

Business: Jobs, space added



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Remodeling will continue for several months at the American Gas & Technology facility.

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 "It's not bad at all," Tate said.

He added that AG&T's technology will provide natural gas fuel at a rate that is comparable with the current gasoline prices. Tate said low prices have chased other alternative sources out of the market, but natural gas is in a unique position.

"The U.S. has a 100-year supply of natural gas and the technology is available to use it inexpensively," he said.

Tate said the business will gradually build to full production—an estimated 900 jobs—within two and a half years.

In the short term, AG&T is on track to finish retooling the site in about four months and then will finalize its production layout.

"There's a lot to do there. We will have four or five different crews working for the next four or five months," Tate said.

AG&T's plan isn't the only positive sign on the jobs and

business expansion front.

Just down the road on Monmouth Cutoff, a home-grown business has just completed an expansion.

MAK Metals/MAK Grills added 22,000 square feet of production space that will allow the company to increase output and hire more workers immediately, said owner Bob Tucker.

MAK Metals is a sheet metal manufacturer, and MAK Grills produces high-end grills and smokers. Both businesses will work out of the addition which is connected to the original production facility built in 2008.

MAK Grills just launched two new lines of grills, and the company simply outgrew its space. Tucker said the business began using the new facility last month and is still settling in.

"We can double our production," Tucker said. "We can do things a little bit ahead of schedule."

Tucker said when eyeing

expansion, the company had no question about whether it wanted to stay in Dallas. He added that the company owns the property out to Monmouth Cutoff and the empty field next door, so it will be able to expand again.

That will happen, Tucker said, and the business has no plans of moving in spite of the overtures of cities in other states. That began happening when the state changed its sick leave law last year and continued with the passage of new minimum wage legislation this year.

"This is our home," he said. "This is where we built our business."

Tucker said his business will respond to the ensuing cost increases by automating more and paying employees more.

"We will plan ahead and be proactive and find ways to make the company profitable," Tucker explained. "That is what we have done all along."

A good day to be a chick



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Nolan Dunaway, 6, of Dallas, stretches to pet a chick at Old Mill Feed & Seed.

Dallas budget planning begins

The 2016-17 budget will be presented on April 18

By Jolene Guzman
 The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The city of Dallas held its first budget committee meeting on March 28, with a focus on long-term planning.

Staff presented the Dallas Budget Committee with the city's five-year capital improvement plan, the 20-year facilities strategic plan and a three-year financial

forecast.

City Manager Ron Foggin said the goal of the initial meeting was to help the committee understand what it takes to write a yearly budget.

"It was an opportunity to show the budget committee what work the staff has been doing and what we use to build the budget," Foggin said.

It was also a chance to show the financial challenges on the horizon for the city.

"The outlook is that it is becoming harder and harder to balance the budget," Foggin said.

He said the 2016-17 budget hasn't been difficult to balance, but impending changes to minimum wage and Public Employee Retirement System rates will make the task an uphill

battle in coming years.

"What we are trying to continue is to maintain service levels the way they are," he said.

Foggin will present the 2016-17 budget at the committee's second meeting on April 18 immediately following the Dallas City Council meeting, which begins at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 187 SE Court St.

In other business, the city:

- Has begun work on playground structures at the newly named Sgt. Ian Tawney Memorial Park off Main Street. A park dedication is planned for May 6.

- Will launch its weed abatement program in mid-April, asking owners of properties to clean up overgrown weeds and vegetation.

Foggin said the objective of the program is to remove weeds that could become fire hazards in the warmer, drier months of the year.

- Approved an ordinance amending the city code to allow temporary parking of commercial trucks and tractor-trailers on Southeast Holman Avenue between Southeast Monmouth Cutoff and Birch Street.

Retirement may be far off, but the April 18 deadline for IRA contributions isn't.

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Why Aren't There More Black People in Oregon? A Hidden History

**April 9
 6:30-8:30 pm**

In the Columbia Room
 WOU, Werner Center,
 Use Parking Lot H



A guided conversation about this hidden history by author & educator, Walidah Imarisha

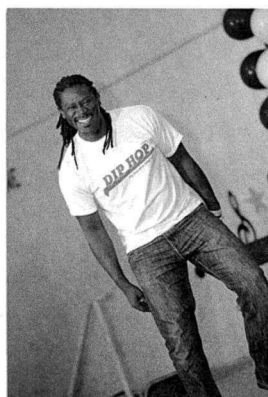
Oregon has a history of Black exclusion and discrimination, but it also has a vibrant Black culture that helped sustain many communities throughout the state – a history not taught in our schools. The evening will be interactive and instructive.

Sponsored by the Polk Community for Human Equality, the Rural Organizing Project & Oregon Humanities, WOU Black Student Union & Western Compass
 For the hearing impaired - ASL interpreters will be present.
 More info: www.forhumanequality.org

Oh... and this too, right after our conversation with Walidah:

A Hip Hop Concert - 8:30 p.m.
 in the Pacific Room, Featuring

Warren Snipes, best known as Wawa. A man of many talents. When you go to "Wawa's House", you'll be taken to a whole new level of music through DEAF eyes! Yes, deaf as in can't hear. He has been performing since childhood. Wawa takes his affection for poetry, creating beats and putting lyrics down to create a performance in sign language that will get you on your feet and have your body grooving along.



No charge for either program - and it's a nice capnote to our evening. We are invited!
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1	2	5	4	9	8	6	7	3
5	7	2	9	1	4	3	8	6
8	9	1	5	3	6	7	4	2
4	6	3	8	7	2	5	1	9
2	8	7	3	4	9	1	6	5
9	5	6	1	8	7	2	3	4
3	1	4	6	2	5	8	9	7

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