

Hays factory plan making progress in Joseph

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Former Wallowa County resident Tyler Hays, now an internationally renowned artist and designer, is making good on his Dec. 22, 2016, announcement that he would bring gainful employment to county residents. At that meeting, Hays, who employs more than 100 people at his M. Crow & Co. facility on the East Coast, unveiled tentative plans to build an industrial site on the outskirts of Joseph that would eventually house a brewery, ceramics shop and high-end furniture factory and eventually employ 25 workers.

Those plans have changed slightly: He now plans to add boutique cutlery manufacturing into the mix.

General manager for the project Michael Junkins is living in Joseph, and several full-time temporary employees are working on installing state-of-the-art woodworking machines



M. Crow & Co. employee Joey Haskins stands next to a new Computer Numerical Control machine, which is essentially a computer operated three dimensional router/carver. This machine, along with several other state-of-the-art woodworking machines, will soon employ up to seven people full-time making high-end walnut tables. Former Wallowa County resident Tyler Hays, a very successful artist/designer owns M.Crow & Co. and said he wants to provide Wallowa County residents with full-time jobs that pay real family wages.

ery to begin producing walnut tables for Hays’ boutique furniture company, BDDW. Hays said he will have five local full-time employees by Sept. 1.

Junkins said that the priority is getting up to speed manufacturing walnut slab tables, which will provide funding to produce the remaining products.

“It’s an already profitable enterprise, and Tyler sells every table he makes,” Junkins said.

For the fledgling production facility, Hays has already purchased a state-of-the-art drum sander, a table saw, a vintage rip saw and a high-end planer and sawdust collection system. Of chief importance to production, Hays also bought a large Computer Numerical Control machine, which is a software controlled three-dimensional carver and router. A technical specialist will arrive in around two weeks to train the crew to run it.

Junkins said that the difficult part of the project for him is tying up loose threads to get production up and running in a short period of time.

“It’s difficult,” Junkins said, “but it’s exciting and awesome.”

Hays, who is overseeing his East Coast concerns, is keeping a close eye on his Wallowa County operations. He

said he’d been mulling over the idea of a local factory for 10 years and actively working on the idea for the past four or five years.

Bringing jobs into the county isn’t always welcomed with open arms by others. Hays named his biggest challenge as lawsuits over what he described as “a pile of dirt” on the property he bought for the facility. As a result, he’s been in court several times, winning each lawsuit, but taking valuable time away from the project.

“We’re ready to go full bore now,” he said.

The current production facility isn’t large enough to house the entire industrial complex, but Hays said plans for a 60,000-square-foot building are being drawn as part of a three-year plan to expand the business, which will use either Oregon or locally grown resources.

To that end, Hays is working with local rancher Alan Klages to grow special barley for the future brewing facility.

He already has a small licensed brewery at the M. Crow store he owns in Lostine. Products made with Wallowa County clay can be seen on the M.C. Crow website.

“I love this county, and I’m just trying to get some family wage jobs up there,” he said. “There’s nothing wrong with tourism, but it shouldn’t be our main thing. Local resources are my priority.”

Hays said the company is looking for a mix of people to fill labor jobs, technical builder and engineer types, as well as people passionate about quality products and people who can work in a team environment. He did caution that it would not happen overnight.

“We have big dreams, and we’re going the slow route because that’s the best way. We’re going to need everyone’s help and support to make this work,” he said.

Work inquiries can be made to Junkins by emailing michael@mcrowcompany.com

COUNCIL

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Market vendor and board member Beth Givans, who also owns a market garden and catering business, said that the market had started as a nonprofit 15 years ago with the mission to sell local produce and unique arts and crafts to support local artisans and farmers.

“I believe we’ve held to that

mission throughout the years,” she said. “Vendors come and go, but the spirit and vision of the market remains the same.”

Givans noted that with the short growing season, the market has struggled at times to offer a wide variety of produce. She also said the market had recently opened a co-op booth so local gardeners can sell extra produce from their personal gardens and expand the variety of offerings.

She said adding artisans had helped bring an energy to the market it had not seen previously.

The market was very grate-

ful to the city for its support, Givans said, both for the street access and the motel and hotel tax grant it provided for the market’s musicians.

“We hope you see the benefit to the community and continue your support,” she said.

Bartlow said that the market was an asset to both the community and its downtown merchants. She said that the market was only open for four hours per week on 20 Saturdays per year.

She noted that the market attracts visitors to Joseph and stressed that vendors are local people who tell the story of the county and city through the diversity of their goods, while

telling customers of other places in Joseph to shop, catch a meal or share information about the area.

“We are eager to support our community businesses in this way,” Bartlow said. She added many of the vendors also patronize local businesses.

Sajonia reiterated that she had received complaints from several local businesses that initially approved of the market wondering why they weren’t consulted when the market had expanded to include artisans, and why it wasn’t charged a vendor’s fee for its use of city streets.

Although some council and audience discussion ensued, Sands said he has always understood the market as a different entity from standard street vendors and motioned that the city permanently waive any vendor fees for the market. Council member George Ballard seconded the motion. The resulting vote saw no dissent.

CITY HALL

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the effort and gave them a 100 percent guarantee of total loss in the case of a serious seismic event.

“It’s an old building, and you’ve really got to want to save it if you’re going to save it. It will be very costly,” he warned.

At the time of Walker’s inspection, a single large iron beam was already supporting a truss in the fire hall and more support was added shortly afterward.

On Monday night Fire Chief Paul Karvoski also reported that the concrete in one of the parking bays shifted beneath trucks as they passed in and out of the building.

“Bringing the old building up to code is basically a rebuild,” said City Attorney Wyatt Baum. He advised the city to be prepared to “push

back” if the insurance company lowballed the cost of repair.

Whether insurance would cut the city a check for the whole \$1.3 million if the new building were larger than the old was also a consideration.

“We’re pretty much forced to move out of that (old) footprint if we rebuild up to ADA and new codes,” said City Manager Michele Young.

Brett Moore, senior engineer for Anderson Perry, was tasked with investigating costs for both repair and replacement for presentation to the insurance adjuster and the city. Moore will also be calling La Grande and John Day Fire departments, which have recently built new fire houses, for examples of plans that are efficient and up to current code.

The focus going forward will be finding housing for the Enterprise Fire Department and its trucks over the winter.

City Hall public meetings are being held at Cloverleaf Hall on the Wallowa County Fairgrounds.

Winding Waters

A Non-Profit Community Health Center

OHSU Resident

Brit Nilsen

August 2nd - August 27th
September 4th - September 7th

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7:00am to 7:00pm
Saturday
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Lostine All-School Reunion
Anyone who attended

WHERE: Lostine Grange Hall
Rosewell Street, Lostine
WHEN: August 26, 2017
TIME: Begins at 10am

Potluck at 12pm
Plates & Utensils provided
Bring your own drinks

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When: Thursday August 17
Time: 2:00pm – 6:00pm
Place: Winding Waters Medical Clinic
603 Medical Parkway, Enterprise

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WALLOWA COUNTY STOCKGROWERS ASSOCIATION

2017 Stockgrowers Rodeo
August 19, 11am - 4pm
WC Fair Grounds
Enterprise, OR

6:30am Breakfast @ Cloverleaf Hall \$10
7:00 am Business Meeting
11:00 am - 4pm Ranch Rodeo
6:00 pm Social Hour
7:00 pm Tri Tip Dinner
7:30 pm Awards/Scholarship Winners
Announced/Gun Raffle Drawing
8:00 pm Music/Dancing

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To ENTER the RODEO, please call
Brinda Stanley @ 541-398-0026
RODEO Questions, please call
Cody Ross @ 541-892-3561

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!