

Five Star Car Wash opens

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

Todd Perkins is one of the owners of Five Star Car Wash, which just opened on Southwest 11th Street and Highland Avenue.

The owners of a Hermiston car wash have started a second one on the opposite side of town. Five Star Car Wash is now open, and is located at the corner of Southwest 11th Street and West Highland Avenue, near a cluster of new businesses.

Todd Perkins, who owns the business with Hermiston native Russ Greene, said they had been looking to expand for a few months. They run the Five Star Auto Wash, near Hermiston's Wal-Mart on the northeast side of town.

"This side of town doesn't have much," he said.

The car wash officially opened on Wednesday, and Perkins said as of now, they are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hours will expand as the days get longer.

Perkins said the car wash has some new amenities that aren't available at their other location. Customers using the self-wash station now have access to dryers and "triple-shine" conditioner, which gives the car a colorful shine.

The tunnel car wash

also has some new LED lights that create a show as cars get washed.

"It looks like a curtain of lava," Perkins said.

Perkins said he and Greene previously owned Five Star Auto Sales, which they recently sold to Toyota.

"We always needed to wash our cars, and we would always see the land (by Wal-Mart)," he said. "The location was so good, we decided to start washing them."

The business is located at 1180 West Highland Ave.



AP Photo/Jessica Hill, File

In this Aug. 17, 2018, file photo, Stamford Police stand outside the headquarters of Purdue Pharma, which is owned by the Sackler family, in Stamford, Conn.

Lawsuits ramp up pressure on family that owns opioid company

Suit aims to hold drug industry accountable for crisis in the U.S.

By GEOFF MULVIHILL
Associated Press

The legal pressure on the prominent family behind the company that makes OxyContin, the prescription painkiller that helped fuel the nation's opioid epidemic, is likely to get more intense.

The Sackler family came under heavy scrutiny this week when a legal filing in a Massachusetts case asserted that family members and company executives sought to push prescriptions of the drug and downplay its risks. Those revelations are likely to be a preview of the claims in a series of expanding legal challenges.

Members of the family that controls Connecticut-based Purdue Pharma are also defendants in a lawsuit brought by New York's Suffolk County. Few, if any, other governments have sued the family so far.

But Paul Hanly, a lawyer representing the county, said he expects to add the Sacklers to other opioid suits. He explained last year that he was targeting the family, known for its donations to some of the world's great museums and universities, in part because they took "tens of billions" of dollars out of Purdue Pharma.

Looming as potentially the biggest legal and financial risk for the family is a massive consolidated federal case playing out in Ohio.

More than 1,000 government entities have sued Purdue, along with other drugmakers and distributors, claiming they are partly culpable for a drug overdose crisis that resulted in a record 72,000 deaths in 2017. The majority of those deaths were from legal or illicit opioids.

The company documents at the heart of the Massachusetts claims also could be evidence in the Ohio lawsuits, which are being overseen by a federal judge. The allegations ramp up pressure on the industry — and perhaps the Sacklers — to reach a settlement, said Paul Nolette, a political science professor at Marquette University who studies the role of state attorneys general.

Having Sackler family members named as defendants in Massachusetts "indicates that the government attorneys believe they have the 'smoking guns' necessary to broaden the potential liability of those at the top of the organization," he said in an email.

The allegations could tarnish a name that is best known for its generosity to museums world-

wide including New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, which has a Sackler wing, and London's Tate Modern. The Sackler name also is on a gallery at the Smithsonian, a wing of galleries at London's Royal Academy of Arts and a museum at Beijing's Peking University. The family's best known and most generous donor, Arthur M. Sackler, died nearly a decade before OxyContin was released.

The Cleveland-based judge, Dan Polster, has been pushing for a settlement since he took over the federal cases a year ago, arguing that the parties involved should find ways to end this man-made crisis, rather than hold years of trials. A court order prohibits participants from discussing most aspects of settlement talks publicly.

Town & Country tickets now on sale

HEPPNER — A discount is available for those who purchase advance tickets for the Heppner Chamber of Commerce's annual Town & Country Community Awards banquet.

With a theme of "An Evening with the Stars," the event is Thursday, Feb. 7 at 6 p.m. at the Morrow County Fairgrounds, in Heppner. A catered meal by Alvin Liu of Gateway Cafe features prime rib with au jus, creamy garlic mashed

potatoes, green beans in garlic sauce, garden salad, dessert and a beverage. Tickets purchased prior to Feb. 4 are \$25 each. They are available at Bank of Eastern Oregon, city of Heppner, Community Bank, the Heppner chamber and Murray's Drug. If available, tickets will be sold after that date and at the door for \$30.

For more information or to reserve a large table, call the chamber at 541-676-5536.

On the road to make an affordable car, Tesla cuts jobs

Associated Press

PALO ALTO — Tesla will cut 7 percent of its workforce as it tries to lower prices and break out of the niche-car market to produce an electric vehicle that more people can afford.

Tesla's cheapest model right now is the \$44,000 Model 3, and it needs to broaden its customer base to survive.

"Looking ahead at our mission of accelerating the advent of sustainable transport and energy, which is important for all life on Earth, we face an extremely difficult challenge: making our cars, batteries and solar

products cost-competitive with fossil fuels," CEO Elon Musk said in a letter to staff. "While we have made great progress, our products are still too expensive for most people."

Tesla had boosted its payroll significantly to meet production goals, but then cut its staff by 9 percent in June. The company delivered more than 245,000 electric cars and SUVs last year, nearly as many as all previous years combined. But it still fell far short of a goal set nearly three years ago of manufacturing 500,000 vehicles for the year.

Musk said in October that Tesla Inc., based in Palo

Alto, California, had 45,000 employees. The 7 percent cut would mean that about 3,150 people will lose their jobs.

Tesla posted a \$311 million quarterly profit in October, only its third profitable quarter in eight years as a public company.

Musk acknowledged that the profit was driven by its ability to sell higher priced vehicles in North America. Tesla dominates that market, but it wants to make electric vehicles for the masses.

It has been Tesla's long-held goal to get a less-expensive, mid-range Tesla Model 3 on the road.

Shares tumbled 11 percent Friday.

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