

Small-business & Ag HAPPENINGS

New directors join Union County Chamber of Commerce board

LA GRANDE — The Union County Chamber of Commerce has its new board of directors.

The chamber in a recent press release announced the addition of new board members Tyler Brooks and Michael Fields, as well as the return of Patrick Flynn and Kevin Loveland for their second terms.

The board provides leadership to help carry out the chamber's mission to promote and support commerce and community in Union County.

Flynn is the manager of the Grande Ronde Hospital Foundation and the chamber board's secretary. He grew up in La Grande and Island City and graduated from La Grande High School. Afterward, he attended Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, where he earned a bachelor's and a subsequent master's degree in business administration.

Loveland is a long-time resident of Union County and the owner of Loveland Funeral Chapel, La Grande. He also is involved in a number of other activities, organizations and groups throughout La Grande, Union County and the Northeast Oregon region.

Brooks owns Brooks Painting. He grew up in La Grande, graduated from La Grande High School, has a college degree in graphic design and has deep experience serving on nonprofit boards.

Fields is a member of the business faculty at Eastern Oregon University, is active in youth sports and volunteers with La Grande Main Street Downtown on its economic vitality committee.

The four join eight others on the board for 2021.

Help available for CARES Act grant applications

LA GRANDE — Union County is preparing to receive a little more than \$700,000 in federal CARES Act grant funding to assist small businesses. The Eastern Oregon University Small Business Development Center in a press release Tuesday, Dec. 1, announced it is available to help locals through the application process.

Donna Beverage, chair of the county board of commissioners, said in the press release the county is working to have all of the details in place by Friday. She explained businesses that were ordered to close and have suffered the greatest impact will be the focus. Business owners should have their bookkeeping up to date and financials in order to expedite the process, as funding will be committed by Dec. 31.

"It's important to note that many businesses which may have qualified for other grant funding found themselves ineligible because they could not provide the financial documentation required," the press release stated.

Staff at the SBDC on the university campus are working remotely to be in compliance with the governor's most recent "Freeze Order," but they stand ready to assist you by Zoom, conference call or email. To schedule an appointment for this or any other business advising questions, call 541-962-1532 or email cousbdc@gmail.com.

Grant, Wheeler and Morrow counties also received funding, and businesses should contact their county offices for information on the application process and deadlines.

Fed restricts visits at ag service centers

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced in a press release Tuesday, Dec. 1, it is temporarily restricting in-person visits for numerous service centers in Oregon because of elevated rates of coronavirus community spread. However, USDA employees will continue to assist agricultural producers with programs and services.

The federal agricultural department is using a phased, data-driven approach to determine which service centers are open for in-person appointments. Field work, including observation planning assistance, will continue with social distancing.

All USDA service centers are open for business, and service center staff members from the FSA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service will work with producers by phone, email and digital tools. Producers can learn more about how to leverage these digital offerings by visiting www.farmers.gov/mydocs.

Producers wishing to conduct business with the FSA, NRCS or any other service center agency should call ahead to confirm and schedule appointments.

More information on service center status is online at www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status and contact information for local service centers is available at www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

— EO Media Group



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

Tom Busciglio, right, and Meghan Froemke refinined the century-old bar for the restaurant they will open soon in Baker City. Philadelphia's will feature authentic Philly cheesesteak sandwiches, 10 flavors of hot wings, burgers and more.

The flavor of Philly

Baker City couple prepares to open restaurant featuring Philly cheesesteaks, hot wings

By Jayson Jacoby
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Tom Busciglio and Meghan Froemke are preparing to open a restaurant during a pandemic that has severely hampered their industry.

This is not a detail they have overlooked. The couple both give rueful grins when asked about the timing. It is a question they obviously expected.

And one they've answered many times this summer and fall while renovating the Baker City building that will house Philadelphia's — Cheese Steaks, Wings & More.

"That's kind of a loaded question, isn't it?" Busciglio says with a chuckle.

He concedes it's hardly ideal to unveil a sit-down restaurant and bar when the state is limiting such businesses to takeout meals or outdoor dining — the latter not a plausible option in a place where the average high temperature in early December is 38 degrees.

In Baker County, one of 25 counties state officials deemed in the "extreme risk" category, those guidelines will remain in place at least through Dec. 17.

The couple plan to open the

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— Tom Busciglio, owner, Philadelphia's restaurant in Baker City

restaurant on Monday, Dec. 7. Check the business' Facebook page, facebook.com/philadelphiabc, for details.

Busciglio is optimistic the pandemic's restrictions actually will entice diners, who are frustrated by the ongoing limitations, to sample Baker City's newest fare.

"I think people in Baker are ready for something different, something new," said Busciglio, 45, who has lived in Baker City for about 12 years.

What he and Froemke are offering is the meal made famous in Philadelphia — the cheesesteak sandwich.

"The crown jewels of our menu are the Philly cheesesteak and the hot wings," Busciglio said.

The latter will come in 10 flavors.

The restaurant also will serve soups, salads, chicken sandwiches and pizza.

Philadelphia's will be open

every day from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. while the restrictions on restaurants are in place. When the restrictions are lifted, the restaurant's regular hours will be daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Busciglio said.

One side of the building at 975 Campbell St., just east of Safeway, will have tables for family dining — when the ban on indoor dining is lifted. The other side is a bar.

And although Philadelphia's is brand-new, this span of polished wood is anything but.

Busciglio said the hand-made bar, which he acquired from a friend, is about 100 years old. In past decades, schooners of beer slid across its smooth surface at a saloon in John Day.

Froemke said she and Busciglio refinined the wood and had new windows cut for the backbar. They had to trim a couple feet from the bar, as its original 12-foot length was too

much for its new space.

Reviving this piece of history was one of the couple's myriad tasks since they bought the building in late August.

"I've been down here seven days a week," Froemke said.

They replaced the lighting fixtures, remodeled the bathrooms, painted, and installed sinks and other items in the cooking area.

There is a TV on the wall in the dining area and another in the bar. There are several pieces of Philadelphia-themed memorabilia, including a framed jersey from Mike Schmidt, the Hall of Famer for the Philadelphia Phillies baseball team.

Except for electrical wiring, the couple did the work themselves.

That was possible in part because Busciglio already owns a business, Baker City Plumbing. He said he'll continue to operate the venture. He needed but a single word to describe the challenge of juggling two jobs, either of which was by itself a full-time endeavor.

"Nightmare," he said. "There's days when it's hard to hold it all together,"

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Business expansion starts with a phone call

Hines Meat continues its quick rise in Pendleton

By Antonio Sierra
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Hines Meat Co.'s two-year journey to Pendleton started with a phone call.

The recruitment pitch didn't come from the usual Pendleton economic development staff who try to bring new business to town. Instead, it came from Sean Tarter, an employee in the city's public works department.

At a 2019 city training, Tarter took part in an exercise where employees were asked to come up with an idea for a business to bring to town. Tarter's group proposed a meat shop, and the idea was liked well enough that City Manager Robb Corbett asked Tarter and the rest of the group to continue working on it.

Eventually, Tarter reached out to Hines Meat and asked



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Customers shop at Hines Meat Co. in Pendleton on Friday, Nov. 20, 2020.

co-owner Paige Hines if she and her husband, Jake, would consider opening a location in Pendleton.

On the other end of the line, Paige remembered the couple had considered expanding into Pendleton one day, but they had never seri-

ously explored the idea before Tarter's call.

Paige said Hines Meat's La Grande location had grown so rapidly since it opened its doors in 2016 they hadn't had time to delve into expansion plans, a trend exacerbated by increased demand after

the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Just a few years prior, Paige said Jake was a concrete contractor who was considering a career change. The couple had talked about

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