



Invest in The Grove — Invest in Progress

*Progress, a new tradition for The Sentinel, is something of a yearbook for our community. This new feature is an ongoing series of special sections designed to highlight important topics, people, places and businesses in our community with focuses on local non-profits, family-owned businesses, transportation, local favorites and more. Throughout the year, look for stories in this special section exploring the best of our local area as we celebrate the many examples of **Progress** in our community. Welcome to our first installment: Family-Owned Businesses*

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Welt family keeps success simple

COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL
STAFF REPORT

The Welts have left their mark on Cottage Grove.

It started in 1968 when William J. Welt moved from Roseburg to take over the 76 distributorship. Starting by himself and temporarily away from his family, the eldest Welt slept in his office to make ends meet as his company got off the ground.

“When he started this, there was every major oil bulk plant represented in this town and now we’re the only one left,” said a proud Brad Welt, the son of William. Brad began his work with the company at the age of 10 and has been working in various capacities ever since.

“I got started riding in the truck with him and I was the bookkeeper. And this was before calculators, before anything else and I was the guy that made out the paperwork and he had small books, about the size of a bible, and we would look up the amount of fuel,” said Brad.

Now with various titles of president and vice president across all of Welt and Welt Inc. — a company that includes ventures in fuel (Pacific Pride, Fuel ‘n’ Go), heating and lube oil (W/W Bio Diesel) and restaurants (Bonanza Fribe-Up and The Pink House) — Brad isn’t worried about the particulars of his title but just wants people to know him simply as Brad. This simplicity goes back to the heart of why this company has been able to achieve success in the area for over five decades.

“Our goal is not to be the biggest, we just



want to be the best,” said Brad.

This commitment to being the best shows up in the details of the work between both Welts. Their goal throughout the history of the company has been to be available for their customers, something that is apparent as they look to help customers which any number of details when they arrive.

While the customers and people are at the heart of their work, the next ingredient that has let the company thrive is being in Cottage Grove, a place that the Welts are glad to call home.

“Love living in Cottage Grove. I’ll take Cottage Grove as the best place in the world to live, I wouldn’t live anywhere else. We’re fortunate to have a small, close-knit community that’s very caring and we like that,” said Brad. “We love it. Just love it. People come, they trust us. I just waited on a person here and he said, ‘Hey, just put it on my bill.’ I didn’t even have him sign a ticket, we’re old-school that way. And they trust us.”

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