

Small businesses are intricately woven into our lives

By **Jeremy Field**

I have a challenge for you: Try to go one day without having a small business impact your life. In fact, try to go one day without having at least a dozen small businesses touch your day. It's impossible. And it's something that makes me proud.

There are nearly 378,000 small businesses in Oregon. Beyond the two out of three net new jobs they create, and beyond their employment of half the state's workforce, small businesses are woven into the fabric of our daily lives.

Consider an average day. You wake up in your home that was built by small contractors. The framers, roofers, electricians, plumbers and painters were all likely from local small businesses.

Your breakfast — be it the milk, the juice, the cereal, the eggs, the toast, the jam — all came from a farm. And given our local agricul-

tural abundance, it's very likely it was sourced locally.

The business that paved the roads of your commute, the businesses that repair the car, bus, bike or plane you ride to work — or the businesses that built those parts for these modes of transportation — are most likely small businesses too.

The coffee shop where you meet a client or friend, the playground where you take your children, or the dental office where you get your teeth cleaned all have small business written all over them.

These are the local heroes we celebrate during National Small Business Week — entrepreneurs like Marshall Doyle from Cal-Cert Company, the SBA 2019 Oregon Small Business Person of the Year, who contributed to the safety of many people in our state by providing calibration and certification of testing equipment used in the construction, aerospace and automotive industries.

Every year since 1963, National

Small Business Week has been a time to shine a spotlight on the impact of small businesses on our economy and communities. During this year's celebration, May 5-11, I challenge you to take a moment to realize how many touchpoints you have with small businesses every day. It's something we often take for granted.

As you reflect on those small businesses that seamlessly weave into your day, consider the people behind the businesses. America's progress has been driven by pioneers who think big, take risks and work hard.

And consider the social impact small business owners have. Take Marshall for example. Not only does he create jobs and economic opportunities for people in Oregon — his company's success has allowed him to give back to his community. He volunteers as a mentor through the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) network at Clackamas Community College and is actively involved in local high schools and

Portland State University.

It's a way for Marshall to pay forward the guidance he received from the SBDC earlier in the business' history. With help from SBDC advisers, he was able to turn the company from the brink of bankruptcy and grow its market share to 41 states and 13 countries while increasing gross revenue 18-fold.

Small business owners are one of our state's greatest resources. The SBA is proud to be a thread in the fabric of what small business owners weave to achieve. During National Small Business Week, join me in honoring the small businesses and entrepreneurs that are woven into our lives.

Jeremy Field is the regional administrator for the U.S. Small Business Administration's Pacific Northwest region, which serves Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Alaska. The SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small businesses with resources to start, grow, expand or recover.

BRIEFS

Continued from Page 1B

"It's rewarding and extremely beneficial to spend time with our firm's visionaries and colleagues who are so accomplished," Mangum said. "I've returned energized and with lots of fresh ideas to share with my clients."

Mangum and Branch Office Administrators Keri Hagerman, Kim Heitstuman and Brittany Seavert may be reached at 541-963-2608. The office is located at 1117 Adams Ave., La Grande. For more details, visit Mangum's website at edwardjones.com/shawn-mangum.

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Pacific Power brings new metering technology to Eastern Oregon

PENDLETON — Pacific Power is bringing more efficient and effective smart meters to residential and business customers in Eastern Oregon, replacing thousands of aging electric meters throughout the spring and summer. About 22,000 new meters will be installed in Adams, Arlington, Athena, Boardman, Echo, Enterprise, Helix, Hermiston, Imnaha, Joseph, Lostine, Milton-Freewater, Pendleton, Pilot Rock, Rieth, Stanfield, Umatilla, Wallowa and Weston.

The installations are set to begin the week of May 13 and will continue until August. The project is part of a statewide rollout of 590,000 smart meters that began in January 2018. The new smart meters will instantly track outages; let customers view their power usage hour-by-hour, so they can adjust their activity to reduce both their carbon footprint and bill; and provide businesses with detailed usage reporting, which will help cut costs.

Smart meters are a key component to updating the energy grid originally built for technology from 100 years ago. This update will allow he grid to work more efficiently and better integrate renewable power sources. The meters also help Pacific Power hold down operating costs, improve customer service and reliability while maintaining security and customer privacy.

There is no charge for the installation or the meter. For more information on what customers can expect during the installation process, go to www.pacificpower.net/smart-meter or call 866-869-8520.

Pacific Power provides electric service to more than 740,000 customers in Oregon, Washington and California. The company works to meet growing energy demand while protecting and enhancing the environment. Pacific Power is part of PacifiCorp, one of the lowest-cost electricity producers in the United States, with 1.9 million customers in six states.

Chinese team heads to Washington to salvage trade talks

By **Joe McDonald**

The Associated Press

BEIJING — Efforts to end a U.S.-China trade war are in shambles after the United States accused China of reneging on its commitments and prepared to raise import taxes on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods.

A Chinese delegation is headed to Washington to salvage talks aimed at resolving a dispute over China's aggressive push to challenge American technological dominance. Negotiations are set to resume Thursday.

The setback in negotiations caught financial markets by surprise, and the U.S. stocks fell Tuesday for the second straight day. For weeks, Trump administration officials had suggested that negotiators were making steady progress.

China confirmed Tuesday its economy czar, Vice Premier Liu He, will lead China's delegation, ending speculation that he'd skip the talks or that the Chinese team would back out altogether.

The announcement suggests President Xi Jinping's government is putting its

desire to end a conflict that has battered Chinese exporters ahead of the political need to look tough in the face of U.S. pressure.

The decision to have Liu take part in talks might keep alive hopes the two biggest global economies could make peace as early as this week.

The Trump administration is pressing Beijing to roll back plans for government-led development of Chinese global competitors in robotics, electric cars and other technologies. Washington, Europe, Japan and other trading partners say those violate China's market-opening commitments and are based in part on stolen technology.

Trump's announcement Sunday that he would increase tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese imports to 25% from 10% on Friday caused global stock markets to plunge. Markets steadied after a Chinese spokesman said Monday that envoys still were preparing to go to the United States, though there was no word then whether Liu would take part.

The American side is led by Trade Representa-

tive Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

A Commerce Ministry statement announcing Liu's plans gave no indication whether other details, such as the size of his delegation, might change.

Washington and Beijing have raised tariffs on billions of dollars of each other's exports, disrupting trade in goods from soybeans to medical equipment. Estimates of lost potential sales so far range as high as \$25 billion.

Both governments have said negotiations were making progress, but Trump expressed frustration Sunday at the pace.

Mnuchin said Monday that Chinese officials "were trying to go back on some of the language" that had been negotiated in 10 earlier rounds of talks.

In response, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang, said Beijing "is sincere in continuing consultations."

Asked whether China took Trump's threat seriously, Geng said similar situations had happened "many times before."

"We hope the United

States can still work together with China," Geng said at a news briefing. "On the basis of mutual respect and equality, we will resolve each other's legitimate concerns and strive to reach an agreement of mutual benefit and win-win."

The decision to send Liu to Washington as scheduled shows China "urgently hopes to reach an agreement," said Ma Hong, a professor at Tsinghua University's School of Economics and Management.

"They couldn't abandon it just because of a Twitter comment," Ma said.

The conflict is testing how far Beijing is willing to go in changing a state-led economic model it sees as the path to prosperity and global influence — and how much power Washington will have to enforce any agreement.

The United States accuses Beijing of pressing foreign companies to hand over technology in exchange for market access, improperly subsidizing Chinese firms and stealing American trade secrets.

No details of the talks have been released. But private sector analysts say

Beijing is willing to change details of its plans so long as it preserves the ruling Communist Party's dominant economic role.

The Trump administration has imposed 10% tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese imports and 25% tariffs on another \$50 billion. The Chinese have retaliated by targeting \$110 billion in U.S. imports.

Trump said Sunday he also planned to impose 25% tariffs on another \$325 billion in Chinese products. That would extend penalties to everything China ships to the United States, its biggest foreign customer.

A stumbling block in the talks is U.S. insistence on an enforcement mechanism with penalties if Beijing fails to keep its promises. The Trump administration wants to keep tariffs on Chinese imports to maintain leverage over Beijing.

Chinese negotiators have balked at what economists say they might see as giving Washington too much control.

"It is not completely an economic issue," Ma said. "After all, it concerns the rights of a sovereign country."

CREDIT

Continued from Page 1B

there is at least 20% equity), titled land and equipment are likely options as a means of securing the loan.

Conditions: The borrower's conditions and that of local and national economies are important

factors. If a person is on the verge of losing his or her home to foreclosure or if other assets such as vehicles are being repossessed, now is not the time to be borrowing more money. While the status of the economy may not be the determining factor in obtaining a loan, a person may very well have to demonstrate how their business will buck the trend

that is affecting everyone else.

While the Five Cs of Credit are in place and suitable to the lender, there is a much better chance the business will be successful.

Greg Smith is the director for Baker County Economic Development. The office is located at 1705 Main St., Suite 500, in Baker City. In Baker

County, he can be reached at 541-523-5460 or bakercountyedc@gmail.com. Smith is also the director of Eastern Oregon University's Small Business Development Center, which has its headquarters at the Integrated Services Building, 1607 Gekeler Lane, Room 148, La Grande. In Union County, he can be reached at 541-962-1532 or eousbdc@gmail.com.

STORE

Continued from Page 1B

new and modern brands of merchandise, including medical-grade footwear for diabetic patients and others, braces for knees and wrists, and specialty order footwear.

"There's always been great quality here, and I always got my shoes here. I was so lucky to have a great start here, but I also wanted to add some things to help pick it up a little more," Simonis said. "I wanted to bring in some more top quality brands and really cover all the footwear needs."

Simonis was born and raised in La Grande. He was home schooled and put in three years at Eastern Oregon University. He received his education in running a business through his family. "My dad started the business, R & C Liquidators, in 1986, selling toys," Simonis said. "Then in 1987, they moved to this (Bearco Loop) location and renamed it R & C Family Store and have been selling footwear

ever since.

"As I grew up, I helped my dad run other businesses," he added.

R & C Family Store's inventory is 90% footwear, but the business also sells clothing by Filson and other brand names, along with some quality sportswear and fun items such as handmade knives from Finland.

"The Filson rep and the Danner rep will be present at the grand reopening," Simonis said. "We just started selling Island World women's designer swimsuits, and we'll also have a rep from the knife company."

The grand reopening will include a ribbon cutting ceremony with the Union County Chamber of Commerce present. Hines Meat Co. will be cooking outside, offering barbecued pork, beef brats and Pepsi beverages.

"We'll have five drawings and our Danner rep will have some giveaways," Simonis added. "We'll be running some sales on footwear like a few of the Danners, some Adidas and

some of the kids' shoes. It will be a good time to come and see what we have."

Simonis said he's in the midst of negotiations with a sales representative to offer accessories such as purses and briefcases. If those are lined up in time, he will show some of those products at the event.

In addition to all-around footwear for kids and adults, R & C offers footwear for firefighters and hikers. Some of the brands the store carries are Whites, Oboz and Kenetrek extreme boot and hiking footwear. Simonis also recently acquired the distributorship for Sorel footwear, which includes a variety of products, from boots to very fashionable dress shoes.

"If you need a shoe, our goal is to have it here," he said. "We just got in our new women's line of Alegria footwear for people like nurses who are on their feet a lot, and we're also getting in our guy's line of this brand — for active people on the go."

R & C Family Store car-

ries Adidas, Traq through Alegria, Oboz and Bear Paw for sportswear and hiking. They also carry the Keen Utility, Red Wing and Whites boots like the Hawthornes, handmade at the factory in Spokane, Washington.

"Whites can do specialty boots," he said. "I can size people for them or I can draw outlines and send them in, so if somebody has one foot wider than the other, we can actually get them into a good fit for their foot. We are also the local Wolverine dealer, and we've got the high-quality Viking rain gear and working clothing by Kie, Big Bill and Berne, as well as outdoor clothing by Ice Breaker. R & C Family Store has lots of options to offer."

R & C Family Store employs two customer service staff, members Megan Demirjian and Joshua Annas, who will help customers find what they need.

"We're excited about the store, and we've put our hearts into it," Simonis said. "We want to give La Grande

the best we can, so come down and meet our staff at the grand reopening and ribbon cutting."

His wife, Malena, is from Union, and together they are raising two children, Josiah and Camille.

The store is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. For customer inquiries, call 541-963-8898 or visit R & C Family Store on Facebook for sales announcements.

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