

Sweet Bee Honey Company in Milton-Freewater 'in the sweet spot'

SHEILA HAGAR
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

MILTON-FREEWATER — It's fair to say Ryan Lieuallen is pretty buzzed about the blueprint being drawn up for his family's business and their future.

Lieuallen is founder of The Sweet Bee Honey Company, which sells a variety of honeys, bees in bulk, pollination services and queen bee cells.

Located near the more civilized entrance of primitive Linton Mountain Road off the meandering Walla Walla River Road, the Lieuallen home and bee farm is hidden from every beaten path in the area.

Lieuallen is the fifth generation in his family to tend bees, he said, a lineage that began in 1860.

"I was born into the system," he said, recalling that images of the winged creatures adorned everything in his childhood home, from silverware to the walls.

Running an apiary wasn't part of his life plan when he graduated from McEwen-Weston High School in 2005, even if he did start up his own bee operation in 2006



Greg Lehman/Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

Lily Boehm, center, takes another taste of dark buckwheat honey April 23, 2022, while tasting room manager Stacie Lieuallen answers Katherine Boehm's questions at Sweet Bee Honey Company in Milton-Freewater.

"as a summer gig."

He didn't know then the time already spent under the tutelage of his mother's father, Edmund Varney, would later come knocking.

Varney, a retired career beekeeper, taught the slightly wild teen about sustainable beekeeping and, more importantly, about being a good human, according to Sweet Bee's marketing.

But Lieuallen's father

imparted his business acumen to his son, meaning the young man could clearly see there wasn't really any money to be made in the bee business — any wealth came from investing in land needed for the pursuit, he explained.

He headed off to Washington State University, with plans to focus on business and entomology, the study of insects.

Business won out — "I

knew how to do bees," he said — and he ended up back where he started. But not before gathering important tools, such as how to collect bee semen for research.

Lieuallen spent a year in Argentina, immersed in work as part of WSU's honey bees and pollinator research program to help breed a more durable bee that can better fly in the face of environmental, parasitic and

infectious dangers.

By 2014, Lieuallen had found and married his own "queen," and the couple purchased the 15 acres of land on Linton Mountain, home base to about 5,000 bees.

Before long, two daughters, Cadence and Sierra, joined the Lieuallen colony.

Somewhere in there, honey prices fell. Lieuallen remembered lessons from his father and knew changes were in order, including diversification and "vertical integration" within the company.

In this case, that meant asking his wife, Stacie Lieuallen, to take on an active role in Sweet Bee Honey Company.

Before deciding to stay home with their children, Stacie Lieuallen had taught high school health and physical education for a dozen years. It was a career she loved, especially enjoying how she could positively impact the lives of teens, and she expected to return to it.

It wasn't an easy "yes" to her husband's request, Stacie Lieuallen said, noting it took about a year for her to find her own path into the family business.

Stacie Lieuallen spent

months designing all things retail for Sweet Bee Honey Company, including that brand new tasting room.

In the space she's cultivated, Stacie Lieuallen teaches her customers about bee health and honey properties. Each flavor profile is distinct, from the subtle tang of the blackberry to the simpler sweetness of the vetch to the long finish of thistle. In coating the tongue, buckwheat's toasted, smoky and robust taste instantly creates a desire for seconds.

Like a bee to a flower, Stacie Lieuallen uses honey samples to draw folks in to enlist them in saving the bees, who need all the help humans can offer.

"Bees are really struggling," she said. "Bees are part of our ecosystem and always should be."

The Lieuallens have big plans for the immediate and far future. They anticipate their children will have the same immersion into the business their father had, the better to continue the legacy.

By the time that happens, Sweet Bee Honey Company will be even tastier, the couple predicts.



Griswold High Class of 2022

Griswold High School on Sunday, May 29, 2022, graduated eight students: standing from left, Madison Jensen, Darla Holden, Sydney Moore, Samuel Kubishta, Victoria Keene and Ashton Miller, and kneeling in front from left, Anitohi Mercer and Sean Phillips.

Brad Bixler/Helix School District

Boutique Air receives 2-year contract bump to provide service to Pendleton

By **JOHN TILLMAN**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The U.S. Department of Transportation has increased Boutique Air's Essential Air Service contract for Pendleton and renewed it through May 31, 2024.

Boutique had asked to renegotiate the terms of its Essential Air Service subsidy to serve Pendleton's Eastern Oregon Regional Airport due to many changes, including the cost of fuel and a workforce crisis.

Boutique filed a form in February requesting to terminate its EAS contract beginning May 12. The subsidy for the fourth year of its agreement was almost \$2.69 million. The DOT then countered, prohibiting Boutique from ending its service and calling for it and other air carriers to issue

proposals for the contract.

Only Boutique responded, and the federal government accepted its two-year proposal.

The new annual subsidy rate for the first year of service is more than \$3.87 million. The second year of the service will see a subsidy of almost \$3.95 million. The contract requires Boutique to provide 21 nonstop, round trips a week to and from Portland International Airport, using an eight- or nine-seat Pilatus PC-12 aircraft.

"I think the increase is absolutely justified," said John Honemann, airport manager, "given their unprecedented costs."

Honemann considered the new contract to be not at all out of line compared to other EAS subsidies. He said he felt the two-year term was warranted, since a longer period might not allow

Boutique to keep up with changes in the economy.

"I think it's a great deal," Honemann continued. "(Air service) is critical infrastructure. Our region needed a tie to Portland and Salem. I've been fighting and working for it."

Pendleton is the only airport in the Pacific Northwest operating with the DOT under an Essential Air Service contract.

The EAS program provides the federal transportation department funding to ensure small communities continue to receive scheduled air service, usually to a large- or medium-hub airport. EAS subsidizes air service to about 60 communities in Alaska and 115 communities in the lower 48 contiguous states that otherwise would not receive any scheduled air service.

MORROW COUNTY SCHOOLS

District welcomes new administrators

East Oregonian

MORROW COUNTY — Morrow County School District on Tuesday, May 31, announced several new administrators to the district for the 2022-23 school year.

"It has been another busy spring as we have worked to fill our vacant administrative positions," according to Erin Stocker, executive director of human resources.

The retirement of Superintendent Dirk Dirksen and a resignation led to movement within the district, Stocker explained.

"The school district is in a good position with our ability to hire strong internal candidates, as well as an experienced administrator to round out our administrative team for 22-23," she stated

The incoming superintendent, Matt Combe, as well as these new administrators will begin their contracts on July 1.

New vice principal at Irrigon Jr./Sr. High School

The newest member of the Morrow County School District administrative team is Jason Dunten. He will be transitioning into the Irrigon Jr./Sr. High School vice principal for the 2022-23 school year. Not a stranger in MCSD, Dunten has been an educator for 13 years, all of which have been in Morrow County. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Eastern Oregon University and a master's in education administration from Grand Canyon University. Well known in the community of Irrigon, Dunten has made many connections through his coaching and community involvement.

"When I began teaching in Irrigon, I was extremely excited for the opportunity

to help mentor our students," he said in the announcement. "By moving into the role of vice principal, I am excited to continue to not only mentor our students but also impact the culture of the Irrigon community and the Morrow County School District."

Stocker said the district is excited that Irrigon Jr./Sr. High School will continue to have leaders that are vested in the programs, schools and community.

New principal at Irrigon Jr./Sr. High School

Rose Palmer will be the next principal of Irrigon Jr./Sr. High School.

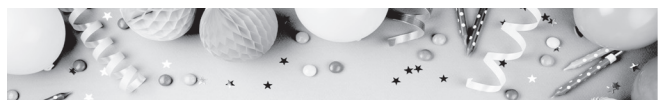
Palmer received her bachelor's degree from Washington State University and has two masters, one in physical education and the other in education leadership. With 15 years in education as a teacher and administrator, Palmer is completing her seventh year in Morrow County School District as the assistant principal at Irrigon Jr./Sr. High School. According to the announcement, she has the background knowledge and experience to aid in a smooth transition for students, families and staff.

"I am looking forward to the opportunity to continue to serve as an administrator at IJSHS," Palmer said, "and excited that I will get to continue to provide opportunities for students to feel connected and important while in our building."

Stocker said the district is pleased to have a veteran administrator continue as a member of the MCSD team in a new role at the same school.

New principal at Heppner Jr./Sr. High School

Ryan Gerry is a new face



The children of Jack Sainsbury are throwing him an 80TH SURPRISE BIRTHDAY PARTY!

Please join us at Hamley's Steakhouse in the Slickfork room. Pendleton, OR

June 4th at 2:00 pm



LOCAL BRIEFING

Fight near Hermiston High results in arrests

HERMISTON — The Hermiston Police Department reported a fight and arrests at Hermiston's skate park. This took place around noon, Friday, May 27.

According to HPD, officers went to the park, which is adjacent to Hermiston High School, in response to a report of students fighting.

"Upon arriving in the area, it was learned the two primary female parties involved in the alterca-

tion were known to each other, and one of them was alleged to have been struck on the head (with an object reported as a closed folding knife) by the other," according to the statement the department posted on its Facebook page.

The department stated there are neither allegations nor evidence of anyone being stabbed with a knife.

"Arrests have been made in this incident, which is believed to be an isolated incident involving persons known to each other (and NOT gang related)," the statement concluded. "We do not believe there is any

danger to the public related to this incident."

Well-loved Hermiston figure Dean dies

HERMISTON — Social media posts Friday, May 27, announced the death of Dean, a homeless man who is known and loved in Hermiston.

His comings and goings have been tracked on the Facebook account Deans & Hermiston Community Cares.

Recent posts to the account reported on his failing health and treatment in a Boise hospital.

—EO Media Group

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2022



Derek Devin
Hermiston High School



Shyenne Troppmann
Hermiston High School

WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO

6/3 - 6/9

Cineplex Show Times

Price changes: Adults: \$10.00 • Child: \$8.00
Senior: \$8.00 • Matinees (before 4:00pm): \$8.00

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Top Gun: Maverick (PG13)
4:20p 5:00p 7:30p 8:10p
extra 1:10p & 1:50p show 6/3-6/4

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The Bob's Burgers Movie (PG13)
4:10p 6:50p 9:30p
extra 1:30p show 6/3-6/4

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Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness (PG13)
4:30p 7:30p
extra 1:20p show 6/3-6/4

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Downton Abbey: A New Era (PG)
3:40p 6:30p 9:20p
extra 12:50p show 6/3-6/4

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JURASSIC WORLD DOMINION (PG13)
STARTS THURSDAY, JUNE 9TH!

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