



Antonio Sierra/East Oregonian

McKennon Station looms over Pendleton on Monday, July 26, 2021. The McGregor Co. of Colfax, Washington, bought the facility from Pendleton Grain Growers on July 20.

Washington company buys McKennon Station, PGG seed division

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton Grain Growers sold one of its last properties in its namesake city, but the PGG banner will remain.

According to Umatilla County property records, The McGregor Co., a Colfax, Washington-based agronomy and seed company, bought McKennon Station from PGG on July 20 for \$924,720. McGregor Co. President Ian McGregor confirmed the purchase and added the company plans to keep McKennon running as a seed processing facility under the PGG brand.

The McGregor family had been farming wheat in Eastern Washington for decades by the time they spun off their commercial fertilizer and equipment business into its own company in 1956. McGregor Co. now serves 48 locations in three states and operates facilities in Adams and Milton-Freewater. McGregor said the company has operated its own seed division for the

better part of 30 years and acquiring a seed-processing facility in Pendleton offered the company some advantages. Although McGregor Co. already operates three seed processing plants, McKennon Station will be its only seed processing facility in Oregon.

But McGregor Co. isn't just acquiring the McKennon Station building, located south of Interstate 84 near the Umatilla County Jail, but PGG's entire seed division. McGregor said the PGG seed team is small, but collectively has more than a century's worth of experience in its field. McGregor Co. will retain the McKennon Station staff and continue to operate the facility under the PGG brand.

"It's not about the assets," McGregor said. "It's about the people."

McGregor said the company is keeping the PGG name to maintain the trust farmers built with the former co-op but also is being transparent with customers about the change in ownership. PGG did not respond to

a request for comment as of press time Monday, July 26.

Once an omnipresent organization across Eastern Oregon, PGG already had begun selling assets by the time members voted to dissolve the co-op in 2016. Retail stores in Hermiston, Athena and Milton-Freewater were sold into private hands. Mid Columbia Producers of Moro purchased PGG's energy division and United Grain Corp. of Vancouver, Washington, acquired the co-op's upcountry grain elevators and terminals.

PGG's Pendleton assets have taken longer to switch hands. Besides the McKennon Station sale, PGG sold its former energy building at 1210 S.W. Dorion Ave. to Hines Meat Co. and recently completed an auction for its former headquarters, retail showroom, automotive service center and warehouse at 1000 S.W. Dorion Ave.

Realty Marketing/Northwest declined to comment on who the winning bidder was, and Umatilla County Records had not received sales information as of July 23.

Stanfield finishing water tower renovations

By NICK ROSENBERGER
East Oregonian

STANFIELD — For a century the Stanfield water tower has stood over the town and provided a recognizable landmark for generations of locals, and now, after three years of work, the 50,000-gallon water tower nearly is complete with renovations.

With painters adding their finishing touches in the next two weeks, Stanfield residents will be able to see the completed tower with up-to-date metalwork, a fresh coat of paint and new lighting, according to Scott Morris, Stanfield's public works director.

Morris said an inspection a few years ago of the out-of-use water tower had shown deficiencies in the structure, and he faced the choice of either tearing down the tower or fixing it up.

The price to tear it down, however, was the same price to fix it. With this in mind, the city manager put out a survey to gauge public support for the two options, and the consensus was to keep it.

"For a good portion of the people who have been here for a long time, they wanted to see it stay," Morris said.

Like for many in Stanfield, the tower is an important fixture for Morris and an important part of the town's history.

According to historical city minutes, a special council meeting was held Oct. 2, 1919, to accept bids for the construction of the new city waterworks. Pittsburgh-Des Moines Steel Company won the bid to install the tower for \$9,410 and finished construction in 1920. The whole water system was approved with a 20-year loan of \$30,000 — or about \$470,000 in today's dollar value.

And, with the 150-foot tower visible from Interstate 84, it has been a marker for generations of families coming home.

Morris explained when he was a child and returning from trips to Portland with his family, they'd see the tower and get excited they were almost home. He



Cecili Longhorn/Contributed Photo

The Stanfield water tower has stood for more than 100 years, and while the city no longer uses it, it remains a local landmark. The water tower is undergoing the final stages of renovations, including fresh coats of paint.

said the tower is a logo and a landmark for the town.

When Stanfield residents decided to refurbish the water tower, planners and city officials decided to split the \$180,000 budget into thirds. Construction began in October 2019, with the first year dedicated to fulfilling different Oregon Occupational Safety and Health requirements and fixing structural issues. The second year was focused on metalwork and finishing up the structural repairs, while the third year was focused completely on painting, which was done by the Pittsburgh Paint Company.

Along with updating structural issues and painting an additional "STANFIELD" on the other side of the tower, the team decided to add programmable lights to the tower. The illumination was red, white and blue lights for Fourth of July, but can change the colors for various events, holidays and special occasions, such as blue and gold for Stanfield High School's graduation.

Morris is glad residents wanted to keep the water tower, and they were able to keep an important part of the town alive.

"This is us," he said.

Mayor goes in for a splash



Kathryn Brown/East Oregonian

Pendleton Mayor John Turner stands under a water feature Sunday, July 25, 2021, at the new spray park at Til Taylor Park in Pendleton for an "exclusive pre-reveal" of the park to the mayor, members of the Pendleton City Council and the Pendleton Parks and Recreation Commission. The event came on the 101st anniversary of the murder of Umatilla County Sheriff Til Taylor, the park's namesake, and preceded a yet-unplanned grand opening. Construction on the park remains ongoing.

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	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	Family Fun at the Thunder Room — DJ
THURSDAY	9:00am	Tough Enough to Wear Pink Walk
	9:00am	Steer Tripping, Three Rounds
	2:00pm	Slack — Arena
	6:00pm	Rodeo Gates Open — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
		Tough Enough to Wear Pink — Wear Pink
		Fun at the Thunder Room after Rodeo — Stay Tuned!
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	2:00pm	Slack — Arena
	6:00pm	Rodeo Gates Open — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center
		Live Music and Dancing at Thunder Room — Whiskey Creek
SATURDAY	10:00am	Grand Parade — Main Street
	2:30pm	Slack — Arena
	6:00pm	Rodeo Gates Open — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center
	9:30pm	Music and Dancing at Thunder Room — Whiskey Creek
SUNDAY	6:00am	Cowboy Breakfast — Rodeo Grounds — til 10:00am
	9:00am	Cowboy Church Service

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