

# More premium coffee arrives in Wallowa County

## Business sells imported Costa Rican beans

By **BILL BRADSHAW**

Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE —

Another premium coffee outlet is coming to Wallowa County.

In fact, it's already here, as True Mountain Coffee is importing green coffee beans from Costa Rica to roast and sell.

Lyman Warnock, of Enterprise, is working in conjunction with a longtime friend, Gustavo Rodriguez, of Tilarán, Costa Rica, and Warnock's wife, Mildred — Rodriguez's niece — to bring the Arabica beans from Central America.

"About two years ago, I started talking to Gustavo about this coffee. (I told him) it's a really growing business, and we've got to look into this," Warnock said. "So I started studying it on the internet — I didn't know anything about the coffee business. We usually drank Costa Rican coffee, but not the premium stuff. He came up for Christmas-time 2019 and he brought us some coffee and we started talking and contacted some growers down there."

Since then, he's been working to develop relationships with Costa Rican growers and even has found a local coffee purveyor who can roast the green beans. Beans designated "green" are simply those that have been harvested and dried, but not yet roasted.

Warnock met Scott McDonald, of Joseph Creek Coffee in Enterprise, who has the needed equipment



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Lyman Warnock pours a measure of Arabica coffee beans from Costa Rica into a bag Tuesday, June 1, 2021. He will sell the locally roasted beans from his Enterprise home under the True Mountain Coffee brand.

to roast the beans. Warnock packages and sells his own.

"He sells locally, and I really don't want to compete with him," Warnock said. "He's doing me a good turn — we have a good business relationship."

Warnock is still developing his own retail outlets.

"I really have not yet established a retail outlet where I sell wholesale to people who sell it," he said.

"But that won't happen until I've secured my source (of imports from Costa Rica) and have a couple thousand pounds of beans."

### Only Arabica beans

Tilarán sells exclusively — and by law — only the Arabica beans. As the community's local chamber of commerce representative Enervey Ramirez explained, it's against the law to sell anything of a lesser quality.

"Only Arabica. If we want to compete, it's better to compete with quality," Ramirez said.

According to the Costa Rica coffee website, <https://tinyurl.com/CafebrittArabica>, Arabica beans are a specific variety of beans

that is more difficult to grow than other, hardier stocks. The result when the beans mature is rich, full-bodied flavors leading to premium blends.

The beans Warnock imports are all from small farms of 20 acres or fewer.

"It's all hand-picked, hand-sorted and sun-dried," Warnock said.

### COVID setback

His business has had some difficulties getting off the ground, like many over the past year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

He and Mildred traveled to Costa Rica in February 2020 and were stuck there for an extra three months because of travel restrictions. They used the time wisely to learn more of the coffee business, but it still set them back.

"Because of getting set back, we're about a year behind where we were scheduled to be at this point," he said. "I was hoping to have 10,000 pounds instead of 2,000 pounds. If I secure 10,000 pounds, I can sell to the big companies and take a lesser

margin."

The bigger companies, such as ones in Portland or Seattle, do the roasting and can provide Warnock with a higher volume of sales.

"You'll want to double your money. That's the whole key," he said. "If you don't double your money, you're losing money. I have a higher profit margin because I have less product to sell."

At present, he sells his coffee beans — unground — for \$15 for a 12-ounce bag. He often sells six bags for the price of five, giving purchasers a bonus. He now bags the beans from home, but hopes to expand in the future by adding employees. Right now, he sells about 60 pounds of coffee beans every two or three weeks.

"There's a certain amount of shrinkage in it," he said. "At 12 ounces, you're about breaking even on a pound of coffee because you're losing like 15-20% of the weight when it gets roasted — it goes up the chimney."

Warnock also is considering the purchase of a roaster, but they can be spendy, so that's in the future.

"Roasters can cost \$30,000-\$50,000," he said.

The next step, he said, is to engage in professional marketing.

"The whole idea is to take this to more than Wallowa County — all over the Northwest, the West Coast," he said. "Volume is the name of the game with margins. If you don't have a huge volume, your margin's got to go up. With a big volume, your margin can go down and you can really offer (a deal) to people."

# How did Oregonians spend their federal stimulus checks?

By **MIKE ROGOWAY**

The Oregonian

SALEM — The federal government paid out \$5.5 billion in stimulus money to Oregonians during the pandemic's first year.

The money was a crucial lifeline early in crisis, propping up households facing lost jobs, school closures and months of financial insecurity. It also helped prop up the broader state economy by boosting consumer spending, which dipped enormously in the first months of the pandemic but quickly returned to levels approaching normal.

Oregonians used the first checks, approved in March 2020, just to keep their households running, according to a U.S. Census Bureau survey. They bought groceries and paid their rent



Dreamstime/Contributed Photo

The federal government paid out \$5.5 billion in stimulus money to Oregonians during the pandemic's first year.

and utility bills with the money, which paid \$1,200 per adult and another \$500 per child (upper-income households got less, or nothing at all.)

That kind of direct spending is what econo-

mists like to see, and why these are described as stimulus payments. They don't just bail out struggling households — they stimulate the broader economy and keep it running through the downturn.

As time went on, though, Oregonians used two subsequent payments quite differently.

According to the Census survey, 16% of Oregonians reported they saved most of that first stimulus check in spring 2020. But 47% said they saved most of the December payment (\$600 per person) and 45% saved most of this past March's stimulus (\$1,400 per person.)

Only 17% used most of that first stimulus check to pay off debt, according to the survey. Roughly a third of Oregonians said they used most of their next two checks to pay down debt.

That suggests Oregonians were in a much more comfortable financial position by December — and, perhaps, that they had few

things they wanted to spend their money on, given that restaurants and bars were closed or severely limited in capacity and that health authorities advised against travel while COVID-19 was raging.

Just 1 in 5 Oregonians actually went out and spent the money that came in from those last two checks. (National data was similar.)

That probably muted the stimulus effect of those next two checks — though Oregonians may be spending some of that money now, with the pandemic in sharp decline. Bars and restaurants are back open, air travel is up sharply and Oregonians are looking forward to a summer much closer to normal.

While most people saved their last two checks,

an analysis of national Census data last month by researchers at the University of Michigan suggested that those latter payments may have had a profound effect on the lowest income Americans.

The study found that food insecurity and financial instability were both down more than 40% from last December through April. The implication is that the people who spent those last two checks couldn't afford to save the money and that it made a substantial difference in their financial well-being.

"Declines in material hardship were greatest, in percentage point terms, among low-income households," the authors wrote, "but also evident higher up the income distribution."

## BUSINESS BRIEFING

### Geddes promoted to general manager of Baker Food Co-op

BAKER CITY — Tiara Geddes, an employee at the Baker Food Co-op since 2017, has been promoted to general manager.

Geddes started her new position June 7.

Since moving to Baker City in 2008, Geddes has managed several local food-related businesses as well as launching her own small business, Geddes Greens Tiny Farm.

She also serves on the board of directors for the Baker City Farmers Market.

"The Co-op is known for its customer service, and Tiara will continue and even improve on that," Cheri Smith, Co-op president, said in a press release. "She also brings a host of ideas for freshening our look and strengthening relationships within the Co-op, with other local business, and in the

general community."

The Baker Food Co-op, at 2008 Broadway St. in Baker City, is a natural foods grocery and mercantile.

### Baker High School grad named CEO for The Standard

PORTLAND — Dan McMillan, a 1984 graduate of Baker High School, will become president and chief executive officer, and a member of the board of directors, of StanCorp Financial Group Inc. on July 1.

McMillan,

who joined the company in 1989, was appointed president and chief operating officer in December 2020.

He will replace J. Greg Ness as chairman and chief executive officer. Ness will retire as CEO but continue to serve as executive chairman of the board, according to a press release from the company, which has as its primary operating

subsidiary the Standard Insurance Company (The Standard).

"Dan brings a wealth of talent and steady, strong leadership to his newest role as StanCorp's chief executive officer, Ness said in the press release. "His more than 32 years at The Standard, deep knowledge of our culture and unique employee and customer orientation, as well as his commitment to the community, position him well to lead the company to even greater accomplishments. I look forward to his success."

McMillan has held a succession of leadership positions in the company, including executive vice president and vice president of the Insurance Services Group.

"I'm honored by the confidence the board has placed in me and excited to lead this great company," McMillan said. "I look forward to building on the incredible momentum established by Greg during his tenure."

— EO Media Group

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Saturday	4-H & FFA Livestock Auction...8:00 am (Buyers Only) Carnival...1:00 pm - 9:00 pm PRCA Rodeo & Horse Racing...2:00 pm
Sunday	PRCA Rodeo & Horse Racing...1:30 pm

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