farmers of America, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation fisheries program, KBLU radio, Interpath Laboratory and more.

One of the demonstrations will take place in the fair beer garden, which will feature selections from the Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co. and Oregon Grain Growers Brand Distillery.

The fair will also feature food from vendors Mario’s Basque Barbecue, Rolling Stone Bakery and Mobile Food Adventures. Music will be provided by the GP Jammers and an open mic set.

The march starts at Roy Raley Park at 11 a.m. before returning for the fair, which runs from noon to 4 p.m.

Meetings to create posters and post cards will be held on Wednesday, at Sister’s Cafe 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and at Great Pacific 7-9 p.m.

For more information, contact the Blue Mountain Marchers at BlueMountainOR-Marchers@gmail.com

Senators’ letter encourages support for air service

PENDLETON — Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley continue to advocate for a federal subsidy that helps pay for commercial air service at the Pendleton airport, which is under threat from President Donald Trump’s administration.

Writing to the chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, Wyden and Merkley joined 19 other senators in urging the subcommittee to provide “robust funding” to Essential Air Service, a Department of Transportation program that provides commercial air service subsidies that connect more than 170 communities nationwide.

Trump’s office proposed eliminating the program in March, but Congress has the ultimate authority in passing the federal budget.

The letter’s authors are mostly Democrats, although it also attracted two Republican senators — Mike Rounds of South Dakota and Dan Sullivan of Alaska.

Pendleton is the only EAS community in Oregon. The \$2.3 million subsidy from the program is paid to Boutique Air to provide daily flights from Pendleton’s Eastern Oregon Regional Airport to the Portland International Airport.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

CHI ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL PRESENTS

HEALTH FAIR

PASSPORT TO WELLNESS

SATURDAY APRIL 8
9AM - 3PM
PENDLETON CONVENTION CENTER

Activities for all ages!

Teddy Bear Clinic ☆ Seed Planting for Kids
Blood Pressure Checks ☆ Vision Screening
Yoga Demonstration ☆ Drawing for Prizes
Health Insurance Information
And MUCH more!

FREE ENTRY

For more information: 541-278-2627

INTERPATH
LABORATORY

HEALTH FAIR
SCREENING

April 8, 2017
8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Community Health Fair
Pendleton Convention Center

Health Fair Panel	\$45.00
Broad screening tool to evaluate organ function and check for conditions such as coronary heart disease, diabetes, liver and kidney disease	
** 12-hour Fasting Required**	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Metabolic Panel • Lipid Panel • TSH – Thyroid • CBC – Complete Blood Count 	
Hemoglobin A1c	\$20.00
Determines how well your diabetes is being controlled	
PSA	\$20.00
A screening test for males to detect prostate cancer	
Testosterone	\$20.00
A test to detect abnormal testosterone levels	
Vitamin D	\$25.00
Measures Vitamin D levels that are attributed to numerous health conditions	

Payment due at time of service
Results reviewed and interpreted by an Oregon-licensed provider