

SNOW: Landscaping businesses often turn to snow removal

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"I can sit at home and twiddle my thumbs or I can go out and do something," he said.

Foust said he gives price quotes depending on difficulty — an empty driveway at a residence is easy, while a vehicle-filled car dealership can take quite a while to clear.

"I like doing it at nighttime, when there are fewer people around ... I work all night long when it snows," he said.

He said many people he knows who do snow removal own landscaping businesses and have to come up with something else to do when snow covers the grass and foliage around town.

In Pendleton, Kline Landscape & Irrigation Inc. already has enough residential and commercial snow-removal customers to keep them from taking on any more right now.

"Our people were out for 12 hours," Lana Kline said of the most recent snowfall. "They started at one in the morning and didn't finish until the afternoon."

She said the company clears parking lots and keeps sidewalks shoveled during the winter, which can be time-consuming and require getting up before dawn to finish before the businesses open. Deeper snow means harder work, and if snow falls over multiple days or melts and then re-freezes they end up returning to the same business multiple times.

"It burns out our employees because you're putting in long hours, you're up at weird times and even though they're used to working outside they're using different muscles," Kline said.

When the landscaping companies are overbooked, some people turn to Facebook and word of mouth to find individuals offering snow removal.

Paul McDonough of Hermiston started using a small red Kubota tractor with front loader and rear blade to

clear the parking lot where his wife works, and soon had other businesses and a few churches asking if they could pay him to clear snow from their parking lots. The rest of the year McDonough uses the tractor for work on a handful of acres of land he owns.

"This is my second year doing it, I just got the tractor a year ago so it's still new," he wrote in a Facebook message, adding, "Good way to offset the cost of the tractor."

He said if people want their driveways and parking lots cleared, it's best to make the call when snow has first fallen instead of waiting until it has been compacted by vehicles and in some places turned to ice.

Naomi Sanchez said her husband Ildefonso Zuniga cleared snow for several businesses on 11th Street in Hermiston using his tractor during the last week. During most of the year he makes money growing vegetables and strawberries, but winter is slow for him.

"This year he hasn't done very many but last year he did a lot," she said of the snow removal.

Not everyone charges for their services. In Pilot Rock, Mike Lankford and a fellow snowplow driver said he would like to remain "low key" and anonymous, rigged blades to their ATVs and cleared surfaces in town that don't get finished by municipal vehicles.

"I just do it to help people out," Lankford said. "I'm on crutches, I've been on them most of my life. I've had six different hips, so I know what it's like to get around."

He said they try to hit sidewalks and parking lots and other places that don't get cleared by larger plows, so that people can have a clearer walk all the way from their car to the grocery store or other businesses.

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Everton Bailey Jr./The Oregonian via AP, File

In this Feb. 5, 2013, photo, Melissa Klein, co-owner of Sweet Cakes by Melissa, in Gresham, tells a customer that the bakery has sold out of baked goods for the day. An appellate court Thursday upheld a penalty against the bakery owners who refused to make a cake for a same-sex wedding almost five years ago.

BAKERY: Court of Appeals decision was unanimous

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discriminate based on sexual orientation, as well as the associated damages.

"For the past 10 years, the Oregon Equality Act of 2007 has protected Oregonians from unlawful discrimination in housing, employment and public places," Avakian said in a statement. "Today's ruling sends a strong signal that Oregon remains open to all."

"Within Oregon's public accommodations law is the basic principle of human decency that every person, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, has the freedom to fully participate in society."

The court found that "the record of the complainants' emotional distress from the denial of service was adequate to support the damages award and that the award was not inconsistent with awards in other BOLI enforcement actions."

The court overturned Avakian's conclusion that there was sufficient evidence to show the Kleins planned to continue the discrimination, but the commissioner had awarded no damages for

that specific violation.

The Kleins had appealed the BOLI commissioner's decision, arguing that it violated their constitutional right to free expression. It was unclear Thursday morning whether the Kleins plan to appeal the decision to the Oregon Supreme Court.

The unanimous decision of the Court of Appeals was written by Judge Chris Garrett and joined by Judges Joel DeVore and Bronson James.

The First Liberty Institute, which wrote a brief in support of the Kleins, was disappointed by the ruling.

"Freedom of expression for ourselves should require freedom of expression for others. Today, the Oregon Court of Appeals decided that Aaron and Melissa Klein are not entitled to the Constitution's promises of religious liberty and free speech," Kelly Shackelford, President and CEO of First Liberty Institute, says. "In a diverse and pluralistic society, people of good will should be able to peacefully coexist with different beliefs. We are disappointed that the court ruled against the Kleins."

KRUPP: Was a volunteer at the World Cup for skiing

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As Krupp walks around the Calpine facility on Simplot Road in Stanfield he explains various facets of power generation.

"That big jet engine sucks in air, kind of like what an airplane would do," he said.

The exhaust, which reaches about 1,100 degrees, goes through a steam generator. Steam is run through a turbine to make electricity.

Once they get power onto the grid, it is sent via a transmission line to the switchyard at the McNary Dam, from which it is distributed across the state, or to Washington or California. The facility is one of two natural gas plants in the Hermiston area, with the Hermiston Generating Project about three miles to its west.

Krupp has an adventurous streak, counting skiing and water sports among his hobbies. In his spare time, he has purchased an old house in Hermiston and is busy remodeling it.

This winter, he had a unique skiing experience. He traveled to Lake Louise in Canada, where he was a volunteer worker at the World Cup, an Olym-



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

Jeff Krupp has held several positions within Calpine, a power generation company.

pic-qualifying event for skiers.

He was there for over a week, with a few other people from Hermiston, building and maintaining the courses, and providing support wherever it was necessary.

Krupp said he applied to volunteer

at the event and is eager to do it again.

"You're on the course, so you have some of the best views of the races," he said. "And the people doing this — the volunteers — are really neat people. They're from all over the world ... just an incredible array of people."



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