

Small-business & Ag HAPPENINGS

Chaves Consulting is focus of Pub Talk

LA GRANDE — The EOU Entrepreneurship Club, in partnership with Eastern Oregon Ventures, has another Pub Talk scheduled for March 7 at the Fire House Museum, 1219 Washington Ave., La Grande. The guest speakers will be Richard and Kathleen Chaves, who together built one of the largest IT outsourcing firms in the region, Chaves Consulting Inc. Their customers include the states of Oregon, Iowa, Missouri, and Wyoming, and they have a regional data center in Baker City. Richard also serves on the Board of Trustees for Eastern Oregon University. CCI was selected as Baker County's Business of the Year in 2012. Richard and Kathleen will share their entrepreneurial journey at the Pub Talk. You can read more about the history of the company at www.chavesconsulting.com.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and the talk begins at 6 p.m. Informal networking will follow the talk. This event is open to students, entrepreneurs and the community. The event will be livestreamed for those who cannot be here in person: <https://livestream.com/eou/EntrepreneurClub>.

UC Chamber calls for table sponsorship

LA GRANDE — The 85th annual Union County Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet will take place April 12. The theme this year is "All In' For Union County: A Night in Monte Carlo." The event begins at 5:30 p.m. at the Blue Mountain Conference Center, 404 12th St., La Grande.

The Chamber is seeking sponsors for the event. Table locations will be arbitrarily assigned. Tables are round and seat eight in total. Sponsors will decorate their own table, and they are encouraged to have a host and/or hostess seated at the table to represent their business. Two tickets will be reserved for the host/hostess. Giving favors and gifts to those seated at your table is customary. To sponsor a table and purchase tickets, contact Kelley at 541-963-8588 or kelly@visitunioncounty.org.

Workshop offered on becoming an Oregon Benefit Company

ENTERPRISE, LA GRANDE, BAKER CITY — In March, the Northeast Oregon Economic Development District and Benefit Corporations for Good will provide a special opportunity to learn about creating or converting to an Oregon benefit company with a workshop. Benefit companies are a growing business movement to build healthy and equitable communities. Entrepreneurs and companies are discovering how to positively impact the world while making a profit. The movement focuses on what is called the "triple bottom line": people, planet and profit. These companies are called benefit companies, benefit corporations and B Corps, and they operate under different rules than other businesses.

In this hands-on workshop, BCG's Tom Hering will provide an overview of the benefit corporation model. The workshop will be held March 20 at noon at the IGNITE E-Center, 104 Depot St., in La Grande, and then at 6 p.m. at Launch Pad Baker, 2019 Main St., in Baker City. The evening workshop will include a presentation by attorney Kim Mosier and will be simulcast at the Enterprise City Library, 101 NE First St. Register at <https://goo.gl/forms/PABgapjEDNPmLWJj2>.

IRS waives estimated tax penalty for farmers who file and pay tax by April 15

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Internal Revenue Service will waive the estimated tax penalty for any qualifying farmer or fisherman who files his or her 2018 federal income tax return and pays any tax due by April 15. The IRS is providing this relief because, due to certain rule changes, many farmers and fishermen may have difficulty accurately determining their tax liability by the March 1 deadline that usually applies to them. For tax year 2018, an individual who received at least two-thirds of his or her total gross income from farming or fishing during either 2017 or 2018 qualifies as a farmer or fisherman.

To be eligible for the waiver, qualifying taxpayers must attach Form 2210-F, available on irs.gov, to their 2018 income tax return. This form can be submitted either

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Courtesy photo

The annual Titanic dinner gives participants a look into what happened on the fateful trip that left 2,000 people dead in 1912. The event, which was created by John Lamoreau and Merlyn Baker, is part museum, part luxury dinner, and part dinner theater.

TITANIC DINNER PROVIDES AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE

Annual dinner about

'unsinkable' ship in April

By Francisca Benitez, The Observer

Most know the incredible story of the Titanic, the "unsinkable" ship that carried more than 2,000 passengers and famously sank after colliding with an iceberg in the Atlantic ocean on April 15, 1912.

The story of the ship continues to capture the imagination of many. It may come as a surprise, but one of the best ways to experience an evening on the Titanic is right here in La Grande.

The Titanic Dinner is an annual event created by John Lamoreau and Merlyn Baker that is part museum, part luxury dinner, and part dinner theater. It takes place on April 13 and tickets are \$300. There are only 40 total seats available.

Lamoreau is a dedicated history buff and a teacher at La Grande High School. He said he has had a passion for collecting historic items since he was a little boy.

"My wife says I'm a pack rat,

but I love history," he said.

The event originated when Lamoreau was sitting in Foley Station in 2007. Foley Station was a restaurant that was a staple of fine cuisine in La Grande for 15 years. An idea occurred to him, and he presented the restaurant's chef, Merlyn Baker, a two-paragraph pitch with his idea for a dinner that would have authentic dishes from the Titanic and would transport diners back to 1912.

"We had no idea how popular it would be. Now we've had people from other states and other countries come," Lamoreau said.

The unique combination of Baker's culinary skills and

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“All the components that make up this dinner are what make it so unique. Those components make it different than any other dinner we've ever heard of.”

— Chef Merlyn Baker



Courtesy photo

Tickets are \$300 each and include a 13-course meal. There are 40 seats available, and the event will be held April 13.

TICKETS FOR SALE

The Titanic Dinner will take place April 13. Tickets are \$300 and seating is very limited.

To inquire about tickets, contact Merlyn Baker at 541-786-0123.

Oregon announces 2018 workplace deaths

Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services

SALEM — Thirty-five people covered by the Oregon workers' compensation system died on the job in 2018, according to preliminary figures issued today by the Department of Consumer and Business Services. That's the same as 2017's figure. Total fatality counts in 2014, 2015 and 2016 were 31, 27 and 29, respectively, meaning that 2017 and 2018 saw the highest totals in recent years. Averaged over five years, there were approximately 31 on-the-job deaths annually.

Whether the numbers go up or down, or stay the same, DCBS is always cautious about drawing conclusions based on

single-year comparisons of fatality data, which can be affected by a number of factors and may not represent a trend. The 2018 numbers are preliminary and will not be finalized until early 2020.

"Through enforcement and education, we have made major advancements in our struggle against workplace death," said Michael Wood, administrator for Oregon OSHA. "However, there are still far too many workers who die from things we know how to prevent."

The agriculture, forestry and fishing industry saw the largest concentration of deaths in 2018, with nine workers killed in that industry. Seven of those people

worked in logging. Transportation and warehousing, which includes truck transportation, had seven deaths. There were five deaths in the wholesale trade industry.

Overall, workplace deaths are down significantly compared to previous decades, as illustrated by compensable fatality rates, which track the number of accepted fatal claims per 100,000 workers. In 2002, for example, the fatality rate was 3.3. In 2016, it was 1.6. That means the worker fatality rate in Oregon dropped by about half over a 15-year period. By way of context, the fatality rate in 1987 was 7.1. And the fatality rate has steadily come down despite a

significantly larger workforce.

While fatalities are significantly down compared to previous decades, the overall downward trend appears to have flattened out. From 2011 to 2017, for example, the compensable fatality rate hovered at, or near, 1.8 for five of those seven years. Meanwhile, compensable fatality data are not the only way to gauge the reality of death in the workplace.

Another barometer is the Workplace Fatalities in Oregon program, which tracks on-the-job deaths regardless of workers' compensation status. The program — a more comprehensive method of identifying

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