

Winery

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Bernau said the sparkling winery and tasting room is a "considerable investment," with the building and road improvements exceeding \$15 million. The site is already home to a mature vineyard, and will also feature a biodynamic garden.

Growth for Willamette Valley Vineyards doesn't stop there. The company is building four winery

the year in Lake Oswego. Three others are planned for Vancouver, Washington, Bend and Happy Valley.

Along with increasing brand awareness nationally for Oregon Pinot noir, Bernau said the restaurants will only add further demand. He estimates that Willamette Valley Vineyards will need to double production over the next 5-7 years to keep pace.

The Salem Hills winery will still be used to make small lots of Pinot noir, with more of the space to be de with the first to open before the end of to wine tastings and hospitality, Bernau said.

In addition, Willamette Vallev Vineyards is creating a new position, director of winemaking and vineyards, who will help manage the transition into the new winery while overseeing operations and assisting in the development of brands and products.

Willamette Valley Vinevards owns five vineyards in the Willamette Valley, totaling about 500 mature acres, 35 acres in Eastern

Valley and The Rocks District of Milton-Freewater American Viticultural Area. The winery also has 500 acres under contract with Oregon growers.

Bernau credits expansion of the winery to its business model, as a publicly traded company with more than 19,000 wine enthusiasts as shareholders.

In mid-June, the winery issued a \$10.7 million stock offering to fund dividend, or wine credit worth 15% more

"The foundation of our success is our owners," Bernau said.

According to its latest annual report filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Willamette Valley Vineyards managed to increase sales and income, despite the pandemic.

Net sales were \$27.3 million, up approximately 10% over 2019, while net income was \$6.9 million, a increase.

restaurants,

and Washington in the Walla Walla

ing sold at \$5.05 with a 4.36% annual

Wages

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The federal minimum wage, meanwhile, has been stagnant at \$7.25 an hour since 2009. There is a general agreement in Congress that the national minimum should rise, but Republicans and Democrats have been unable to agree on how much and how quickly.

That reflects a perennial debate among economists over how much higher minimum wages inhibit job growth, the fear being that employers will hire fewer workers if they must pay them more. There's no debate, though, that it's easier to raise wages when the economy is strong.

Oregon's succession of minimum wage increases coincided with a long stretch of economic growth, when the state's jobless rate was at historic lows - dependably below 4% in the months before pandemic recession hit.

And even as the minimum wage rose, the number of Oregon workers earning the minimum steadily declined from 7.3% in 2018 to 6.6% in 2019 and just 6.1% last year. Some 123,000 workers statewide earned the minimum in 2020, according to the Oregon Employment Department.

That could suggest that employers were raising wages to attract workers during the strong economy, not only because the state was mandating higher pay.

Of course, the pandemic changed everything. Many low-wage workers lost their jobs last year when bars, restaurants and other hospitality sectors cut back or shut down. That meant fewer workers in those industries, and fewer workers earning the minimum.

And now, with employers facing a labor shortage, there is evidence that wages are rising for a new reason employers racing to reopen after the pandemic are paying more so they can staff up quickly and capitalize on the economic rebound.

Offices

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To improve mental health, the company transformed a planned work area into a spa-like "relaxation room" with reclining chairs and soft music. A test kitchen is wired for virtual presentations in case clients don't want to travel. And a cleaning crew comes through twice a day, leaving Post-it notes to show what's been disinfected.

"Maybe it's over the top, but maybe it provides comfort to those that have sensitivities to returning to an in-person work environment," said Ryan Smith, the executive vice president of Ajinomoto North America. Smith estimates 40% of the new headquarters design changed due to COVID.

Shobha Surya, an associate manager of projects and sales at Ajinomoto, is energized by the space.

Surva said she's also thrilled to be working alongside her co-workers again.

She's not alone. Surveys show the thing employees



Shafkat Anowar/AP

The auditorium of Ajinomoto, a global food and pharmaceutical company in Illinois. In May, Ajinomoto's employees returned to work in a space designed for a post-COVID world. Hallways are wider. Glass panels separate cubicles. A work space has been transformed into a spa-like relaxation area. The culinary center is wired for virtual presentations. And a cleaning crew comes through twice a day, leaving Post-it notes to show what's been disinfected.

miss most about office work is socializing and collaborat-ing with colleagues, said Lise Newman, workplace practice director at architecture firm SmithGroup. Companies are trying to encourage that rapport by building more social

hubs for employees. Some mimic coffee houses, with wood floors, booth seating and pendant lamps.

"Companies are trying to create the sense that this is a cool club that people want to come into," Newman said.

Mark Bryan, a senior interior designer with Colum-bus, Ohio-based M+A Architects, expects a more fluid office culture in the future, with different places to work on any given day. Introverts might choose a small, private

room; extroverts, a table in the office cafe.

Some office changes reflect a new commitment to hybrid work. Valiant Technologies, which provides tech support and other services to businesses, is letting its employees work primarily at home but has them reserve a desk for the days they want to come to the office. The New York company has removed rows of desks and put more space between the remaining ones. Employees leave their keyboard, mouse and headsets in lockers.

Not every design change will stick. Last summer, when Steelcase started bringing back some workers, they pushed tables in the cafeteria far apart from each other and only allowed one person per table. It made the space so depressing that no one wanted to sit there, Steelcase CEO Jim Keane said.

"An important lesson is that, yes, it has to be safe, but also has to be inspiring," he said. "People are actually going to expect more from offices in the future."

Facebook

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Boasberg dismissed the separate complaint made by the state attorneys general as well.

The FTC didn't immediately have a comment on the ruling and it wasn't known whether the agency planned to try again.

Facebook, in an e-mailed statement, said "We are pleased that today's decisions recognize the defects in the government complaints filed against Facebook. We compete fairly every day to earn people's time and attention and will continue to deliver great products for the people and businesses that use our services."

Alex Harman, competition policy advocate for Public Citizen, a consumer advocacy group, said the ruling wasn't surprising in that other courts had grappled with and thrown out cases in which consumers weren't charged directly for the services in question.

"Courts really have a hard time with that market definition for some reason," Harman said. "It's Exhibit A for why we need the laws changed."

An ambitious package of legislation to overhaul the antitrust laws, which could point toward breaking up Facebook as well as Google, Amazon and Apple, was approved

by the House Judiciary Committee last week and sent to the full U.S. House.

Rep. Ken Buck of Colorado, the chief Republican sponsor of the legislation, said in a statement that Monday's ruling "shows that antitrust reform is urgently needed. Congress needs to provide additional tools and resources to our antitrust enforcers to go after Big Tech companies engaging in anticompetitive conduct?