

## Small-business & Ag HAPPENINGS

### Dinner and trade show tables available for sponsorship

ENTERPRISE — The Wallowa County Chamber encourages businesses to participate in the Citizen Awards Banquet by sponsoring a dinner table or a trade show table, which provides an easy way to showcase your business and do some networking within the community.

The cost of a trade show table is \$10 and a table and tablecloth are provided. There is no fee for sponsoring a dinner table — the only cost is the decorations you provide on the table.

If you are interested in a trade show table contact Darlene Johnson at 541-426-3025. If you would like to become a table sponsor, contact Cammie Hale at 541-263-1087. The Citizen Awards Banquet will be held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Jan. 27, 2019, at Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise.

### Trivia Night returns to Side A

LA GRANDE — This winter, Trivia Night returns to Side A Brewing, 1219 Washington Ave., La Grande. Beginning at 8 p.m., the business hosts a trivia competition on Wednesdays. Come in from the cold and join the fun. More details are available at [www.sideabeer.com](http://www.sideabeer.com) or by emailing [sideabrewing@gmail.com](mailto:sideabrewing@gmail.com) or calling 541-605-0163.

### OTEC launches new incentive program

BAKER CITY — Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative announces the launch of a new incentive program for its members to upgrade their wood-burning devices with more efficient heating options.

The cooperative is offering two separate rebates — one for members wanting to retain their woodstoves and one for those wanting to remove their woodstoves.

Susie Snyder, OTEC's supervisor of energy programs, said the incentive program is a win for members, the local community and the cooperative.

"We know there are areas on our system that are struggling to meet EPA's air quality standards, and this new program gives a little more reason to invest in a new heating system," Snyder said.

Members will receive a \$650 rebate if they add an electric heat pump and retain their woodstove or a \$800 rebate if the woodstove is replaced with an electric heat pump. If the heat pump is purchased from a local vendor, there is an additional \$50 rebate on top of that.

"Mini-split heat pumps are a very efficient form of electric heat for our members that can help keep costs down while improving the air quality, particularly on the low air quality days," Snyder said.

Members interested in more information can contact their local OTEC office for more information.

"This rebate won't last forever," Snyder said. "This is a good time for members who have been thinking about upgrading their heating systems to give us a call and let us see how we can help them."

### Oregon Farm Bureau applauds new Clean Water Rule

SALEM — On Dec. 11, Oregon Farm Bureau President Sharon Waterman witnessed the signing of the new Clean Water Rule at the EPA headquarters in Washington, D.C., along with presidents from other State Farm Bureaus from across the nation.

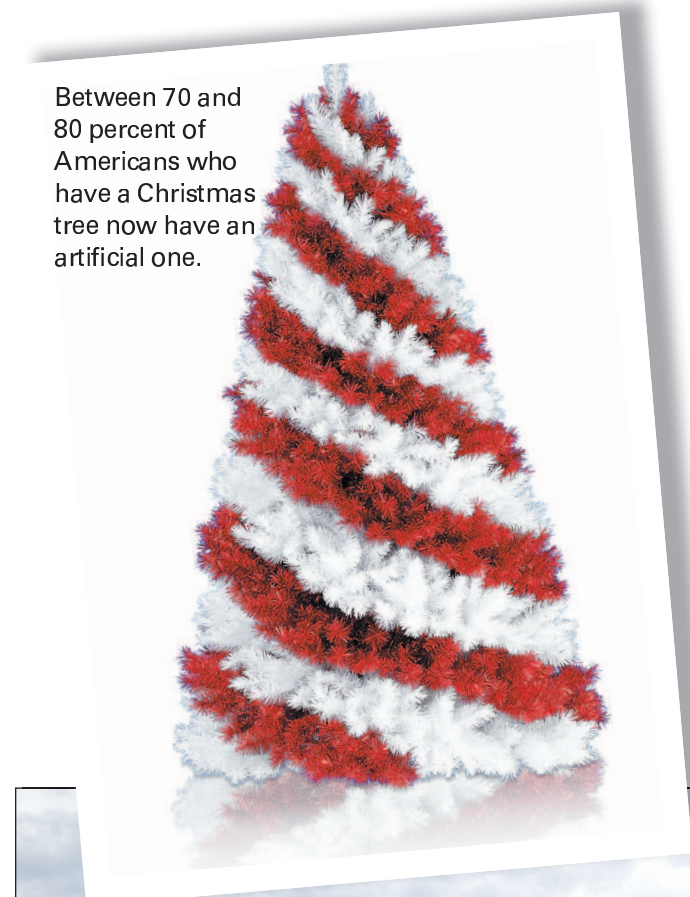
"Oregon Farm Bureau applauds the Environmental Protection Agency for listening to America's farmers and ranchers and taking a step in the right direction with the new Clean Water Rule," Waterman said in a press release. "Every day, Oregon's farmers and ranchers work very hard to maximize water efficiency and protect water quality because our livelihood and future depend on it, it's the law and it's simply the right thing to do. We hope the new rule will give Oregon's farmers and ranchers the ability to productively work the land without constant fear of litigation, costly permits, or risk of enormous fines for even basic farm practices."

The Oregon Farm Bureau was active in the years-long campaign beseeching the EPA to overturn what Waterman called the "unworkable and impractical" 2015 Waters of the U.S. definition.

"The fact that we have a new Clean Water Rule is a testament to the power of Farm Bureau's grassroots membership," she said.

Waterman is an OFB Hall of Fame honoree and operates a Century Ranch raising sheep, cattle and timber in Bandon. She is OFB's 16th president.

# Christmas tree farmers combat popularity of artificial trees



Between 70 and 80 percent of Americans who have a Christmas tree now have an artificial one.

■ Younger families are opting to get artificial trees instead of the real thing because it's easier

By Gillian Flaccus  
The Associated Press

TUALATIN — Rosa Villarreal's three young sons jumped and ran around the field of Christmas trees like jackrabbits, their excitement palpable as they raced from evergreen to evergreen. The boys, ages 2, 4 and 6, were picking out a real tree this year — a new tradition their young parents hope will create lasting memories.

"I saw this video where the big tree, the mom decorates it, and the little tree, the kids get to decorate it," she said, as her husband, Jason Jimenez, snapped a photo of their toddler posing with a tiny tree just his size.

Christmas tree farmers across the U.S. worry families like Villarreal's are slowly dwindling. Artificial trees, once crude imitations of an evergreen, are now so realistic that it's hard to tell they are fakes even though many are conveniently pre-strung with lights and can fold up for storage at the push of a button.

Between 75 and 80 percent of Americans who have a Christmas tree now have an artificial one, and the \$1 billion market for fake trees is growing at about 4 percent a year — even though they can be reused again and again.

To combat this trend, Christmas

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Christmas tree farmers across the U.S. worry families are less likely to buy real Christmas trees. Artificial trees, once crude imitations of an evergreen, are now so realistic that it's hard to tell they are fakes even though many are conveniently pre-strung with lights and can fold up for storage at the push of a button.

## How the demise of Toys R Us impacts holiday sales

By Taylor Telford  
The Washington Post

The whirlwind of the holidays often leaves even the most organized shoppers scrambling as Christmas draws closer, but experts say if you're trying to snag hot toys at the last minute this year, you'll probably head home empty-handed — yet another shift in the first holiday season sans Toys R Us.

Since Toys R Us liquidated its stores this year, many of the biggest names in retail have angled to snag a piece of the former heavyweight's business. Amazon, Walmart and Target have been leading the pack, introducing toy

catalogs and substantially increasing their toy inventories. But their strategies reflect businesses that aren't toy-centric outside the holiday season, which means they're aiming to sell out by the time the stockings are stuffed, according to Adrienne Appell, senior director of strategic communications for the Toy Association.

"This is the first time a lot of these stores are stepping into the toy market in a big way," Appell said. "You're going to see toys in a lot more places this year, but they also want to make sure they're not left with inventory."

Nearly half of sales in the \$3.3 billion U.S. toy industry happen

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— Adrienne Appell, senior director of strategic communications for the Toy Association

during the holidays, according to research from the NPD Group, with business getting progressively busier closer to Christmas. For Toys R Us, which commanded about 12 percent of the U.S. toy market in 2017 according to NPD, last-minute dependability was a unique highlight in its strategy.

"The difference between Toys R Us and everyone else is that Toys R Us would want their shelves to be fully stocked toward the end of the year," Appell said. "If you didn't have something in the 11th hour, you could walk into Toys R Us and expect their shelves to be full."

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## Four tech tasks to keep your parents safer online

All of us are vulnerable to fraud. But the ways some older people use technology can put them at higher risk.

That's where you come in. When you're home for the holidays, or the next time you visit your folks, offer to help with a few tasks that can keep your parents safer online.

### Check privacy settings

Identity thieves glean details from social media accounts that they can use to impersonate others. Unfortunately, many people have no idea how much information they're exposing to the world.

"If you've never changed



NERD WALLET  
LIZ WESTON

your Facebook privacy settings, everything you post can be seen by everyone," said Doug Shadel, AARP's lead researcher on consumer fraud and author of "Outsmarting the Scam Artists."

Your mom may love the birthday greetings on her special day, for example. But publicly posting birthdates, full names, addresses, relationship status, hometowns and other key details just makes it easier for someone else to answer security questions that give access to Mom's accounts,

Shadel said.

Facebook offers a privacy checkup link, accessible via the question mark at the top of every page, that allows people to quickly adjust some of their settings. Also show your folks how to access their privacy settings from the drop-down menu to the right of the question mark. Then, tackle any other social media sites they use. If you're not sure where the privacy settings are or what to change, search the site's name plus "privacy settings."

### Boost login security

Security experts say it's essential to:

- Use strong passwords of

eight characters or more.

- Never reuse passwords.
- Add two-factor authentication when possible.

People older than 65 are actually less likely to reuse passwords than younger people, an AARP survey found. Only 36 percent of the older crowd use the same password on more than one site, compared with 55 percent of those ages 18 to 49.

That may be because older people have fewer accounts to keep track of, Shadel said. Anyone who has more than a handful of passwords quickly realizes how hard it is to keep track of them all. To stay safe, Shadel recom-

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