

Small-business & Ag HAPPENINGS

Hines Meat Company plans holiday open house

LA GRANDE — On Dec. 1, Hines Meat Company invites the community to celebrate the holidays at its third annual Christmas Open House. Stop by 2315 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. The local owners say, “Bring old friends and make a new tradition.” Call 541-975-2333 for more information.

Small business marketing and accounting seminars continue

ENTERPRISE — The Small Business Development Center is currently offering a series of marketing seminars and accounting seminars for small businesses. “Facebook for Business” will be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Nov. 27, focusing on creating a brand for your business and using Facebook to promote it. The four-part accounting series — improve your “language” skills by learning or refreshing your grasp of fundamental accounting concepts — begins at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 27. The seminars are held at the Wallowa Resources Stewardship Center, 401 NE First St., Enterprise. For cost and sign-up information, contact Andrea Fowler at afowler@bluecc.edu or 541-278-5833.

Bank of Eastern Oregon announces dividend for 2018

HEPPNER — The Board of Directors of BEO Bancorp voted to declare a \$0.85 per share dividend for 2018. The dividend will be paid to shareholders of record as of Dec. 3, payable on or before Dec. 14, according to President and CEO Jeff Bailey.

Board Chairman Joel Peterson said the corporation has paid a dividend 32 of the past 33 years, adding “Dividends reflect the financial stability and profitability of the bank.”

BEO Bancorp is the holding company for Bank of Eastern Oregon, which operates 14 branches and seven loan production offices in 12 Eastern Oregon and three Eastern Washington counties. For further information, go to www.beobank.com.

Oregon added 4,600 nonfarm jobs in October

SALEM — According to the Oregon Employment Department, Oregon’s nonfarm payroll employment grew by 4,600 jobs in October, following a revised gain of 4,700 jobs in September. Monthly gains in October were widespread, with nine of the top 13 industries adding jobs, led by professional and business services (+1,500 jobs), wholesale trade (+1,000 jobs) and government (+1,000 jobs). Only two major industries cut jobs substantially in October: private educational services, which lost 800 jobs, and financial activities, which lost 900 jobs.

Oregon’s unemployment rate was 3.8 percent in October, the same as in August and September. These were Oregon’s lowest unemployment rates since comparable records began in 1976. The U.S. unemployment rate held steady at 3.7 percent in both September and October.

Oregon’s nonfarm payroll employment has increased by 38,100 jobs, or 2 percent, since October 2017. In that time, construction remained the fastest growing industry at 8.2 percent. Health care and social assistance grew 2.6 percent, and professional and business services grew 2.2 percent. However, three of Oregon’s major industries slowed recently, with gains close to 1 percent since October 2017: financial activities, leisure and hospitality, and retail trade. Two industries declined over the year: information, down 0.3 percent, and private educational services, down 2.2 percent.

U.S. Cellular looks to sponsor local youth organizations

CHICAGO — Youth organizations in Oregon can earn up to \$1,000 through U.S. Cellular’s Community Connections program. Now in its fourth year, Community Connections provides sponsorship support to help youth groups pay for uniforms, equipment, travel and other group expenses. Since the program launched in 2015, U.S. Cellular has awarded \$1.3 million to more than 2,800 groups, including sports teams, STEM programs, marching bands and dance squads.

Academic and athletic groups representing kids and teens up to 12th grade can sign up at www.uscellular.com/communityconnections to become eligible to

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Aid for farmers stung by trade war has helped few

By Alan Rappeport
New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — America’s farmers have been shut out of foreign markets, hit with retaliatory tariffs and lost lucrative contracts in the face of President Donald Trump’s trade war. But a \$12 billion bailout program Trump created to “make it up” to farmers has done little to cushion the blow, with red tape and long waiting periods resulting in few payouts so far.

According to the Department of Agriculture, just \$838 million has been paid out to farmers since the first \$6 billion pot of money was made available in September. Another pool of up to \$6 billion is expected to become available next month.

The program, which is using a Depression-era fund, allows farmers earning less than \$900,000 a year to receive money if they produce one of the agricultural products that has faced retaliation. In some cases, the government is buying excess food such as apples and orange juice and giving it away through nutrition assistance programs.

Under the program, different types of commodities receive different rates — for instance, hog farmers get \$8 per head for 50 percent of their herd, while dairy farmers get 12 cents for every hundred pounds of milk — creating questions about equity.

The dairy industry has been particularly critical of the



WesCom News Service file photo

A \$12 billion bailout program created by President Donald Trump to “make it up” to farmers hurt by the trade war. Just \$838 million has been paid out so far.

program and, in a letter, asked the administration to rethink how it calculates subsidies and to make them more generous to dairy farmers. The milk federation expects dairy farmers to lose \$1.5 billion from the tariffs in the second half of this year and it has received only \$127 million in aid.

Many farmers are disappointed as the subsidies have not made up for their losses.

“I don’t think this is going to be enough to compensate them,” said Eric Belasco, an economist at Montana State University and a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. “It seems like there’s not really an end in sight.”



WesCom News Service file photo

A pool of \$6 billion was made available in September, and up to \$6 billion more should be made available next month.

BGood Bars selected as top five finalists in a field of 50

Local business owner participated in competition in Boise

By Katy Nesbitt
For The Observer

BGood Bars, a gourmet energy bar company in Joseph, is gaining national attention as some of the varieties of bars it makes have been chosen as finalists in competitions in both Boise and San Francisco.

Owner Judy Goodman said in October she participated in a “pitch” competition in Boise sponsored by Albertson’s, the grocery store chain. The BGood Bar entries were selected as

one of the top five finalists in a field of 50.

“We didn’t win, but got to meet with Albertson’s executives who wanted to put some of our products in one Boise Albertson’s store,” Goodman said.

BGood Bar entries were also selected as finalists in the annual Good Food Foundation awards.

Goodman said the foundation was created to empower small businesses to help change food culture.

“The Good Food Foundation promotes tasty, authentic and responsible food,” Goodman said.

This is the inaugural year of the foundation’s snack food category, to which Goodman entered her company’s Espresso Date Nut, Chia Blueberry and Cranberry Hemp bars.

Goodman said she will attend the foundation’s San Francisco awards ceremonies and an “untrade” show in January where retailers, like Whole Foods, REI and New Seasons, come and sample products.

To be a member of the foundation Goodman said food products don’t have to be organic, but cannot contain preservatives, artificial ingredients and must be non-GMO.

As a finalist, Goodman said

she had to provide documentation proving her ingredients passed the foundation’s requirements. She said most of her ingredients are from Azure Standard that meets the standards. The dark chocolate into which each bar is lovingly dipped, is not only non-GMO, but certified as fair trade.

In all, the competition has 2,000 entries.

“It’s a prestigious award if we win,” Goodman said.

To add to the prestige Goodman is receiving this year she said BGood Bars was written up in Seattle Met Mag as one of five Northwest brands of energy bars highlighted.

La Grande’s Gardner Building wins award

Observer staff

LA GRANDE — An iconic building in downtown La Grande recently was named as a winner of a 2018 Restore Oregon DeMuro Award. The Gardner Building, 1210 Adams Ave., was renovated by Dale and Virginia Mammen (owners and developers) in partnership with WC Construction Inc. and the City of La Grande.

According to a press release, the DeMuro Awards celebrate and honor exceptional historic rehabilitation and compatible infill projects across the state. Selected for extraordinary quality, creative problem-solving and notable community impact, DeMuro Award-winning projects showcase the best in preservation design and represent Oregon’s diverse culture and history through

architecture.

Also known as the Berry Building, the Gardner Building was erected in 1921 by John Gardner, an entrepreneur and railroad engineer. The building, which was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has housed many businesses on its ground floor over the past century.

However, its second story sat vacant for more than 50 years. Thanks to the vision and commitment of the Mammens, residents of La Grande, the Gardner Building is now home to four new apartments upstairs, and Community Merchants, a modern general store, occupies the refurbished ground floor.

The DeMuro Awards were presented to the winning restoration teams Nov. 2 at Restore Oregon’s Restoration Celebra-



Contributed photo

The Gardner Building in La Grande was recently named as a winner of a 2018 Restore Oregon DeMuro Award.

tion, an event that raised more than \$120,000 to save Oregon’s heritage.

Founded in 1977, Restore Oregon is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that advocates

for sound preservation policy and legislation. Its mission is to preserve, reuse and pass forward the historic places that create livable communities. For more, go to www.restoreoregon.org.