

Big changes a brewin' in our county



Kathleen Ellyn

It's throwback days in the Wallowa County beer industry this week.

Terminal Gravity has won a bronze medal at Willamette Week's Oregon Beer Awards for its Wallowa Lake Lager, a wheat-based, pre-prohibition-style pilsner.

TG is often recognized for its beer. It won People's Choice Award for its IPA at the same

event last year and has been featured in brew industry magazines several times in addition to being highlighted by Travel Oregon.

Now, however, TG is turning back the page on brewing, away from Belgian Malts and toward malts grown in the Northwest for a new line of beers. Exciting.

Tyler Hays, owner of M Crow & Company General Store in Lostine, is also experimenting with the old way. You may already know that you can get a growler or glass of M Crow Beer at the store. Now, rancher/farmer Alan Klages of Joseph is growing about 4 acres of a barley variety called "Klages," named after Alans' grandfather's brother, who

was an agronomist at Eastern Idaho University back in the 1940s.

"It's a malting variety that was released in 1976 and was the most popular variety for about 10 years," Alan said. "It's hard to grow but it has a good malting profile."

Alan says they should get about 8 tons of barley off their little 4-acre experiment, and "then we'll see where we go next. Tyler wanted to have a Wallowa County connection. His idea is to raise the barley here, malt it here and make the beer here. He'd really like to have some local hops, too."

One last update for the connoisseur of alcoholic beverages: Dandelion Wines at 112 W

Main Street in Enterprise will now have their previously announced Third Thursday wine tasting and glass-pouring event from 4 to 7 p.m. every Thursday, so come on in for a glass of wine and enjoy downtown Enterprise.

Just a thank you to those of you who have been sending me tips and a promise to get to them all. If it's been a month or two since you sent them, remind me again. It never hurts. Also know that some of your tips turned out to be such big news that we contacted the business in question and are preparing full, individual articles.

Please send your Biz Buzz news tips to Kathleen Ellyn at kellyn@wallowa.com.

Jobless rate dips to 4.5 percent

Wallowa County Chieftain

Oregon's unemployment rate dropped to a record low of 4.5 percent in March — the lowest point since comparable records began in 1976. Oregon's February unemployment rate was 4.8 percent. A year ago, in March 2015, Oregon's unemployment rate was 5.7 percent.

Oregon's rate is half a percentage point below the U.S. rate of 5.0 percent in March. The last time Oregon's rate was half a percentage point below the U.S. rate was in November 1995.

The total number of Oregonians employed in March reached 1.94 million, which was up substantially from 1.84 million in March 2015. The rapid rise in the number of employed is the main driver of an increase in Oregon's labor force participation rate, which shot up to 62.3 percent in March from a recent low of 60.8 percent in March 2015.

"Rapid job growth and a historically low unemployment rate mean that Oregon's labor market is stronger than it's been in decades," said state employment economist Nick Beleiciks in a press release. "Businesses are raising wages to attract the help they need, and it's working because people are flocking to Oregon's labor force."

Oregon's payroll employment grew by 3,900 in March, following a revised gain of 7,400. The March gain was close to the average monthly pace seen over the past three years. In March, three major industries each added more than 1,000 jobs: health care and social assistance (plus 1,400 jobs), wholesale trade (plus 1,300) and professional and business services (plus 1,200). Meanwhile, three major industries cut close to 1,000 jobs apiece: private educational services (minus 1,200 jobs), construction (minus 900) and manufacturing (minus 700).

The tightening of Oregon's labor market is leading to rapidly rising wages, with the average hourly wage up by 4.6 percent over the year. In March, the average wage was \$24.45 per hour for Oregon's private sector payroll employees, which was 10 cents more than the \$24.35 in February.

So you wanna be a farmers market vendor?

Saturday symposium offers tips from experts and a chance to network

By Scot Heisel
Wallowa County Chieftain

If you've ever had an urge to become a farmers market vendor but you aren't sure how to go about it or — better still — how to be successful, this could be your year to take the leap.

Opening day for the Wallowa County Farmers Market in Joseph is just six weeks away, and organizers are sowing the seeds of local commerce with a vendors symposium from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday in Enterprise.

"(The symposium) is the first of its kind," said vendor and market manager Carol Bartlow. "Every year we have an annual meeting. Potential vendors come, we answer questions. This year, to build up the market and get new people involved, we have a guest speaker to help understand what it means to be a vendor. And we have a panel of veteran vendors who will share tips on what it takes to be successful."

This year's pre-season gathering will offer a new slate of valuable resources for veteran vendors and anyone who is interested in testing the farmers market waters.

Sales specialist Kathy Bingham will offer advice on general business strategies. Also, Jody Berry of Wild Carrot in Enterprise will discuss the "nuts and bolts" of booth presentation and the practicalities of on-site prod-



The Joseph Farmers Market kicks off its 2016 season May 28.

Chieftain archives

uct display.

Following presentations and a panel discussion, there will be a question-and-answer session on all things related to the market to cap the event.

"It's a wonderful opportunity," Bartlow said.

The vendors symposium will take place at the Fish-trap house, 400 E Grant St. in Enterprise. Admission is free. Registration is recommended but not required. Refreshments will be provided. To register or to get more information, contact Bartlow at wallowacountyfarmersmarket@gmail.com or 541-398-8435.

In March the Wallowa County Farmers Market board announced that it has canceled the Enterprise Farmers Market, traditionally held on Thursday nights, for the 2016 season with the intent of bringing that market back as soon as possible.

The Joseph Farmers Market runs from 10 a.m. to 2

p.m. Saturdays from May 28 through mid-October. For more information, contact

Bartlow at 541-398-8435 or visit www.wallowacountyfarmersmarket.com.

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