

PDA REPORT

Downtown businesses partner with Pendleton

Several years ago, businesses in the downtown core, municipal and urban renewal representatives discussed the value of establishing an Oregon Main Street Program (OMSP) for Pendleton.

It was realized that many communities in Oregon and throughout the country were rejuvenating their downtown business districts by implementing successful OMSP strategies. It was also realized the Oregon Main Street Program provided substantial grant opportunities from the state of Oregon that only certified downtown associations with a 501(c) (3) status are eligible for.

In the spring of 2015, a reorganized Pendleton Downtown Association (PDA) was founded and began the task of establishing organizational capacity to qualify for application to the state of Oregon. In January of 2016, Pendleton’s OMSP application was approved and the PDA was certified as a Transforming Oregon Main Street Program.

It was known staffed downtown associations receive a priority status when applying for grants. To address this requirement, downtown businesses and other contributors in the community donated \$50,000.00 to match a Mike & Jill Thorne Challenge Grant.

In September of 2016, the PDA hired a program manager through the University of Oregon’s RARE Program, which lead to the hiring of a PDA executive director in September of 2017.

In the first year of OMSP grant eligibility, the PDA applied for and was successful in obtaining a \$100,000.00 grant for the restructuring and renovation of the Rivoli Theater, and is currently developing grant opportunities for a Downtown Business Retention and Recruitment Plan.

In May of 2018, the city of Pendleton Council voted to provide financial support to the PDA on the condition the PDA maintain the Oregon Main Street Program, use PDA grant capabilities to assist the city in the implementation of the Pendleton Downtown Plan, the Destination Development Plan, and the Downtown Parking Plan.

The source of city funding for the PDA is derived from multiple sources. Some years ago, the city of Pendleton raised the annual business license fee from \$50 to \$100 per year. The \$50 per year increase was targeted to supplement the city’s Economic Development staffing. However, the city’s economic development department has been focused on the acquisition of industrial and larger-scale businesses, and not focused on recruiting operations more suited to the downtown business core.

Realizing the value of supporting a vibrant economy in the 6 X 6 Downtown Business District, the city voted to reallocate the \$50 per year business license fee back to the downtown business district by providing partial funding for the Pendleton Downtown Association, which has prioritized the retention and recruitment of retail and service related businesses in the district as its mission. The balance of partial PDA support is advanced by the Pendleton Development Commission to conform with their goal No. 1 — increase the vitality of Pendleton’s downtown, and with their awareness of potential PDA grant awards.

See www.pendletondowntownassociation.com for more information.

Fred Bradbury is the president of the Pendleton Downtown Association board of directors.

Cafe Cultura coming to Boardman

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

For a long time, Ivonne Navarro wanted to be a barista.

She achieved that goal, working for several years at her hometown’s only coffee shop, Boardman Jump Start Java. But as she got older, Navarro realized she didn’t just want to work in a coffee shop, but run her own.

At 18 years old, Navarro is about to see that dream come true. She will open up Cafe Cultura this fall, where she’ll sell coffee as well as Mexican snacks and drinks, such as flavored waters and sweet breads.

“I want to reflect who I am in the coffee shop,” she said. “I take a lot of pride in being bilingual, and Mexican-American. I want to express that in the shop.”

Navarro, a 2017 graduate of Boardman’s Riverside High School, has diverged from many of her peers, quickly finishing school and jumping into the business world.

A barista since her freshman year of high school, Navarro graduated from high school early and, at the age of 17, moved to Corvallis and enrolled in Linn-Benton Community College, hoping to eventually transfer to Oregon State

University. After a term, she returned to Boardman.

“Just due to things getting tight,” she said.

When she returned, Navarro worked at Jump Start Java again, but began revisiting the idea of her own business.

“I loved my job, but I always wanted to go the extra mile,” she said. “I always wondered, ‘What if I had my own shop?’”

In her spare time, Navarro looked for mobile coffee shops for sale, and in April she found one in McNary that was within her price range.

“It was old, but it came with a lot of things, like a refrigerator and machinery,” she said. “With another one it would have cost that much for just the building.”

Navarro emptied her savings and, with some help from her parents, purchased the mobile shop. She’s spent the last few months getting it ready, painting the exterior and prepping the inside, as well as coming up with a business plan and working with the Small Business Development Center to start her company. She awaits some last-minute approvals like a health inspection, but



Navarro

hopes to be open by October.

While Navarro had never taken any business classes in high school, she said she picked up much of her knowledge working in the coffee shop.

“It’s such a small business, we do everything,” she said. “Making drinks, ordering, inventory, balancing tills.”

She is happy to be back in her hometown, and even more so to be opening a business there.

Navarro said she loved the experience of being a barista and having a personal relationship with customers.

She was also the only bilingual barista at the shop, which led to several customers asking specifically for her.

“A lot of customers would practice their English with me,” she said. “It’s heartwarming to know people warm up to you like that.”

She also hopes the shop’s cultural theme will encourage those who may not speak English to come in, and not be afraid or embarrassed about messing up an order.

She said her family has

been instrumental in helping her start the shop.

“My sister’s in seventh grade and loves art — she designed our logo. My grandpa made shelves,” Navarro said. “They’ve been such a huge help. Even though they think I’m crazy, they support my crazy.”

Sam Cornelius taught Navarro as a freshman in high school, but the two have stayed in touch, and Cornelius has advised her on her business.

He recalls Navarro was a bright student, but struggled with the structure of school.

“She wanted to get out of high school and start learning by doing,” he said. “She had a lot of initiative and big plans — she was rather independent.”

He said Navarro has found free resources for entrepreneurs on her own, and has educated herself.

He noted that Navarro has been a role model to current high school students.

“We have a low high school to college rate,” he said. “Less than one-third of our students go on to a two-year, four-year or trade school. For her to find success on another path is a great role model for (other) kids.”

Cafe Cultura is located at 101 Front St NW, Boardman.

Hoping the shop’s cultural theme will encourage customers to come in

Merger to change Universal Realty to John L. Scott Hermiston

Universal Realty of Hermiston and KD & Associates (doing business as John L. Scott Real Estate in Milton-Freewater) announced a merger.

They will operate as KD & Associates doing business as John L. Scott Hermiston starting Monday.

According to a news release from the business, John L. Scott will operate

in the same location as Universal Realty, 985 N. First St.

“We are excited to become part of the Hermiston community and the fact we are carrying on a legacy established by Charlotte Dack in 1964,” owner Dennis Gisi said in a statement.

Last year, Dack was named Realtor of the Year by the Columbia Basin

Board of Realtors at age 94. She said in a statement she was glad to partner with a company that has been around the industry “longer than I have” (John L. Scott was established in 1931 in Seattle) and has so much to offer in regards to technology and training.

Eight agents — Donald Brewer, Kim Fife, Melinda Newman, Dalia Villegas,

Debora Wood, Phil Otto, Natalie Turner and Pam Wilson — will be available. The company footprint will include four John L. Scott franchises in Washington and Oregon’s Columbia Basin region, bringing “a synergy and knowledge of the area like no other real estate company in the Columbia Basin Region.”

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