

Dairy relocates to Boardman Tree Farm

Sale completed in November

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Staff Writer

Nearly one-third of the massive Boardman Tree Farm has been sold to a local dairy that plans to move operations within the next year.

Willow Creek Dairy purchased 7,288 acres of the tree farm from Greenwood Resources in November. Owner Greg te Velde said the land he purchased runs along the property's southern boundary — out of view from Interstate 84 — near Finley Buttes Landfill.

Once trees have been removed from the property, te Velde said he will put in a center pivot to grow irrigated wheat, corn and alfalfa.

The deal will return the land to more conventional irrigated agriculture. Before the land was planted in trees by Potlatch Corp. in the early 1990s, the land was operated as irrigated agriculture farm, growing mostly potatoes, alfalfa and wheat.

Te Velde's dairy currently raises about 8,000 cows and provides 70,000 gallons of milk per day to Tillamook Cheese at the Port of Morrow.

Te Velde lives in central California, and established Willow Creek Dairy in 2002 on land leased from Threemile Canyon Farms. The operation employs about 50 people.

"The whole community is



FILE PHOTO

Nearly one-third of the 25,000-acre Boardman Tree Farm is being sold to the Willow Creek Dairy.

great," te Velde said. "It's all about agriculture. It's really easy to do business here."

Te Velde purchased land, water rights and irrigation equipment from the Boardman Tree Farm for \$65 million, according to documents with the Morrow County Assessor's Office. Greenwood Resources has owned the Boardman Tree Farm since 2007, totaling 25,000 acres of hybrid poplar trees that are grown in rotation and sold for sawlogs, pulp and biofuel. It takes 12 years before the trees fully mature.

Te Velde said he expects

a measured transition from tree farm to dairy farm on the newly acquired land. Greenwood Resources did retain some options in the deal, depending on market conditions.

With any luck, te Velde said he could be moved within the next year.

"We'll have a little more control over our destiny," he said.

Don Rice, director of North American operations for Greenwood Resources, did not comment on the long-term future of the tree farm. The area spans six miles along Interstate 84

and 13 miles to the south, and stands as a significant landmark for the region.

The tree farm includes roughly 6 million standing trees, and provides lumber to the Collins Companies' Upper Columbia Mill, which operates in conjunction with the Greenwood Tree Farm Fund. There is also a veneer mill owned by Columbia Forest Products that opened in 2013.

The Tree Farm has also hosted "A Very Poplar Run" since 2011, with 5K and 10K races to benefit the Agape House in Hermiston.

PGE takes over construction at Boardman plant

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Staff Writer

Portland General Electric has fired the general contractor in charge of building the Carty Generating Station near Boardman and will assume control of the project's final construction.

Abeinsa, an affiliate of the Spanish multinational corporation Abengoa, was selected by PGE to build Carty in 2013. Abengoa is now in talks with creditors to try and avoid becoming the largest bankruptcy ever recorded in Spain.

PGE provided interim financing to pay for construction at Carty in the weeks leading up to Monday, Dec. 14, when Abeinsa began turning approximately 500 workers away from the site. On Friday, PGE declared Abeinsa in default of their agreement and removed them from the project.

The Carty Generating Station is a 440-megawatt, natural gas-fired power plant located on Tower Road in the shadow of the existing Boardman Coal Plant. PGE identified the need for Carty in 2009, and hoped to have the plant up and running by mid-2016.

The Carty facility is about 75 percent built, and PGE is now assembling a new construction management team to finish

the job. Spokesman Steve Corson said some employees could get back to work as early as this week, though most will likely have to wait until after the holidays.

"I think many of the same contractors will be working at the plant again," Corson said.

Jim Piro, PGE president and CEO, said they have closely monitored progress at Carty, and all major components of the plant are either in place or in the process of being installed.

"Our responsibility to our customers and our investors requires us to step in now and assume control so construction can get back underway," Piro said.

PGE has started discussions with Liberty Mutual Surety and Zurich North America, which provided a performance bond of \$145.6 million under the original construction agreement. Carty was originally estimated to cost up to \$514 million. PGE says it will provide an update on costs and expected completion after work resumes.

"Our focus here is on getting the plant built and online for our customers," Corson said.

PGE serves roughly 840,000 customers in the Portland metro area south to Salem.

BRIEF CASE

Distinguished citizen nominations sought

Nominations are open for the 46th annual Distinguished Citizens Awards Banquet in Hermiston.

Award categories are man, woman, business, volunteer of the year and community service award. The nominations are due by Monday, Jan. 4. Nomination and criteria forms are available at the chamber office, 415 S. Highway 395, or at www.hermistonchamber.com.

Others awards that will be presented include the Altrusan Outstanding Young Citizen Award, Hermiston School District Educators and Administrator of the Year.

The banquet is Wednesday, Feb. 3 at the Hermiston Conference Center. Tickets are \$30 per person. For more information, call 541-567-6151.

Business advisor announces class

Business owners who are tired of struggling and ready to take their business to the next level are invited to an upcoming course.

The Serious Business

Owners Roundtable with Carol Frink provides step-by-step information on how to build a business you really love. The program provides tools, support and a blueprint for success. The next six-month course begins Tuesday, Jan. 12.

A business solutions expert, Frink is known for her ability to turn complex situations into simple steps. In a 13-month period of time, the Hermiston woman built a six-figure profitable business working part-time. Surrounding herself with a success team, Frink said, is a key to her achievements.

For more information, visit www.realbusinessolutionsllc.com or contact Frink at 541-567-0869 or carol@realbusinessolutionsllc.com.

Realtors donate to Agape House

The Columbia Basin Board of Realtors recently held its annual Christmas party and auction, with proceeds to benefit the Agape House.

The board presented a check to Dave Hughes of Agape House for \$1,420.

Items were donated by local real estate offices for a silent auction at the

event. The table centerpieces were also auctioned off that were donated by local affiliates.

Gas prices up slightly in advance of holiday

The average price of gasoline in Oregon rose 2.3 center per gallon over the last week, averaging \$2.29 per gallon on Sunday, according to GasBuddy.com's survey of gas stations in Oregon.

Nationally, gas prices have fallen 1.6 cents per gallon, to \$1.99 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy.com, all stations in the Hermiston area are lower than the state average, except for the Texaco station in Umatilla, which was

showing a price of \$2.399 per gallon on Tuesday.

The lowest prices locally were reported at the Pilot and Space Age travel centers along Interstate 84 at \$2.059 per gallon on Tuesday. The lowest price in town was reported at the 76 station on Hermiston Avenue at \$2.099 per gallon, according to GasBuddy users.

The Hermiston Herald accepts news announcements about job changes and promotions, business ownership changes, renovations, remodels, changes in business hours, new business openings, business owner retirements and related items. Submit your business news and photos to newsroom@hermistonherald.com.

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