

Business & Agriculture

HAPPENINGS

Group files appeals in Boardman to Hemingway contested case

LA GRANDE — The Stop B2H Coalition and 26 petitioners filed appeals Nov. 6 on Idaho Power’s site application for the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line.

The coalition in a press release Tuesday, Nov. 10, reported the group appealed directly to the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council to highlight more than “130 separate issues of noncompliance with government laws and regulations” concerning the project to build a 500 kilovolt power line from Boardman to southwestern Idaho.

The group also requested “the same full party status granted to Idaho Power and the removal of limits on specific issues raised in the state’s contested case proceeding” for the project, according to the press release.

Stop B2H member and petitioner Kathy Andrew of La Grande in the press release cited the “massive negative impact to Oregonians on our environment and wildlife from the B2H transmission line” as the reason for the degree and passion of participation in the contested case proceedings.

According to the release, 14 more individual petitioners opposed to the B2H have standing in the case but did not appeal their limited party status.

An administrative law judge on Oct. 29 rejected or limited the party status of all of the 53 original petitioners except Idaho Power and the DOE. The judge also reduced the number of issues to 70. Petitioners then had a week to argue for reinstatement of denied issues and for full party status. The group stated they need that to “provide accountability and oversight in the energy facility siting process, vital to EFSC’s purpose of protecting Oregon’s environment and public safety.”

EFSC will make decisions on the appeals at its Nov. 19-20 meeting remotely over Zoom.

— The Observer

Family of man killed in mill accident files lawsuit

KLAMATH FALLS — The family of a Klamath Falls man who died while working at the Columbia Forest Products mill has filed a wrongful death lawsuit.

The mother of Francis “Frankie” Crispin, Kay Moyette, is suing the mill for nearly \$5.5 million after Crispin fell into a vat of scalding, corrosive liquid on Nov. 17, 2017, while repairing an electrical cord. The complaint alleges Columbia failed to install the proper safety equipment that could have prevented Crispin’s death, The Herald and News reported.

The family filed the lawsuit last week in Multnomah County.

An OSHA investigation into his death completed in May 2018 led to \$17,500 in fines for Columbia after finding safety violations, including holes in the vat cover and not providing safer access to the area. Columbia has since installed improved guardrails around the vat, according to the OSHA report.

The Associated Press sent an email to the company seeking comment on the lawsuit.

The complaint states Crispin’s family has incurred economic losses of almost \$3 million, including from funeral expenses and loss of income, and noneconomic losses totaling \$2.5 million.

Crispin was an apprentice electrician and was on his way to taking the test to become a journeyman.

— Associated Press

Groups fight to keep gray wolf protections for most of U.S.

BILLINGS, Mont.— Wildlife advocates and environmental groups have announced that they are challenging the removal of federal protections for gray wolves across most of the U.S.

Two coalitions of groups filed formal notices over the past several days that they plan to sue the U.S. Interior Department in federal court unless protections are restored. The notices are required as a precursor to lawsuits brought under the Endangered Species Act.

The Trump administration recently finalized a decision that ends longstanding federal safeguards for gray wolves in the Lower 48 states except for a small population of Mexican gray wolves in the Southwest.

The move puts states and tribes in charge of overseeing the predators and could allow hunting to resume in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Gray wolves have recovered from near extinction in parts of the country with thousands now roaming the northern Rocky Mountains and western Great Lakes region and growing numbers of the animals in the Pacific Northwest. But they remain absent from much of their historical range and wildlife advocates have said protections still are needed. Colorado wildlife officials say they are planning to reintroduce wolves in the state in coming years under a voter-approved ballot initiative.

— Associated Press

By Kaleb Lay
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The holiday season has long been a staple of American life. With it comes the comfort of familiar habits — tree lightings, parades, religious services, taking the kids to see Santa — but perhaps none are so loved or so lucrative as that most precious of holiday traditions: Shopping.

Americans love to shop. For evidence, look no further than the U.S. Census Bureau, which reported retail sales in the United States surpassed \$19 billion in December 2018.

But with the coronavirus pandemic disrupting brick-and-mortar shopping and small-market art scenes, some are urging shoppers to do their holiday gift-buying locally this year.

That’s where Art Center East’s Handmade Holidays comes in, the La Grande holiday market featuring local artisans.

“Artists have taken such a hit during the pandemic, from loss of revenue due to restricted farmers markets and cancelled art fairs, to loss of opportunities to earn income through teaching or exhibiting,” said Darcy Dolge, Art Center East’s executive director. “When Union County went into Phase 2, we decided to go forward with Handmade Holidays, an important sales opportunity for working artists in our community.”

Handmade Holidays, a more than decade-old tradition at Art Center East, is set to go forward in spite of the COVID-19 situation — with some modifications.

The number of vendors for this year’s Handmade Hol-



SabrinaThompson/The Observer, File

Art Center East, La Grande, is hosting its 12th annual Handmade Holidays event Friday and Saturday, Nov. 13-14, 2020, in support of local artists.

IFYOU GO

WHAT: Handmade Holidays
WHEN: Friday, Nov. 13, 4-8 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 14, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
WHERE: Art Center East, 1006 Penn Ave., La Grande.
COST: Free.
TIP: RSVP at artcentereast.org to reserve a time slot for your visit, as there will be limited entry due to COVID-19.

idays has been cut by about 30% to allow for better distancing, and shoppers will be required to practice proper social distancing and mask wearing. No more than 50 people will be allowed into the event at one time to comply with the two-week pause Gov. Kate Brown implemented earlier this week.

“It is going to feel a little different than previous years,”

said Jennifer Durr, Art Center East’s program assistant. “There will be a lot less mingling and hanging out, but we hope that the quality of goods available will still bring in shoppers, giving local artists a much needed economic boost.”

Shoppers can expect to find an array of hand-crafted goods for sale, including artwork, ceramics, jewelry, glass and

wood products, screenprints and leather creations, all made by local artists.

Sarah West, communications outreach coordinator for Art Center East, estimated as many as 70% of featured artists were based in Union County. All are from Eastern Oregon.

Handmade Holidays will take place Friday, Nov. 13, 4-8 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 14, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Art Center East, 1006 Penn Ave., La Grande. Entry is free.

Those planning to attend are strongly encouraged to RSVP at artcentereast.org to reserve a time slot for their visit, as the 50-person capacity limit could lead to lines outside the building.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftai

The crew at Moonlight Graphics in Joseph looks over some of primary artist Chuck Barrett’s work. From left are owners Pam and Chuck Garrett, printer John Jordan and new managers Ali Garrett and Scott Westrick. The elder Garretts are turning over operation of their business to daughter Ali and her boyfriend, Westrick.

Next generation ready at Moonlight Graphics

By Bill Bradshaw
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — A new generation is taking over the operation of an old favorite in Joseph.

Chuck and Pam Garrett have owned and operated Moonlight Graphics since 1989. The couple is retiring and turning over day-to-day operations to their Wallowa County born-and-bred daughter, Ali Garrett, and her boyfriend, Scott Westrick.

“We’re going to do a little traveling and some projects at home,” Pam said.

But Chuck and Pam won’t be totally absent.

“We’ll retain ownership, at least for the first year, and turn it over to Ali to run,” Chuck said. “We’re going to help part time over the next year.”

“I’m not,” Pam quickly said in jest. “Well, yeah, I’ll help. We’ve got to train them.”

The shop primarily produces silkscreen artwork to go on T-shirts.

“Basically, it’s just on tex-

tiles,” Chuck said. “I also do web design, but I don’t know if they’re going to go in that direction or not.”

Ali is well trained to follow in her father’s artistic footsteps.

“I’m going to be doing mainly the artwork,” she said. “I went to art school, and my dad has been teaching me all about the process. We’re all going to be doing the retail end of the storefront.”

At present, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the store is open by appointment only, which probably will continue until at least the first of the year.

Scott, who will be working largely behind the scenes doing the bookkeeping and logistics, said he hopes to see that change soon.

“We hope to have the front open at least a couple days a week in the new year,” he said.

Chuck agreed.

“We hope to be back open

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Oregon researchers win \$2 million in specialty crop block grants

By Sierra Dawn McClain
Capital Press

SALEM. — USDA this month awarded Oregon nearly \$2 million in funding through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, which will fund 14 innovative projects statewide.

Experts say the grants could make Oregon’s fruits, vegetables, tree nuts and nursery industries more competitive.

This year’s projects include fascinating research, educational opportunities and marketing campaigns, according to Oregon Department of Agriculture Director Alexis Taylor.

“Oregon has a long history of creative and innovative Specialty Crop Block Grant projects and this year is no exception,” Taylor said in a statement.

Over the past nine years, according to grant program coordinator Gabrielle Redhead, Oregon has received about \$18 million, which has fueled nearly 200 projects. This year’s awardees include nonprofits, for-profits, government bodies, colleges and universities.

ODA itself snagged \$124,214 for a project intended to increase industry awareness and compliance with regulations related to seed production, sale and export. ODA and partners will develop educational materials about seed laws, record-keeping and labeling to help growers.

ODA also received \$103,112 for a project that is supposed to connect specialty crop growers with at least 250 small- to medium-sized food companies

that buy Oregon specialty crops.

Friends of Zenger Farms, a not-for-profit urban farm, received \$166,073 to expand Oregon’s CSA market with a special focus on connecting CSA farmers with low-income consumers.

The Gorge Grown Food Network will use \$66,000 to increase marketing and distribution of specialty crops in five counties and on the Warm Springs Reservation.

With its \$95,566 award, Growing Gardens, a nonprofit, will expand gardening opportunities for adult and juvenile inmates at 16 Oregon correctional institutions. The program was designed to provide inmates with healthful food and job credentials to help them succeed when they re-enter society.

The Oregon Blueberry Commission received \$175,000, which it plans to use to promote Oregon blueberries in Vietnam, the Philippines and Singapore. Experts say Vietnam especially stands poised to become the Oregon blueberry industry’s largest Asian customer.

Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network will use \$92,043 to help producers interested in selling produce to schools and to expand an online, searchable directory so schools can easily find fruit and vegetable producers to work with.

With \$175,000, Oregon Processed Vegetable Commission will develop better crop production practices

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