Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Don't Hasselhoff me, just keeping cool

Graffiti depicting David Hasselhoff in his starring role as Michael Knight from the hit TV series "Knight Rider" adorns the side of a refrigerated rail car on a rail spur in the Port of Morrow in Tuesday in Boardman.

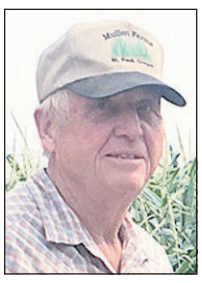
A century of farming

Special recognition for farms that last 100, 150 years

By DESIREE BERGSTROM
EO Media Group

Founded in 1852, seven years before Oregon became a state, a farm in Saint Paul is continuing to build on its legacy as a family operation.

Mullen Farms is one of two sesquicentennial farms designated this year by the Oregon Century Farm and Ranch Program along with 12 century farms. The sesquicentennial award recognizes families who have continuously farmed some or all of their original family acreage for 150 years or more. Farms designated century farms have been in continuous operation 100 years.



Jerry Mullen

"We are definitely a family farm," said Jerry Mullen, great-great-grandson of one of the farm's founders, Patrick Mullen.

Through the years, it has been important to every generation to keep the farm going and in the family, Mullen said. Mullen never knew his dad, who died when Mullen was two years old, but Mullen spent a lot of time with his grandfather, Charles S. Mullen Sr., who taught him about the farm.

On the property is a house where Mullen's grandfather was born and lived for 101 years.

"It was important to my granddad especially that we kept the farm together," Mullen said.

Mullen recalled growing up on the farm mentioning how they had their own pigs, dairy and granary. "I grew up with all that to self-sustain and then grow enough to make some cash," Mullen said.

Desiree Bergstrom/EO Media Group

The sign in the front yard of Jerry Mullen's yard was a gift from the rest of the family.

Over time the farm has grown from 150 to 1,300 acres as the Mullen family has added other farms and land to the business. They now grow mainly seed crops and hazelnuts.

The other sesquicentennial farm honored this year is the Robinson Stillwell Taggart Farm in Dayton in Yamhill County. It was founded in 1844 when Benjamin and Elizabeth Robinson came to the Oregon territory on a wagon train.

The farm is still in the family, though pieces of it were sold off during the Depression.

"(The farm) has been a source of pride for our family for generations," said John Taggart, current owner of the farm.

Also on the list are 12 newly designated century farms, including two from Umatilla County and one from Morrow County:

• Howard-Allstott Ranch in Umatilla County was founded by William Howard in 1884, when the homestead claim was approved. The ranch was eventually passed down throughout the generations to Richard and Dorothy Howard Allstott, the great-granddaughter of the founder.

• The Rockwell-Doherty farm was founded in 1906 by Seth and Sarah Rockwell in Umatilla County near Pilot Rock. The farm has seen many different uses through the years, including fruit orchards, raising horses and growing irrigated wheat, pasture grass and alfalfa. Richard Doherty now runs it for the family.

• Brown Farm, in Morrow County, goes back to 1912 when Chris P. Brown, an immigrant from Denmark, purchased 350 acres to grow wheat in the Willow Creek drainage northwest of Heppner. His grandson and his grandson's wife, Chris E. and Kathy Brown, currently run the operation.

• Sandoz farm was founded in 1880 in Wasco County by three brothers, Alphonse, Arnold and Charles Sandoz. They grew root vegetables, fruit trees and grapes. Ted, Charles Lee and Mary Sandoz are the third generation and operate a farmstand where they sell USDA beef and pork along with fruit, vegetables and other products.

The awards ceremony for the century and sesquicentennial farms will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at the Oregon State Fair picnic grove area.

The Oregon Century Farm and Ranch Program is administered by the Oregon Farm Bureau Foundation for Education. It is supported by a partnership among the Oregon Farm Bureau, the State Historic Preservation Office, OSU University Archives and by generous donations of Oregonians.

For information, contact Andréa Kuenzi, program coordinator, at 503-400-7884 or cfr@oregonfb.org.

The application deadline for 2019 is May 1.

Courtesy of John Taggart

Left: A house built on the Robinson Stillwell Taggart Farm around 1849 near Dayton, Ore. Right: Still sitting on a portion of the original Mullen farm, this barn was built during the first part of World War II. The top part of the barn was used to store feed and below was a dairy, Jerry Mullen said.

Umatilla County sets up committee to drive public transportation

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Umatilla County is preparing for public transportation.

The county board of commissioners Wednesday morning in Pendleton established the advisory committee for Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund projects. Commissioner Bill Elfering also said the board approved committee by-laws and selected seven people to serve on the committee:

• Seth Whitmer, CEO of Columbia River Community Health Services

• J.D. Tovey, planning director of Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

• Linda Carter, finance director for the city of Pendleton

• Doug Primmer, Hermiston city councilor

• Esmeralda Horn, community development director with city of Umatilla

• Jose Garcia with New Horizon alcohol and drug treatment program in Hermiston

• Teresa Dutcher, recently retired as Milton-Freewater's public transportation coordinator.

The 2017 Legislature established the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund to provide money to local agencies for public transit projects. The new statewide payroll tax of $1 per $1,000 fills the fund. The Oregon Transportation Commission distributes the money to qualifying entities, which includes Umatilla County. The state requires those entities to set up advisory committees to prioritize plans or projects that would receive money from the fund.

The committee's role is to make recommendations to the county board, which has the final say on submitting projects to the Oregon Department of Transportation.

"The emphasis is really on moving people around within the county," Elfering said, but that could lead to including cities.

The committee looks to meet for the first time in September and could consider projects for a state deadline of Nov. 1. But Elfering said there is no real rush. The state silos the money for the county, so if the advisory committee does not push anything forward this year, the money will be waiting for the next round in February 2019.

County Planning Director Bob Waldher is coordinating the committee. He told the board the seven committee members meet state rules for diversity, including low income, 65 or older and public transportation providers.

Dangers of additional fires remains high

East Oregonian

Firefighters continue to make progress on wildfires caused by thunderstorms in Eastern Oregon, according to an update issued Wednesday evening by the Umatilla National Forest.

Fire managers anticipate more fires may be reported throughout the next few days as weather conditions continue to stay warm and dry, said Darcy Weseman, public affairs officer for the U.S. Forest Service, Umatilla National Forest in a press release.

Fire officials want to remind everyone that the current fire danger rating remains at extreme and Public Use Restrictions involving campfires and chainsaw use are in effect.

The Harrison Fire, 16 miles west of Sumpter, is about 30 acres, and is 100 percent lined and 50 contain contained as of Wednesday evening. The fire is located within the Greenhorn unit of the North Fork John Day Wilderness on the North Fork John Day Ranger District.

This section of the wilderness is remote and in steep terrain, making access difficult, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

Firefighters continued to strengthen the fire line Wednesday while watching for new spot fires.

A helicopter supported ground resources Tuesday by dropping water and cooling hot spots. There were 65 firefighters, an air attack aircraft and one helicopter on that blaze.

Firefighters also made progress securing containment lines Wednesday on the Gilman Fire, located near Gilman Flats in the Heppner Ranger District and Prineville Bureau of Land Management lands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry.

The fire was reported as 954 acres in size and 70 percent contained.

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