HEPPNER 50¢
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Bank of Eastern Oregon among 200 top performing banks in nation

American Banker magazine has ranked three Oregon banks among the top 200 community banks in the country.

The magazine, a trade publication based in New York City, named Oregon Bancorp of Salem, OR; FS Bancorp of Mountlake Terrace, WA; Timberland Bancorp of Hoquiam, WA; Summit Bank of Eugene, OR; Baker Boyer Bancorp of Walla Walla, WA; Cashmere Valley Bank of Cashmere, WA; BEO Bancorp of Heppner, OR; Community Financial of Spokane, WA; Peoples Bancorp of Bellingham, WA; U&I Financial Corp of Lynnwood, WA; Pacific Financial Corp. of Aberdeen, WA; Coastal Financial Corp. of Everett, WA; Riverview Bancorp of Vancouver, WA; and Sound Financial Bancorp of Seattle, WA to the list based on average return of shareholder equity between 2016 and 2018. Banks with less than $2 billion in assets were eligible.

At 25.18 percent average return, Oregon Bancorp, ranked one; FS Bancorp ranked six at 15.57 percent average return; with a 13.24 percent return Timberland Bancorp ranked 26; 12.70 percent return Summit Bank ranked 34; with 11.6 percent Baker Boyer Bancorp ranked 59; Cashmere Valley Bank was 72 at 11.22 percent; at 10.71 percent average return BEO Bancorp ranked 97; Community Financial ranked 104 with 10.63 percent; Peoples Bancorp was 121 with 10.3 percent; U&I Financial Corp ranked 141 at 9.85 percent; Pacific Financial Corp. ranked 153 with 9.66 percent; Coastal Financial Corp. ranked 173 with 9.41 percent; Riverview Bancorp ranked 197 at 9.15% and Sound Financial Bancorp ranked number 199 at 9.13 percent.

"We are extremely pleased with the recognition in American Banker magazine. We find ourselves in the company of some of the best run and most admired banks in the nation," said Jeff Bailey President and CEO of Bank of Eastern Oregon. "This is testimony to the dedication of our employees and the tremendous support of our customer base. We are proud of our track record serving eastern Oregon and southeastern Washington communities for over 74 years and are delighted to be the one of only three banks located in Oregon that can make the claim of being in the top 200 community banks in the country," concluded Bailey.

New salon opens in Heppner

There's a new hair salon in town. Schatzi's Mane Attraction, owned by Torri Lovgren, opened in February in Heppner. Schatzi's, which offers haircuts and styling, coloring, waxing, nails and facials, is in a brand-new shop, located next to the former bowling alley.

Torri, 27, is the daughter of Pat and Bobette Lovgren of Heppner. She has two younger sisters, Hanna Rinehart and Ali Lovgren, both Heppner; and two older brothers, Kyler of Pomeroy, WA, and Kody, who lives in Central Oregon. She graduated from Heppner High School in 2010 and then attended Blue Mountain Community College, where she played basketball on the BMCC team for three years. She worked for Morrow County in the tax collection office in Heppner before attending beauty school, graduating in 2018.

Construction of the new shop started in November of last year and was completed by February 1, with the help of contractor Rod Wilson and Torri's dad, Pat. The shop has a country look, featuring barn door sliding partitions.

The name Schatzi's (which means pretty girl or sweetheart in German) comes from a nickname Torri was called by a relative when she was young and Mane (vs. main) is a play on words, as in horse's mane, since Torri loves riding.

Above: Torri at the entrance to her new shop
Below: Torri shows off her new country-themed salon.

Salon hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment at 541-980-7081. Torri also has a Facebook presence, called Hair by Torri, whereby people can make appointments online.

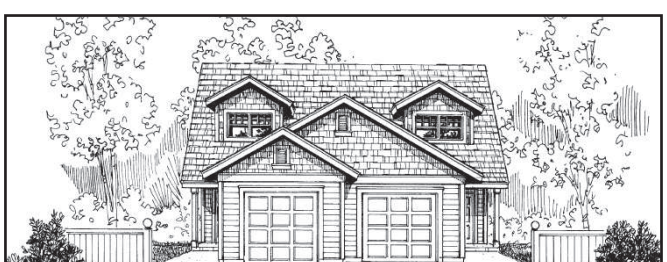
WCVEDG breaks ground on new duplex

Aims to ease rental shortage in area

Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group board members last week broke ground on construction of a new duplex in Heppner. Left to Right: David Sykes treasurer, Nancy Snider VP, Sheryll Bates executive director, Kim Cutsforth president, board members Kraig Cutsforth, Bob Houser, Ed Rollins, Darrell Green and project general contractor David Allstott.

By David Sykes

After several years of planning and the accumulation of funds, the local economic development group has broken ground on construction of a new duplex in Heppner. Located on Cowins Street, construction of the duplex will hopefully help to ease a chronic lack of rental housing in Heppner.



The new units will be three-bedroom two-bath each with a garage.

The Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) has for many years recognized that a lack of housing in south county is an impediment to maintaining and growing healthy local businesses and jobs. The opportunity to do something about it came several years ago when the Columbia River Enterprise Zone in Boardman began allocating to WCVEDG funds earmarked for housing. The group has used some of that money for a housing rehabilitation project in south county, but a majority of the money has been held to where now there is now enough money for construction.

WCVEDG bought a parcel of land on Cowins Street, tore down the old dilapidated apartments there, and put the project out for bids. Allstott Construction of Heppner was awarded the contract and plans to start construction soon. Miller and Sons of Heppner also did the building tear down and excavating on the lot in preparation of the construction.

The two-story units will be of quality construction featuring three-bedrooms, two-baths with kitchen, living room, nook and covered patio out back. Each 1213 square foot unit will have its own garage. Completion date is not set yet, and the rent amount has not yet been established.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:
MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

PGE official talks big green energy project coming to Morrow County

Wind, solar, battery first of its kind in US

Brad Jenkins of Portland General Electric speaks at the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group annual luncheon. *-Photo by David Sykes.*

By David Sykes

An official from Portland General Electric, PGE, was the featured speaker at this year's Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group annual luncheon and he talked about the big green energy project coming soon to Morrow County. Although the county has seen lots of windmill projects already Brad Jenkins, vice president for Utility Operations, said his company is partnering with NextEra Energy Resources, LLC, to construct the first ever wind, solar and battery operation of this scale in all of North America.

The project will produce 300 megawatts of wind generation with 50 megawatts of solar generation and 30 megawatts of battery storage, all of which will be purchased by PGE to meet its green energy commitment. "We are committed to reducing our carbon output by 80 percent by 2050," Jenkins told the gathered luncheon crowd. He reminded everyone that the coal-fired electrical generating plant owned by PGE in Boardman will be closing in 2020, putting an end to coal generating in Oregon.

Called the Wheatridge Renewable Energy Facility, it includes 120 turbines on a wind farm to be located just north of Lexington, as well as a new solar farm and a large battery operation to store the power for when it is needed. Wheatridge will provide up to 300 jobs during construction of the wind site and up to 175 jobs during construction of the solar and storage sites. Approximately 10 full-time employees will operate the combined facilities once they're commissioned for service.

Jenkins said PGE will buy all of the electricity from the new facility but will only own 100 megawatts of output. A subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources will own the balance of the project and sell its output to PGE under 30-year power purchase

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