

BTI to provide training for operators in Arlington

Operator training planned for landfill employees

East Oregonian

BAKER CITY — Baker Technical Institute is teaming up with Waste Management Pacific Northwest to provide heavy equipment operator training at its Columbia Ridge Landfill in Arlington.

BTI will provide training to approximately 47 operators currently working at the Columbia Ridge site during the months of December and January. BTI will utilize its mobile operator training platform that combines the latest technology of virtual reality through simulation, with time in the seat running equipment, such as dozers, wheel loaders

and excavators.

“Being able to train right at the customer’s site is key. This allows us to focus on using technology to build the exact skills, right in their work environment, that will increase efficiency and build safety practices in the most efficient manner possible,” said lead instructor Dave Frazey.

“We are working with their management team to build a customized learning plan for each operator in advance of the training. This will ensure we are all in alignment providing each operator the opportunity to receive individual training based on their needs.”

The training is the result of a proactive approach of Columbia Ridge leadership to providing employees with advanced training allowing them to increase their

operating efficiency, learn preventative maintenance strategies, and to develop enhanced safety awareness and skills. A team from the site, which included management and operators with varying years of experience, toured the BTI headquarters in Baker City and had an opportunity to experience how virtual reality and simulation can play such a key role in training today’s operator.

“We are excited to have BTI come to our facility and provide this training that is so customized to what we do. By being able to customize the tasks for each person based upon what they need, it truly benefits each operator from the beginner to the veteran,” said Paul Wilson, Waste Management Pacific Northwest district operations manager.



Baker Technical Institute Photo

Baker Technical Institute is teaming with Waste Management Pacific Northwest to provide heavy equipment operator training at its Columbia Ridge Landfill in Arlington.



ABC Photo/Eric McCandless, File

Jason Thomas, an entrepreneur from Bend, makes his pitch on the Nov. 3, 2019, episode of the ABC show “Shark Tank.”

Bend resident swims with the sharks

Local entrepreneur appeared Nov. 3 on ‘Shark Tank’

By SUZANNE ROIG
EO Media Group

BEND — Jason Thomas is going nuts. Pili nuts, that is.

As owner of Pili Hunters, Thomas’ journey of first tasting the nuts, then creating a company and selling these low-carb nuts in the United States, aired on ABC’s “Shark Tank” on Nov. 3. Thomas, a Bend resident for three years, is the fourth entrepreneur from Central Oregon to appear on the popular show that helps struggling businesses by making an investment.

“I didn’t get a deal, but people saw the episode,” said Thomas from his Bend warehouse. “During the show, I got emotional. I was there to try to get some financial help.”

Thomas asked the investors for \$325,000 in exchange for a 10% stake in his company. Pili nuts — described as tasting rich and buttery — are high in fat and minerals and low in carbohydrates, the kind of food desired by those on the keto and paleo diets.

The investors, however, declined to invest.

The last company to appear on “Shark Tank” was KidRunner, a modified stroller that allows parents to pull their young children behind them while jogging that appeared in 2016. Before that, La Pine-based TurboPup (a dog treat) received \$100,000 from “Shark Tank” investor Daymond John in exchange for 35% stake in the company. And Qubits Toy Company received a \$90,000 investment that fell through after the episode aired, according to *The Bulletin* archives.

As Thomas talked of his odyssey from discovering these nuts while kite surfing in the Philippines, a crew of temporary workers were filling orders. The sound of tape stretch-

ing across boxes filled the warehouse space. Boxes of product littered the floor of the southeast Bend warehouse.

That was in July. He didn’t know if his pitch would air. He learned he’d made the cut a few weeks before his “Shark Tank” episode aired.

A week after the show aired, more than \$250,000 worth of orders poured into the company, he said.

On the show, Thomas told the judges that he is poised to earn \$1 million in sales this year. The product took off in his third year when his revenues rose from \$70,000 to \$700,000.

Thomas DeLauer, a California-based health and fitness coach who has 14,300 Twitter followers, is a pili nut fan. “All nuts are not created equal. Many are full of pesticides and unhealthy phytotoxins that can cause digestive problems. Pili nuts are the answer. I have used Pili Hunter Pili Nuts for a very long time and honestly feel that they are the highest quality sprouted pili nut that you can find. My 100-pound weight loss would not have been possible without them!”

Most of Thomas’ early sales were from the back of his pickup. And now direct sales account for about 40% of his revenue, he said.

“I had no business experience,” he said on Thursday. “I’ve learned a lot.”

Thomas started the company with \$100, a label designed by someone he found on Craigslist and a lot of driving as he offered stores and buyers samples. The first company to buy his products to sell in a store was Erewhon National Foods in Los Angeles. His products can be found in Bend at Newport Market, Market of Choice and Natural Grocers.

“My life is consumed by these nuts,” Thomas said. “Pili means chosen, and it almost feels like the nuts chose me.”

Community Bank announces holiday charity drive

UMATILLA COUNTY — The annual Holiday Charity Drive for local nonprofit organizations is underway at local branches of Community Bank, including Pendleton, Hermiston and Milton-Freewater.

Donations made at the Pendleton branch, 157 S. Main St., will support Altrusa International of Pendleton’s Feed the Child. The program helps ensure needy students in the school district have food during the weekend. Money collected at the Hermiston branch, 50 E. Theater Lane, will benefit Made to Thrive, which helps local youths by providing support to encourage involvement in sports, adventure activities, music and the arts. The Milton-Freewater branch, 504 N. Main St., will donate funds to the Milton-Freewater City Light & Power Energy Assistance Program, which provides help for local residents.

People can donate via cash or checks through Friday, Dec. 20, in jars at the local branches. Community Bank will match donations at 50 cents on each dollar, up to \$500 at each branch. Since the program’s inception in 2010, more than \$194,000 has been given to area charities.

For more information, contact marketing manager Leah Johnson at ljohnson@communitybanknet.com, 541-207-0717 or stop by the local branch.

Unemployment tax rate moves to tax schedule two

SALEM — Unemployment tax rates for employers subject to Oregon payroll tax will move to tax schedule two for the 2020 calendar year.

BRIEFLY

Tax schedule two includes an average rate of 1.73% for the first \$42,100 paid to each employee. The specific rate each employer will pay under the new schedule depends on how much they have used the unemployment insurance system.

Oregon adjusts employer tax rates annually using eight tax schedules based on the solvency of the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. Movement between the eight schedules of tax rates represents part of the self-balancing aspects of Oregon’s Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund law. Each September, a formula contained in statute determines how much should be collected during the next year to maintain a solvent fund. Each schedule has a range of tax rates based on an employer’s previous unemployment insurance experience. Employers with more unemployment insurance claims have a higher tax rate than those with fewer claims.

As a result of this approach, Oregon has one of the strongest trust funds in the nation. The trust fund provides support for temporarily unemployed workers, their families, and communities while minimizing the impact on employers. This approach allows support without having to reduce benefits to workers, increase employer taxes, or borrow from the federal government, as most other states had to do for the Great Recession.

Anti-robocall bill likely as House, Senate compromise

WASHINGTON — It’s looking like an anti-robocall bill will get sent to President Donald Trump this year, helping tackle an infuriating problem in the U.S.

House and Senate leaders said Friday they’ve reached an agreement in principle on

merging their two versions of bills against robocalls.

The House bill had gone further than the Senate one. Details about what’s in the final bill are still to come, but legislators say it will require phone companies to verify that phone numbers are real, and to block calls for free. It will also give government agencies more ability to go after scammers.

It’s the latest effort in a crackdown, building on steps by state attorneys general and the Federal Communications Commission as well as the phone companies.

Phone companies have been rolling out verification tools after prompting from regulators. These reassure customers that the number showing up on their phone

is actually the number that called, and not a fraudster “spoofing,” or faking, the number to try to get people to pick it up. Numbers can be faked to look like they’re coming from the IRS, for example, or from a number with the same area code as you. But to combat this successfully, all carriers need to put the anti-spoofing system in place.

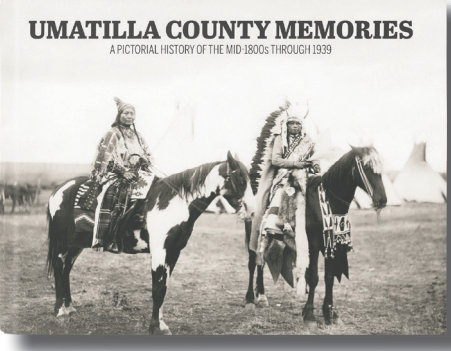
Telecom companies are also offering call-blocking apps for smartphones and many home phones, although not always for free. The FCC in June gave them permission to turn on call-blocking by default. While tools had been available before, customers might not have known to ask about them.

— EO Media Group and Associated Press

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT
EastOregonian.com

The East Oregonian & Heritage Station Museum invites you to attend the:

UMATILLA COUNTY MEMORIES BOOK LAUNCH



Saturday, Nov. 23rd
10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Heritage Station Museum

- Snacks & Beverages Provided
- Free Holiday Gift Wrap w/ Purchase

This collaboration between the East Oregonian and the Heritage Station Museum has created an opportunity for the museum to sell 100 copies with 100% of the proceeds going to the museum.

BE FIRST IN LINE TO GET YOUR BOOK!

EAST OREGONIAN


The Umatilla County Historical Society Museum



Enter to Win \$3000!

Newspaper Sponsored Local Shopping Survey
No Purchase Necessary



ENTER TO WIN NOW!

www.PulsePoll.com