

ZiPLY Fiber to expand

Cove, Elgin, Imbler, Joseph to get gig-speed fiber Internet

The Observer

KIRKLAND, Wash. — Gig-speed fiber continues to make its way across Union and Wallowa counties.

ZiPLY Fiber announced on Friday, Aug. 13, that it is bringing gig-speed fiber Internet service to 14 additional markets across Washington and Oregon, including Cove, Elgin, Imbler and Joseph, this calendar year.

This latest expansion is in addition to the 22 new market builds, which included La Grande and Enterprise, announced in the spring.

This brings the total number of fiber expansion markets to 52 since the Washington-based company acquired the Northwest operations of Frontier Communications in 2020.

The company is investing \$500 million and building an advanced fiber network to smaller towns and rural communities across the Northwest that have been underserved when it comes to Internet access.

The new expansion will represent more than 38,000 new fiber-ready addresses once construction is complete.

“Many of the communities we’re upgrading have never experienced anything like fiber before,” said Harold Zeitz, chief executive officer of ZiPLY Fiber. “We’ve seen an increased demand for high-speed Internet to support all the activities we do online, whether that’s online learning, streaming entertainment, or working from home. To support this, we’ve spent the last year investing and constructing a new state-of-the-art fiber-optic network, and we’re thrilled to bring these improvements to rural and urban communities in the Northwest.”

While it will take time to upgrade 250,000 square miles of land throughout ZiPLY Fiber’s service area with new fiber-optic cables, local hubs, new offices and new hardware to run the network, the company is capitalized for and committed to expanding fiber to cover more than 80% of its territory in the next three years.



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Dr. Yvonne Morgan poses in front of her dentist station chair on Monday, Aug. 9, 2021. Morgan, a graduate of Oregon Health and Sciences University, joined the staff at Eli Mayes Dental this spring.

‘We’re here to stay’

Dr. Yvonne Morgan brings specialty dentistry to La Grande

By CARLOS FUENTES

The Observer

LA GRANDE — There’s been a new face at Eli Mayes Dental in La Grande for several months now, and with it, new services at the dental office that has served Union County for 40 years.

Dr. Yvonne Morgan was hired in April 2021, after completing dental school at Oregon Health Sciences University and practicing in Eugene for three years.

And now, after several months, Morgan has become acclimated to Union County and plans on staying around as long as she can.

“We were looking for that small-town feel, to be part of that community, and it ticks all of those boxes, especially in terms of outdoor recreation,” she said. “We have dogs. It’s just like a playground out here.”

Morgan is far from a native. She grew up in northwestern Ontario, Canada, in a small town. She met her future husband while attending school at the University of Portland, where she studied biology and French.

According to Morgan, she was planning on going to medical school, but after her twin brother underwent extensive dental work, she began talking to dentists and realized her passion.

“They had an oral surgeon and a prosthodontist, and I just got to talking to them, and seeing how much that changed my brother’s life and seeing his care just really launched me in

that direction,” she said.

After attending the University of Portland, Morgan enrolled in the dental school at Oregon Health & Science University. As part of her training, she was assigned to La Grande, where she met Mayes, who is a part-time faculty member at OHSU.

“We were able to have her come into Elgin and work for us

“She’s moving into Botox, which most people think of just getting rid of wrinkles, but in dentistry there’s a lot of pain and jaw issues that Botox can help. Nobody in La Grande is doing anything like that.”

Dr. Eli Mayes

as a student. We immediately loved her, our patients loved her, so we asked her to work for us right then and there,” Mayes said. “It’s taken three years to get her back.”

Upon graduation, Morgan and her husband moved to Eugene for three years, where she practiced general dentistry, but after getting a taste of Eastern Oregon, they knew they wanted to return.

“I knew Eli from my dental training, and the timing worked out great,” Morgan said. “We came out here, loved it here,

it’s paradise. We just bought a house. We’re here to stay.”

Morgan specializes in Botox and dermal fillings, and she is the only dentist in Union County with this speciality, according to Morgan and Mayes.

Botox, which is generally used to remove facial wrinkles, blocks muscle contractions, which can be effective for relieving pain and jaw issues, according to Morgan. Dermal fillings, which are substances injected into skin tissue to add volume, have the same application.

“Part of what I love about dentistry is that you can pick what you really like, and in that small-town environment, when people can’t travel to a specialist sometimes, we can handle things here, which is really nice and part of what I wanted in a smaller area,” Morgan said.

Morgan is one of three dentists at Eli Mayes Dental, and her speciality will allow the business to be on the front edge of new dental practices, according to Mayes.

“She can do anything she wants. She is a very driven, bright lady, and right now she’s focusing on aesthetic dentistry,” Mayes said. “She’s moving into Botox, which most people think of just getting rid of wrinkles, but in dentistry there’s a lot of pain and jaw issues that Botox can help.”

He added: “Nobody in La Grande is doing anything like that.”

Giving back to the area

Genuine Wallowa County donates to boost economy

Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Genuine Wallowa County made a recent donation to the Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland as it continues its goal of supporting the community with assisting local non-profits. GWC announced Monday, Aug. 16.

“I think of GWC as a mission-based business,” owner Kristy Athens said. “The main reason I’m running this company is to strengthen Wallowa County’s economic resiliency.”

GWC operates two channels, an online gift box store and a local food delivery service called GWC Provisions.

To achieve its mission, Athens buys handmade goods and food from more than 70 Wallowa County and Nez Perce artists, farmers and ranchers. She then ships curated gift box collections — purchased by both locals and by people outside the area — across the United States, while also delivering groceries to Wallowa County homes and workplaces on a weekly basis.

From the proceeds, Athens makes quarterly donations to Community Connection’s food pantries in Enterprise and Wallowa, and annual donations to Oregon Community Foundation’s Wallowa Fund and the Homeland, which as of August totaled more than \$1,000. GWC also provides various gift certificate donations and sponsorships, such as to competitors at the Wallowa County Fair.

“This year’s gift has an exponential impact,” said Angela Bombaci, executive director at the Homeland. “These dollars have already benefited local growers, makers and entrepreneurs, and now they’ve come back around to help bring Nez Perce people home to Wallowa. Thank you Genuine Wallowa County for supporting our mission at the Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland, and for promoting the values that make our community special.”

For Athens, it’s the only way to do business.

“I plan to register GWC as a benefit corporation in the next year or two,” she said.

Century farms, ranches to be honored at state fair

Capital Press

SALEM — Twelve farms and ranches from six counties will be honored this year as official Oregon Century Farms or Ranches, bringing the total number of Oregon Century Farms and Ranches to 1,247.

One Sesquicentennial Century Farm recipient from 2020 — a family that has reached the 150-year mark — brings the total of Sesquicentennial honorees to 47.

The 2020 families will be honored with the 2021 families at this year’s awards ceremony at the Oregon State fair on Saturday, Aug. 28.

“Every Oregon farm and ranch has a unique history and special family story. The Oregon Century Farm



Capital Press, File

More than 20 families will be honored at the Oregon State Fair on Aug. 28, 2021, as official 2021 and 2021 Oregon Century and Sesquicentennial Farms or Ranches.

& Ranch program encourages agriculture families to share, with a broader audience, these stories,” said Program Coordi-

nator Andrea Kuenzi in an Oregon Farm Bureau press release. “By promoting family stories, our rich cultural heritage is passed down to future generations while educating Oregonians about the social and economic impact of Oregon agriculture.”

The Century Farm and Ranch families being honored are:

2021 Century Farm & Ranch Families

- Alderson Farms: Founded in Polk County in 1921 by Richard Alderson. Applicants: Dennis and Ron Alderson.

- Barnett Farm: Founded in Polk County in 1921 by Martin and Tressa Conger. Applicant: Linda M. Barnett.

- Cruickshank Brothers Farms: Founded in Polk County in 1920 by David and Annie Cruickshank. Applicant: John W. Cruickshank.

- Norman Farm: Founded in Clackamas County in 1921 by John and Anna Norman. Applicant: Shirley Norman.

- Ogle Ranch: Founded in Lake County in 1919 by Clarence Wilson (C.W.) “Jim” Ogle. Applicant: James W. Ogle.

- R.T. Gilliland Farm: Founded in Umatilla County in 1914 by Robert T. and Willie Gilliland. Applicant: Donald H. Benschel.

- Rueck’s Grandview Farm: Founded in Washington County in 1921 by George Sr. and Anna Marie Rueck. Applicant: Marvin

C. Rueck.

- SC Ranch LLC: Founded in Lake County in 1918 by S.B. (Sol) Chandler. Applicants: Lytle and Tamara Ann Simms.

- Timber Hill Farm: Founded in Polk County in 1920 by David and Annie Cruickshank. Applicant: Kenneth David Cruickshank.

- Welter Family Farm LLC: Founded in Marion County in 1919 by Albert F. and Mary B. Welter. Applicant: Welter Family Farm LLC (Tom Welter).

- Tucker Ranch: Founded in Umatilla County in 1916 by Eugene “Eaph” Tucker. Applicant: Samuel E. Tucker.

- Von Derahe Orchards: Founded in Umatilla County in 1914 by A.A.

& Lois E. Bixby. Applicant: Von Derahe Orchards LLC (Mike and Chuck Von Derahe).

2020 Century Farm & Ranch Families

- Blackman Ranch: Founded in Klamath County in 1919 by Thomas Walter Blackman. Applicants: Rodney and Virginia Blackman.

- Marx Farm: Founded in Polk County in 1920 by Julius and Luise Marx. Applicant: Merle Marx.

- Paysinger Family Farm: Founded in Yamhill County in 1920 by George and Lizzie Shelburne. Applicants: David and Theresa Paysinger.