



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Phil Hamm, director of the Hermiston experiment station, talks about the benefits of locating the new Precision Irrigated Agriculture Center in the HAREC campus in Hermiston.

BMCC: Is the second of three BMCC bond projects to be completed this year

Continued from 1A

the world, according to Fred Ziari with IRZ Consulting in Hermiston.

Ziari's company specializes in helping farmers adopt precision irrigation practices, though he said the development of new technology has outpaced the ability for companies to find qualified experts in the field. Ziari said he approached BMCC seven or eight years ago about developing a curriculum to train the next generation of tech-savvy farmers.

"I can see, with a little bit of effort, that this can become a global center for teaching irrigation technology," he said. "There's no place like this."

The Precision Irrigated Agriculture Center is the

second of three BMCC bond projects to be completed this year. The first, the Workforce Training Center in Boardman, celebrated its grand opening in April. It houses the college's industrial systems and data center programs.

The bond is also funding the new Facility for Agricultural Resource Management, or FARM, on the BMCC Pendleton campus. President Cam Preus said the college should be ready to unveil that building by late September.

Rather than build the Precision Irrigated Agriculture Center next to BMCC's other Hermiston facilities, it was located at the Hermiston agricultural experiment station through a long-term lease with OSU. Phil Hamm, who directs the station south

of town, said they are already using the same irrigation equipment that farmers use commercially in their fields, meaning students will leave the program ready to jump right into the local workforce.

"This is just a tremendous opportunity for OSU and BMCC to partner and provide something that's never been done before," Hamm said.

Ziari said he is already looking forward to hiring the program's first graduate.

"Precision irrigation has been growing dramatically throughout the U.S.," Ziari said. "This is a great opportunity for students to learn knowledge that is globally in need."

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DAIRY: At full capacity is expected to generate 187M gallons of wastewater and manure annually

Continued from 1A

petition for reconsideration, asking regulators to take a closer look at whether the permit does enough to protect surface water and groundwater sources. On Tuesday, ODA and DEQ issued a 10-page order denying the request and potentially setting the state for a future lawsuit.

Ivan Maluski, policy director for Friends of Family Farmers in Salem, issued a statement saying attorneys are reviewing Tuesday's order. He said there is a "clear indication that Oregon has a broken system for CAFO permitting," while specifically criticizing ODA, DEQ and Gov. Kate Brown.

"These mega-operations pollute the air with no environmental oversight, they put our limited groundwater at risk, and though Oregon has lost nearly 40 percent of our dairy farms over the past decade with small and mid-sized farms getting hit the hardest, the governor and her agencies are bending over backward to open the door for out-of-state factory farms like

Lost Valley," Maluski said.

Lost Valley Farm is owned by Greg te Velde, a California dairyman who has been milking cows in Oregon since 2002. He used to run Willow Creek Dairy on land leased from Threemile Canyon Farms before relocating and expanding his business, which sells milk to Tillamook Cheese at the Port of Morrow.

In the lead-up to permitting, ODA and DEQ were flooded with 4,200 public comments, mostly in opposition to Lost Valley. The campaign was spearheaded by a coalition of environmental, animal rights and small farms groups including Friends of Family Farmers, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, Columbia Riverkeeper, Food & Water Watch, Humane Oregon, Humane Society of the United States, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility and Oregon Rural Action.

They argue that Lost Valley — which at full capacity is expected to generate 187 million gallons of wastewater and manure annually —

poses a significant risk of groundwater and surface water contamination, while also exacerbating elevated levels of groundwater nitrates in the lower Umatilla Basin.

Regulators have insisted their permit for Lost Valley is the most protective of any to date, requiring 11 groundwater monitoring wells and a minimum of three annual inspections.

Te Velde has also defended the farm's management practices. Wastewater is stored in lagoons on site and then mixed at specific agronomic rates with irrigation to help grow feed crops for the cows. Monitoring wells are supposed to ensure the soil is not being overloaded with the nitrogen-rich water.

Lost Valley has been operating for several months now, so far bringing in 16,000 total animals with 8,700 being milking cows. The dairy expects to gradually build its full herd of 30,000 animals over the next several years.

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COACH: Worked for 32 years at the district

Continued from 1A

machine, uniforms and some extra bats and balls. The girls practiced on the field near the Round-Up Grounds, the site of Indian Village, so the infield was grass — save one circle cut out for home plate. To power the pitching machine, Prouse donated a noisy generator, parking it behind the restrooms to muffle the sound. The field was in close proximity to an enclosure containing some ornery livestock.

"I remember a playoff game at the field when a ball rolled in with the bulls," she said.

No one retrieved the ball, she said, though one boy offered, sure that he could quickly grab the ball before the bull jumped to its feet. His dad said no.

There weren't too many teams in the area to play that opening season.

"We played Hermiston eight times that first year," she said, laughing, adding that the team won two and lost 15 games in all. The next year, after joining with the Intermountain Conference, the team went 11-8. In her 15 years as head coach, the team topped the conference four times and made it to state every year except that first one. Coach Prouse was IMC Coach of the Year in 1993.

Three decades later, Prouse has retired. Over the 32 years at the district plus previous years in Beaverton, she coached volleyball at various levels for 39 years, basketball for nine, softball for 21 and golf for 11. She also served as assistant women's softball coach at Blue Mountain Community College for four seasons. In high school softball, she amassed 199 wins. Three of her volleyball teams — two JV and an eighth-grade team — had undefeated years.

In addition, she taught PE to thousands of children from kindergarten through high school.

Prouse never had children of her own.

"My kids were the kids I

coached," she said. "I took care of them like they were my own."

But that didn't mean she babied them. Kelli (Chandler-Read) Bullington recalled Prouse coaching her freshman volleyball team. Bullington described Prouse as smart, focused, motivating and demanding.

"I remember practice being hard. She was pretty stern," Bullington said. "If you could make Coach Prouse smile that was really cool."

Coach Prouse's favorite phrase for when something went wrong, Bullington said, was "it'll all come out in the wash."

The coach's love of athletics started early, possibly in the womb. She recalls regularly running three miles around her Beaverton neighborhood with her sister just for fun. As a third-grader, she begged her father to install a basketball hoop in the driveway and he promised he would as soon as she grew as tall as her mother's shoulder. Prouse measured daily and finally her dad put up the hoop.

"We'd shoot until dinner and then go out again afterwards," she said.

Prouse went on to run track and play basketball and volleyball at Beaverton High School. Summers she played slow pitch softball. As a senior, she was named "Girl Athlete of the Year." That same year, her softball team traveled to Fargo, North Dakota, for nationals and got fourth. At Portland State University, she played volleyball, basketball and softball.

As a teacher, Prouse liked to mix it up for the young students in her PE classes. She coaxed out physical talent and honed eye-hand coordination with activities such as mini-marathons, juggling, lacrosse and cup stacking. (Her students earned Guinness Book world records for cup stacking seven years in a row.) Prouse also made up original games such as "healthy heart tag."

Her ingenuity spilled into the regular classroom, too. During one downsizing spell in the late '80s, she was asked by the district to step outside her comfort zone and teach high school sewing classes. Though Prouse didn't sew, she refused to panic, knowing she had a secret weapon.

"At the time, I lived with my grandma who was an excellent seamstress," Prouse said.

Each night, Nellie Jones would tutor her granddaughter on button holes, zig-zag seams and other sewing skills.

"I would have a lesson each night and go the next day and teach what I learned," she said. "I stayed one step ahead of them."

Fellow teacher Karen Schimmel marveled at Prouse, who taught and coached Schimmel's children and grandchildren. Prouse, Schimmel said, found ways to teach successfully even when budgets were tight at the three schools (Lincoln, Washington and West Hills) where she taught PE.

"Ms. Prouse packed up her SUV on a daily basis and transported the more expensive items to each school," Schimmel said.

Prouse is preparing to move to Beaverton, where she plans to work on her golf game. She'll coach freshman volleyball at Beaverton High School and volunteer at Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation.

"I want to keep busy," Prouse said. "And I like kids."

Looking back on the years of coaching and teaching, she reflected on the hundreds of Pendleton kids who came into her orb.

"I always expected the kids to try," she said. "I loved it when they made their first basket or ran in and jumped rope for the first time. I loved it when their eyes lit up."

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