

Pandemic may boost demand for real Christmas trees

By Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Press

SALEM — Though the coronavirus outbreak is expected to disrupt some aspects of the holiday season, that's not necessarily a bad omen for Christmas tree farmers.

The vast majority of consumers — 92% — expects the pandemic will change this year's Christmas celebrations, according to a survey commissioned by the Christmas Tree Promotion Board.

However, the survey has

found that consumers are now more likely to appreciate "simple pleasures" and focus on creating new traditions.

Among consumers who expect the pandemic to alter their celebrations, 39% say they're more likely to buy a real Christmas tree, compared to 21% who say they're less likely to do so.

"Clearly, the thought process is leaning toward experience, toward making the holiday a bright part of the year," said Marsha Gray, executive director of

the promotion board, which raises funds for industry research and promotions.

The expectation of stronger demand for real Christmas trees isn't entirely surprising, as a similar phenomenon has occurred during past disasters, Gray said.

"Consumers tend to turn toward things that make them feel good and happy," she said.

The board generally emphasizes the opportunity to create memories but has amended that mes-

sage by presenting real Christmas trees as a way to finish a bad year with good memories.

"Things haven't been so hot this year, so let's make them better at the end," Gray said.

The survey revealed that real Christmas trees have some advantages over artificial ones during the pandemic.

About 76% of consumers described real trees as an experience rather than a

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Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press, File

Workers load Christmas trees onto a pallet at Sunrise Tree Farm near Philomath. A new survey reveals the coronavirus pandemic may inspire more consumers to buy real trees.

104-year-old barn links generations

By Kathy Aney
East Oregonian

WESTON — The bright red barn rises steeply from emerald grass, its elegant arched roofline meeting blue sky.

Inside are echoes of past life, easily accessible to the imagination. The nickering of draft horses and mooing of dairy cows. The hollow thunk of milk hitting bucket. Lingering aromas of manure and freshly mowed hay.

The Winn barn in Weston so far has escaped the fate of thousands of barns decaying in fields across America. Maintaining such a barn against the relentless forces of nature is costly. Preston and Arlene Winn justified the expense by converting the barn into a wedding venue business in 2008, using most of the revenue to pay for maintenance.

Recently, the couple began passing ownership of the business to daughter Kendra Seymour and her husband, Tim. The energetic duo will shepherd the homestead into the next chapter of its long history.

Kendra's great-grandfather, George W. Winn, erected the structure 104 years ago after spending two years assembling supplies. Wood and cement arrived by rail from the Willamette Valley. In 1916, Winn and his neighbors raised the barn.

"It took 30 men, 30 days and \$3,000 to build it," said Preston.

The voluminous barn features a hay loft, shiplap floors and an arched roof. Its Gothic arch style is rare in the West, though common in England. The barn is built into a hillside so one could once drive a wagon into the loft to unload loose hay or grain into a chute for the livestock below. A dam on nearby Dry Creek generated electricity for the barn.

As years passed, the family's relationship with the barn changed. In early decades, dairy cows and draft horses inhabited the



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Preston and Arlene Winn, Waverly Seymour and Kendra and Tim Seymour pose on the lawn in front of their 104-year-old Gothic arch barn near Weston.



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

The Winn barn, in the gothic arch design, was built in 1916. George W. Winn spent two years assembling supplies in preparation on the building's construction.

place. Milk was transported to a creamery in Walla Walla. Wheat harvested from surrounding fields went into a grain bin in the center of the hayloft and flowed down via gravity. As farming technology improved and tractors replaced horses, the barn wasn't needed as

much. Sometime during the Depression, the family sold the dairy cows.

Preston remembers working in the barn as a boy. In later years, the barn provided a haven for his children. Daughter Kendra, a four-sport athlete at Weston-McEwen High School, practiced her bas-

ketball moves in the barn. She and brothers Ben and Daniel played half court games, the ball thudding on the shiplap floor. The siblings raised 4-H animals there too.

As the barn aged, the family looked for a way to

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Move a boon for local tax consultant

Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Kristin Jones, a licensed tax consultant who specializes in helping small businesses, took a big step 10 months ago.

Jones moved her bookkeeping business, J2K2 Books, out of her La Grande home and into an office building at 1614 Fifth St., formerly the home of a dental office. The move has proved to be fruitful.

"I like having a separation from home and work and the increased visibility," Jones said.

The greater visibility is enhanced by her business's eye catching blue, black and white J2K2 Books sign. The name reflects the initial letters of the first names of Kristin Jones' family — hers, her husband Jeremy and their son Jeremiah and daughter Kylie.

Jones said she likes helping small businesses because often the owners and their staff are extremely gifted at what they do but are only being held back by bookkeeping procedures she can easily help them with.

She has long enjoyed bookkeeping.

"I love numbers and solving problems," Jones said.

She started her bookkeeping service 10 years ago in Coos Bay. She moved to La Grande in 2015 when Eastern Oregon University hired her husband to work for its student housing office. Jones then operated her bookkeeping service from home before making her move earlier this year.

She studied accounting for two years at Southwestern Oregon Community College and was certified as a tax consultant in May by the Oregon Board of Tax Practitioners. Jones

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MOST RECENT LOCAL AREA CENTURY FARMS

WALLOWA COUNTY
Name of farm: Carman Ranch LLC
Location: 67357 Promise Road, Wallowa
Original owner: Jacob Weinhard
Year of property acquisition: 1913
Year of Century Farm designation: 2016

UNION COUNTY
Name of farm: Bingaman Enterprises
Location: 64088 McDonald Lane, La Grande
Original owner: Peter McDonald
Year of property acquisition: 1882
Year of Century Farm designation: 2015

BAKER COUNTY
Name of farm: Charles M. Colton & Sons
Location: 45887 Slough Road, Baker City
Original owner: William H. and Charles H. Colton
Year of property acquisition: 1917
Year of Century Farm designation: 2017
Source: Century Farm & Ranch Database



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Enterprise's historic Depot, a former railroad station, is undergoing some changes at its coffee and gift shops.

Historic Depot in Enterprise makes changes

By Bill Bradshaw
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The historic Depot in Enterprise is planning some changes, even as the tourist season winds down and the business closes for the winter, according to the owners.

The coffee shop, gift shop and combination B&B and campground is housed in the 1908 building that once was the railroad depot in Enterprise, then located along the tracks near where Wallowa County Grain Growers now stands.

"It was well used in the early 1900s," said Leita Barlow, who with daughter Amy Roseberry owns and operates the business.

Barlow said when the railroad decommissioned stations, most of the older, wooden ones were burned down. Somehow, she said, the Enterprise depot was spared. In the 1980s, it was moved down the road from Enterprise to its current location near Joseph and used as a residence. And a previous owner began using it for overnight lodging.

Now, Barlow and Roseberry have expanded that lodging to include units such as an old Burlington Northern caboose, a tepee, a yurt and others.

But it's the coffee shop and gift shop that will be seeing the changes, Barlow said. She said they pur-

chased most of the equipment from the recently closed Red Horse Coffee Traders in Joseph — except for their espresso machine.

"We just do drip coffee," she said.

They do sell the popular coffee beans Red Horse provided.

"That's all we sell because it's so wonderful," she said.

Barlow's other daughter, Autumn Roseberry, lives in Alaska but also contributes to the Depot. She provides a variety of arts and crafts for sale in the gift shop. In addition to the coffee beans and gifts, the shop also sells a variety of snack items.

The Depot is planning a

"grand reopening" in April, and Barlow said they have plans for a variety of seasonal events for next year.

"That way it'll be nice enough weather we can all sit outside and keep our distance because of the virus," she said.

As for now, the Depot has no regular hours, but customers can arrange via its website to stop into the lobby or view what's available to order.

"We have a variety of products," Barlow said. "Something for everybody."

The website is www.thedepotjoseph.com. Contact by email at thedepotjoseph@gmail.com or by phone at 916-202-3609.