

Rebates

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Rebates

Green and his wife received the largest rebate for a new home still under construction on Northwest Valley View Drive. The 2017-2018 assessed value was \$29,090, and its current value is \$252,549. The Greens received a rebate of \$17,678, according to city documents.

John Brazil received a \$12,217 rebate for a completed new home on Northwest Charolais Heights that increased in value from \$91,443 to \$174,536.

Sally Knowles received \$6,137 for a multi-dwelling unit on Northwest Canton Street that improved from \$32,330 to \$87,681. The

program also waives system development charges to hook up with city sewer and water services, and Knowles was able to waive \$3,682 in water connection fees and \$8,430 in sewer connection fees.

Jesse and Michal Mad-den received \$6,554 for a remodel on Northwest Bridge Street, and Olivia Cornell received \$4,566 for a remodel on Northwest First Avenue.

The district

Green said the city wanted to create a housing incentive program that was as inclusive as possible, but state law constricts urban renewal districts to 25% of the land within the city and 25% of the assessed property values.

Although the city wanted

to include more properties, Green said, despite advocating for a change to the law through the League of Oregon Cities, it was “politically untenable” to change the statute.

“Instead, we opted to include every available parcel within city limits that was undeveloped or partially developed, and as many existing homes as we could, with the hope that over the next 20 years (the expected life of the program) we would see new home construction and substantial improvements on the majority of those lots,” he said.

The city’s Project Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee shaped the initial district boundaries behind closed doors. The Planning Com-

mission and City Council approved the final boundaries. The goal was to reach as many neighborhoods as possible while holding back about 5% of the available land area for future allocation, Green said.

“If we have property owners that want to participate now or in the future for either incentive program, anywhere in the city limits or our urban growth boundary, we have the ability to amend the boundaries to bring them in,” Green said. “Anyone can be included even if they weren’t in the initial boundaries.”

Concerns

Former city councilor Louis Provencher expressed concerns in 2018 when the district was being developed that the program benefited

a limited number of people and that construction was already underway at some of the sites included in the district boundary, defeating the purpose of the program to encourage new construction.

A foundation appeared to have been poured for the Greens’ home before the urban renewal agency was officially created by ordinance in June 2018, and the initial values used for program calculations were based on 2017-2018 assessed values.

Green said he was happy his family could be early participants in the program. He said the city council, advisory committees and consultants “wrestled for months” on how to create as inclusive a program as possible.

He said he did not “view

this as an ethical question at all” because “the council created a program that benefits all current and future residents equally.” He said anyone who wants to participate can, regardless of where they work.

“We own two of the 173 acres that were included by the city council in the urban renewal area,” he said. “That’s about 2% of the initial land area. Since the council’s goal is 100 homes, I guess we need to build one more in the next 20 years to do our part to reach that goal — and we’re happy to do it.

“We’re raising the third generation of my wife’s family in John Day. We want to do our part to lend our time, talents and resources to help improve the community. This is our home, and we’re here to stay.”

Torrefaction

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produce 80,000-90,000 tons of torrefied wood in a year.

The plant will provide 15-17 new positions, and seven people have already been hired. The pay ranges from \$15-\$25 per hour for the five different job types available. Some of the positions require expertise, but some training will be offered as well.

The torrefaction plant was built at the Malheur Lumber mill in John Day. The two separate businesses now share some of the same machinery, Krumenauer said, and the wood the mill cannot use to produce high-value, dimensional lumber will be used by the torrefaction plant.

“These guys (Malheur Lumber) can get a more consistent supply of the log that they need to keep the mill running, and we (Restoration Fuels) get to find another market outlet for the waste that traditionally hasn’t had a market and has not allowed local contractors to plan and effectively invest in their own operations,” Krumenaur said.

The plant will turn biomass, such as small-diameter trees that have little economic value, into torrefied wood that can be sold. With additional value from the biomass, restoration projects on the forest cost less and are more efficient.

The torrefaction plant can also use other forms of biomass.

John Shelk, the managing director of Ochoco Lumber, which owns Malheur Lumber, shared that the John Day mill currently has about 15,000

tons of wood fiber, which is primarily used for paper. But when demand for fiber from paper mills is low, the supply backs up in John Day, which can now be used by the torrefaction plant.

Krumenauer said Restoration Fuels is in discussions with utilities from Europe and Asia and several power plants in the United States as possible customers. Because the torrefied fuel can be ground up and pulverized and can be stored outdoors in the same way that coal is handled, the power plants don’t need to make expensive modifications to the existing plant, Krumenaur said.

“We believe that we have a mission to support the broader market development, and we would like the opportunity to use this plant to get as many potential users to evaluate this type of fuel before we lock in a firm, long-term off-take,” he said. “We will provide initial deliveries to customers in 2020 while we continue to work through the current negotiations on long-term sales contracts.”

Krumenauer said plant construction costs were about \$17.5 million, provided primarily by the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities with some development expenses provided by the Forest Service and air pollution-reducing equipment funded by the Governor’s Strategic Reserve Fund.

Local businesses have benefited as well.

“We’re spending quite a bit of money at the local Ace Hardware store. A lot of the renting equipment are through JD Rents,” he said. “I think we bought out all the water and Gatorade that the grocery store has.”



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

This is the new boiler system that will be used for the torrefaction plant and Malheur Lumber.

How

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fuel,” wood residues that include bark, sawdust, planer shavings, wood chunks, fines, dirt and other woody materials, according to Matt Krumenaur, CEO of Restoration Fuels.

2. The chipper

The primary source for the plant will be wood around 6-8 inches in diameter, which has little to no value until it is torrefied. At the start of the plants production there will be about five semi-trucks delivering small-diameter wood, Krumenaur said. Malheur Lumber’s whole log chipping system will cut the wood into pieces about 5/8 inch by 5/8 inch.

3. The dryer

Once chipped, the product will go through a 25-foot-wide-by-100-foot-long dryer built to process up to 37 tons of chipped wood an hour. Warm air at 120 degrees blows through the chips on a conveyor belt. Outside tem-



Contributed photo

Chipped wood before the torrefaction process, left, and after.

peratures affect the process, but it will typically take about 30 minutes to reduce the moisture content of the wood to about 10% of its previous levels.

4. The torrefier

The magic happens when the dried chips are roasted at 570 degrees as they spin inside the rotary drum of the torrefier that can process up to 17 tons of chipped wood per hour. The torrefaction process decomposes the hemicellulose, a major component of plant cell walls, from the wood into gases and reduces the weight of the chips by 30% while retaining a majority of the energy content. The wood becomes brittle and hydrophobic (water resistant). The energy of a torrefied pellet is about 20-30% greater than a traditional white pellet.

“The torrefaction pro-

cess involves applying high temperatures in the absence of oxygen,” Krumenaur said. “This process converts the hemicellulose within the wood to volatile organic compounds such as ‘torr gases.’ Those ‘torr gases’ are then processed in a thermal oxidizer, and the thermal energy is then sent back into the kiln system to provide heat for the process and to inert the interior of the torrefaction reactor.”

5. The pellet mill

The wood chips then go through a cooling system, reducing their temperature from 500 degrees to under 100 degrees. They go through a grinder or hammer mill and are fed directly into the pellet mill. The torrefied wood receives a small amount of water before being densified into briquettes that range from 1.5 to 3 inches in diameter.



The Blue Mountain Healthcare Foundation would like to thank everyone who attended and supported Campfires & Cocktails - the Annual Meeting, Dinner & Auction held on October 19th at the Grant County Fairgrounds Pavilion. Funds raised this year were put into the Helping Hand Fund.

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Walden

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running for any other political office next year. Merkley is running for a third term in the U.S. Senate. Oregon’s secretary of state, attorney general and treasurer positions are also on the ballot. As the state’s most high-profile Republican, Walden could be pressured to run for governor in 2022 when Gov. Kate Brown is ineligible for re-election due to term limits.

While the overwhelming majority of his votes were solidly in line with the Republican agenda in the House, Walden has not been in lock-step with President Trump on issues.

As chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, he supported Trump’s position on repealing the Affordable Care Act, to relax net neutrality rules and has backed Trump on the current Ukrainian scandal.

In his statement, Walden recounted his more than 20 years in office, saying that he had worked to find solutions to the opioid crisis, improve forest health and increase access to high speed broadband. Walden said he was proud to champion the issues facing Oregonians east of the Cascades and south of the Willamette Valley.

“Rural Oregon values run deeply in my veins,” Walden said. “My ancestors arrived here in 1845 and I grew up on a cherry orchard in The Dalles with parents who survived the Great Depression. They taught me the true meaning of community; the importance of giving back; and the value of hard work. That’s why I’ve given it my all for the people and the way of life we so enjoy in Oregon.”

The son of former state Rep. Peter Walden, Greg Walden was elected to the Oregon House in 1989. He was Majority Leader for the 1991 and 1993 legislative sessions. He served two years in the Oregon Senate from 1995 to 1997.



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