

▲ DOW 32,778.64 +293.05	▼ NASDAQ 13,319.86 -78.81	▲ S&P 500 3,943.34 +4.00	▲ 30-YR T-BOND 2.40% +12	▼ CRUDE OIL \$65.61 -.41	▼ GOLD \$1,719.50 -2.80	▼ SILVER \$25.88 -.28	▼ EURO \$1.1950 -.0032
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BRIEFING

Inventor of audio cassette dies

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — Lou Ottens, the Dutch inventor of the cassette tape, the medium of choice for millions of bedroom mix tapes, has died, said Philips, the company where he also helped develop the compact disc.

Ottens died March 6 at 94, Philips confirmed.

He joined Philips in 1952 and was head of the Dutch company's product development department when he began work on an alternative for existing tape recorders with their cumbersome large spools of tape.

His goal was simple. Make tapes and their players far more portable and easier to use.

The final product created in 1962 later turned into a worldwide hit, with more than 100 billion cassettes sold, many to music fans who would record their own compilations direct from the radio.

Its popularity waned with the development of the compact disc, an invention Ottens also helped create as supervisor of a development team, Philips said.

— Bulletin wire report

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

• **Gunnar Haugan** has been hired as a senior tax manager at Kernutt Stokes, a full-service accounting and business consulting firm established in 1945 with offices in Eugene, Bend, Corvallis, and Lake Oswego. Haugan works in the Bend location.



Haugan

• **Mike Guerchon** has been hired as senior vice president of people at Volansi, a San Francisco Bay area drone startup with offices in Bend. Guerchon has more than 25 years of experience in both ground-level startups and global public companies and will be working out of the Bend office.



Guerchon

• **Chrissy Christoferson** has been hired by Brooks Resources Corp., a Central Oregon development firm, to run its newly formed property management division, Heartwood Commercial Management.



Christoferson

• **Jim Mazziotti**, known to his clients and the Realtor community as Mazz, has announced that he is stepping down as the principal managing broker and franchise owner of EXIT Realty Bend effective July 1. **Juana Beede** will take over and continue to train new and experienced agents and continue to grow the company, which increased from 32 to 50 agents in her first year.

COVID-19 | Federal stimulus package

Aid brings companies to scale back layoffs

BY ELI ROSENBERG

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Two airline giants said that they would cancel tens of thousands of planned layoffs because of aid earmarked for them in the \$1.9 trillion stimulus measure passed by Congress this week, an early sign of job losses averted by the land-

mark package.

Scott Kirby, CEO of United Airlines, which had warned employees about 14,000 layoffs last month, said in a social media post that Congress's new funding for airlines would allow the workers to receive their paychecks and health care through September. American Airlines said it

planned to rescind notices it sent last month to 13,000 employees about coming layoffs.

"Those are happily canceled — you can tear them up!" Doug Parker, American's CEO, and Robert Isom, its president, wrote in a note to employees. "We are grateful for the support of our government leaders and their continued acknowl-

edgment of all you do."

The \$1.9 trillion stimulus package includes far less for companies, but it does include \$65 billion that is directed to range of hurting industries including restaurants, aviation, live entertainment and tourism.

Chip Rogers, president and CEO of the American Ho-

tel and Lodging Association, called it a vital step forward that will help small businesses and protect jobs. He said that the pandemic has wiped out 10 years of hotel industry growth, noting that leisure and hospitality accounted for about 39% of the jobs lost during the pandemic.

See **Layoffs** / A6



A group of four Bird e-scooters sits parked Wednesday along E. Main Street in Hermiston. Bird, which recently began operations in Hermiston, is looking to expand to Pendleton.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Bird pitches its electric scooters to new market ... Pendleton?

BY ANTONIO SIERRA • East Oregonian

A Los Angeles-area company has been pitching small-town America on adopting its electric scooter program, and Pendleton is its next target.

At a Tuesday workshop, Michael Covato of Bird, a Santa Monica, California, company, fielded numerous questions from the Pendleton City Council as it prepares to vote on an ordinance allowing Bird's scooters on city streets and the Pendleton River Parkway.

While Bird has been in large metro areas for years, Covato told the council that the company has been looking to expand its presence across the globe. He said one of the reasons Bird was interested in Pendleton was because of its demographics and its "phenomenal grid structure" in the city's core.

"I don't think we'll be competing with the Los Angeles of the world, but I don't think we need to," he said.

A cursory Google search shows that Bird has been soliciting its services to rural and suburban towns across the country, many of them with populations under 50,000 people. If the council gives Bird the green light, Pendleton would join Hermiston, which has already launched the company's

scooters.

Pending council approval, Bird intends to introduce as many as 55 scooters in April at no charge to the city. Covato said Bird would partner with a local business or organization to act as a "fleet manager" for its scooters. In exchange for a cut of the scooter rental revenue, the manager would oversee the program locally and resolve any issues with the scooters.

All customer interactions with the scooter — locating a scooter, payment, activation and deactivation — will be handled by a downloadable cell-phone app.

Covato also fielded numerous questions about the safety of the scooters and how they would integrate into existing traffic.

Across several answers,

Covato said all riders will be required to view a safety tutorial before operating the scooters. When operating a scooter, a rider will also be required to wear a helmet and avoid driving on the sidewalks.

Addressing concerns that scooters will litter sidewalks and impede pedestrians, Covato said users will need to send a picture of their parked scooter before finishing their ride. If the scooter is improperly parked, the app will ask the user to reposition it and send another picture as proof.

"It's going to be new, but people will get used to it," City Attorney Nancy Kerns said.

Kerns said she and other staff worked with Covato to iron out any safety concerns, including talks with Police Chief Chuck Byram.

Employers can, but aren't likely, to require vaccine

BY JAMIE GOLDBERG

The Oregonian

As the COVID-19 vaccine rollout ramps up this spring, though, Oregon workers may wonder whether their bosses could require them to get vaccinated.

In most cases, the answer is yes. But there are exceptions, and very few employers require the vaccinations now or are likely to in the future.

"I think ultimately most employers would be able to require it," said Henry Drummonds, a Lewis & Clark Law School professor specializing in labor and employment law. "But I think most employers probably wouldn't want to require it. I think employers could first encourage and educate employees about the safety of the vaccine and the desirability of it in terms of protecting yourself and your co-workers."

Drummonds said that at-will employment standards allow private businesses to dictate and change the terms of employment at any time and fire employees for any reason, as long as they don't

discriminate on the basis of race, gender, age or any other protected category.

In practice, this means that employers probably could require employees to receive the vaccine to remain employed or return to the office. Both the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries have released guidance stating that employers can mandate that employees get vaccinated.

There are, of course, exceptions.

Workers can request an exemption for religious reasons or if a disability prevents them from receiving the vaccine. Employers must make reasonable accommodations for those employees if it doesn't cause undue hardship.

That could mean allowing an employee to work from home or requiring an unvaccinated employee to wear a mask in the workplace, Drummonds said, after vaccinated colleagues are allowed to go unmasked.

See **Vaccine** / A6

State settles suit, may resume giving grants to Black recipients

As part of the terms, some money will go to people of other races who applied

BY JAMIE GOLDBERG

The Oregonian

Organizers of the state's \$62 million coronavirus relief fund for Black Oregonians could soon be allowed to resume distributing grant money after agreeing to a settlement with a John Day logging company that challenged the constitutionality of the unique state fund.

Pending court approval, the fund could resume paying out aid to Black Oregonians while the state will pay an undetermined sum to applicants of other races who applied for help from the fund last year.

The Oregon Cares Fund distributed \$49.5 million to nearly 15,600 Black individuals, 466 Black-owned businesses and 103 Black-led nonprofits last year before agreeing to suspend operations and hand over their remaining money to a federal court in December amid the ongoing legal challenge.

More than \$9 million has been tied up with the legal case ever since.

But the two sides filed a settlement proposal Friday that would enable the fund's organizers to immediately recoup \$5.3 million held by the court. The fund can distribute that money to Black Oregonians and businesses that were approved for aid but never got their money because of the lawsuit.

However, as part of the settlement, the state of Oregon has agreed to use its own funds to pay grants to up to 1,252 non-Black applicants that sought funding through the program before Dec. 8, 2020. A separate party will determine how much money those newly eligible will receive.

Those non-Black applicants constitute only a small portion of those who applied for grants through the fund, since the application explicitly stated that the money was meant only for Black Oregonians.

The court will retain \$3.7 million deposited by fund organizers until the state has paid out those grants. At that point, that money could be released back to fund organizers to distribute to Black Oregonians.

The settlement still needs approval from U.S. Judge Karin Immergut.

See **Suit** / A6