

Small-business & Ag HAPPENINGS

Tri-County Equipment employee recognized for commitment

LA GRANDE — Chet Stockhoff, a parts department employee for Tri-County Equipment — an agricultural equipment dealership chain with locations in Enterprise, Baker City and La Grande — was recently recognized by John Deere for his masters degree in parts.

The award represents a commitment from Stockhoff investing the time to participate in hundreds of hours of classes and studying for three to four years to complete the degree. John Deere University combines classroom, online and interactive online classes to achieve the degree. Stockhoff has worked for Tri-County Equipment for 19 years and continues training as part of an ongoing education. He joins six other Tri-County employees who have obtained their masters and are committed to keeping up with continuous changes in technology and the industry.

Welcome Old West credit union to town tomorrow

LA GRANDE — The Union County Chamber officially welcomes Old West Federal Credit Union to town with a ribbon-cutting and open house from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. March 14. The public is invited to come by 3 Depot St., La Grande, to see what's new and enjoy snacks, treats, drinks and giveaways.

Survey seeks to identify local business challenges

ENTERPRISE — The Wallowa Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Development Center at Blue Mountain Community College are working together to identify the business challenges local business owners are facing. A survey that circulated last summer has been revived in order to gather information so that all businesses may be better served. The brief survey may be accessed at www.surveymonkey.com/r/Q82PFP2.

Economist talks about impacts of government shutdown on Eastern Oregon

PENDLETON — Chris Rich, Eastern Oregon regional economist with the Oregon Employment Department, will speak about the government shutdown and its implications for Eastern Oregon at a special presentation set for 7 p.m. March 19 at Blue Mountain Community College (room ST-200), 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. Admission to "After the Shutdown: The Significance of Federal Employment in Eastern Oregon" is \$5 at the door. For more information, call Karen Parker at 541-966-3177.

Interested in a financial advisor career?

LA GRANDE — Financial services firm Edward Jones is having a "See What's Next" networking dinner and Career Development Program informational event from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. March 19 at Mamacita's International Grill, 2003 Fourth St., La Grande. The event is for students who are interested in financial adviser career with Edward Jones, which offers a Financial Advisor Internship and Career Development Program. RSVP by contacting Brittany Seavert at the Eastern Oregon University Career Center at Brittany.Seavert@edwardjones.com or 541-963-2608.

The Edward Jones company ranks No. 7 on the 2019 Fortune "100 Best Companies to Work For" list, according to global research and consulting firm Great Place to Work and Fortune magazine. This year marks the firm's 20th year on the list.

Roadkill as meat: Why states are legalizing

By Matt Vasilogambros
Stataline.org

NAMPA, Idaho — It's taco night at the Lindskoog household in this suburban community 20 miles west of Boise. Nate Lindskoog has seasoned the red meat sizzling in his cast-iron skillet with a mixture of chili powder and Himalayan pink salt. In a few minutes, he will wrap it in corn tortillas and top it off with lime-soaked avocados.

The 36-year-old father of six isn't making carne asada with meat he bought from a butcher or at the grocery store. Instead, he's searing venison from a deer killed by a car on Lake Avenue.

"That is just fine," he said, taking a bite of the cilantro- and onion-garnished taco. "I've had worse tacos in restaurants that were \$10. This was free, laying on the side of the road."

Cooking some roadkill is legal now in Idaho, Oregon and a few

other states — and it's probably good for wildlife and public safety alike.

Between 1 million and 2 million large animals are hit by vehicles every year in the United States in accidents that kill 200 people and cost nearly \$8.4 billion in damages, according to estimates from the Federal Highway Administration.

Instead of wasting roadkill or mocking it as hillbilly cuisine, Idaho is tracking the carnage and allowing residents to salvage the carcasses to reduce the number of vehicle-animal collisions and feed hungry people. More states are joining Idaho, letting people like Lindskoog reclaim fresh, nutrient-dense, grass-fed meat that might otherwise end up as a grease stain on the highway.

Lindskoog has salvaged three deer, a couple of times getting a tip from a sheriff's deputy about an accident near his home. At



Matt Vasilogambros/Pew Charitable Trusts/TNS

Nate Lindskoog and his son Jett, 8, cook venison tacos with caramelized onions in their Nampa, Idaho, home. The deer was killed by a car a year earlier.

a safe distance off the highway shoulder, he can butcher all the meat he wants in 30 minutes or less, later freezing it to be used in a year's worth of meals.

As a conservationist, he's eager to let the coyotes, eagles

and the rest of the ecosystem take care of what remains.

"This was a living thing," he said. "It's the most respectful thing to do if wild game dies.

It's the best way to dignify its

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Tom Brenner/ForTheNewYorkTimes

President Donald Trump's \$4.75 trillion budget blueprint on Capitol Hill in Washington, March 11. House Democrats must now work out a blueprint for governing that will define the party on health care, taxation, climate change and other policy matters that have dogged the new majority since it took control.

Record-breaking deficit proposed

By Lisa Mascaro
AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump proposed a record \$4.7 trillion budget on Monday, pushing the federal deficit past \$1 trillion but counting on optimistic growth, accounting shuffles and steep domestic cuts to bring future spending into balance in 15 years.

Reviving his border wall fight with Congress, Trump wants more than \$8 billion for the barrier with Mexico, and he's also asking for a big boost in military spending. That's alongside steep cuts in health care and economic support programs for the poor that Democrats — and even some Republicans — will oppose.

Trump called his plan a bold next step for a nation experiencing "an economic miracle." House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called his cuts "cruel and shortsighted ... a roadmap to a sicker, weaker America."

Presidential budgets tend to be seen as aspirational blueprints, rarely becoming enacted policy, and Trump's proposal for the new fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, sets up a showdown with Congress over priorities, especially as he reignites his push for money to build the U.S.-Mexico border wall.

The deficit is projected to hit \$1.1 trillion in the 2020 fiscal year, the highest in a decade. The administration is counting on robust growth, including from the Republican tax

cuts — which Trump wants to make permanent — to push down the red ink. Some economists, though, say the bump from the tax cuts is waning, and they project slower economic expansion in coming years. The national debt is \$22 trillion.

Even with his own projections, Trump's budget would not come into balance for a decade and a half, rather than the traditional hope of balancing in 10.

Titled "A Budget for a Better America: Promises Kept. Taxpayers First," Trump's proposal "embodies fiscal responsibility," said Russ Vought, the acting director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Despite the large projected deficits, Vought said the administration has "prioritized reining in reckless Washington spending" and shows "we can return to fiscal sanity."

The budget calls the approach "MAGAnomics," after the president's "Make America Great Again" campaign slogan.

Some fiscal watchdogs, though, panned the effort as more piling on of debt by Trump with no course correction in sight.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, said Trump "relies on far too many accounting gimmicks and fantasy assumptions and puts forward far too few actual solutions." She warned the debt load will lead

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Gene-edited food quietly arrives in restaurant cooking oil

By Candice Choi
AP Food and Health writer

NEW YORK — Somewhere in the Midwest, a restaurant is frying foods with oil made from gene-edited soybeans. That's according to the company making the oil, which says it's the first commercial use of a gene-edited food in the U.S.

Calyxt said it can't reveal its first customer for competitive reasons, but CEO Jim Blome said the oil is "in use and being eaten."

The Minnesota-based company is hoping the announcement will encourage the food industry's interest in the oil, which it says has no trans fats and a longer shelf life than other soybean oils. Whether demand builds remains to be seen, but the oil's transition into the food supply signals gene editing's potential to alter foods without the controversy of conventional GMOs, or genetically modified organisms.

Among the other gene-edited crops being explored: Mushrooms that don't brown, wheat with more fiber, better-producing tomatoes, herbicide-tolerant canola and rice that doesn't absorb soil pollution as it grows.

Unlike conventional GMOs, which are made by injecting DNA from other organisms, gene editing lets scientists alter traits by snipping out or adding specific genes in a lab. Startups including Calyxt say their crops do not qualify as GMOs because what they're doing could theoretically be achieved with traditional crossbreeding.

So far, U.S. regulators have agreed and said

several gene-edited crops in development do not require special oversight. It's partly why companies see big potential for gene-edited crops.

"They've been spurred on by the regulatory decisions by this administration," said Greg Jaffe of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a health watchdog group.

But given the many ways gene editing can be used, Jaydee Hanson of the Center for Food Safety said regulators should consider the potential implications of each new crop. He cited the example of produce gene-edited to not brown.

"You've designed it to sit around longer. Are there problems with that?" he said.

Already, most corn and soy grown in the U.S. are herbicide-tolerant GMOs. Just last week, regulators cleared a hurdle for salmon genetically modified to grow faster. The fish is the first genetically modified animal approved for human consumption in the U.S.

Though regulators say GMOs are safe, health and environmental worries have persisted, and companies will soon have to disclose when products have "bioengineered" ingredients.

Calyxt says its oil does not qualify as a GMO. The oil is made from soybeans with two inactivated genes to produce more heart-healthy fats and no trans fats. The company says the oil also has a longer shelf life, which could reduce costs for food makers or result in longer-lasting products.

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