

# Herald Business

Follow us on Twitter  
@HermistonHerald



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY DEBBIE PEDRO

More than 300 people attended the third annual Community Agricultural Workers and Employers Resource Fair, Wednesday at the Hermiston Conference Center.

## 300 attend ag workers resource fair

More than 300 employees, job seekers, families and community members came together March 9 for the third annual Community Agricultural Workers and Employers Resource Fair.

The attendance more than tripled over past years, according to Debbie Pedro, director of the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to 45 informational and vendor booths, the two-hour event also included dental care, hair cuts, a meal provided by Fiesta Foods and multiple health screenings, such as blood pressure checks and cholesterol screenings.

The free event was presented by the Hermiston Latino Business Network, Fiesta Foods, Atkins Staffing and the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY DEBBIE PEDRO

**Michelle Monroe, of literacy program Ready 2 Learn, mans a booth at the third annual Community Agricultural Workers and Employers Resource Fair.**

“We hope that next year we’ll be able to expand the event and it will continue to grow,” Pedro said. “It was awesome, and we will definitely do it again.”

# Lamb Weston plans \$30 million Boardman expansion

Plant investment comes before planned split with ConAgra Foods later this year

ConAgra Foods Inc. announced Friday that its Lamb Weston processing facility will expand operations in Boardman.

The \$30 million investment will add additional processing capacity for making formed products such as hash brown patties and potato puffs. The addition of the line at the company’s existing facility is expected to add 50 jobs to the 390 people already employed by the company in Boardman.

With continued increase in demand for frozen potato and formed products, this capacity expansion is necessary to fulfill Lamb Weston’s global growth projections, according to a press release from the company.

Construction on the processing line is expected to begin this spring, with completion in 2017. The added line will increase processing capacity by approximately 50 million pounds.

“With the frozen potato category growing globally, we have tremendous opportunity to support our customers’ growth in the U.S. and around the world,” said Lamb Weston President Greg Schlafer in a press



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Employees gather outside the ConAgra Foods Lamb Weston frozen potato plant in June 2014 at the Port of Morrow in Boardman.

release. “To capture that growth, we need to make more products. Expanding our operations in the Columbia Basin — with access to great potatoes, people and ports — just makes sense.”

The facility in Boardman is close to growing, storage and shipping operations, with easy access to the Port of Morrow. The company opened an initial expansion of the facility in June 2014, adding 300 million pounds of capacity with a new fry line. That \$200 million project included plans for the addition announced Friday.

“Lamb Weston’s planned expansion shows their continued commitment to the Port of Morrow, Boardman and the Mid-Columbia region as the right place to do business,” said Gary Neal, general manager of the Port

of Morrow. “Their ongoing investments add good paying jobs to our region and we are fortunate to have such great partners at the Port.”

Lamb Weston employs about 4,500 people at a corporate office and seven manufacturing facilities in the Columbia Basin, and operates 22 manufacturing facilities in North America, Europe and China.

Lamb Weston was established in 1950 by F. Gilbert Lamb in a former co-op plant in Weston, Oregon. Lamb and the company also invented the water gun knife in 1960, which was used to make french fries by moving potatoes with water at a high speed into a sharpened steel grid to turn the whole spuds into fries. The company entered the

domestic potato processing market and within 10 years had expanded by adding new processing facilities in American Falls, Idaho; Connell and Quincy, Washington; and Hermiston.

ConAgra Foods announced late last year that it will separate from Lamb Weston later this year, forming two separate publicly traded companies. That spin-off is expected to be completed sometime this fall, with Lamb Weston being headquartered in Kennewick, Washington.

ConAgra Foods, which currently has headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, will become Conagra Brands and also move its corporate offices to Chicago this year. ConAgra acquired Lamb Weston in 1988.

### BRIEFCASE

#### Secretary of State sets notary seminar

A free seminar for experienced notaries is being offered by the Secretary of State.

The class covers such topics as employee notary issues, comparing signatures and identification, notary and elder abuse fraud, and journaling witnesses. The class is not for beginning notaries.

The session is Thursday, March 24 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in ST-214 at Blue Mountain Community College, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton.

Although the session is free, those planning to attend must register at <http://notsem.sos.state.or.us> or by calling 503-986-2200.

#### Business lunch builds bridges

Consultant John Audley will discuss building bridges to promote healthier and more self-reliant rural Oregon during the upcoming Hermiston Chamber of Commerce B2B Luncheon.

Audley owns a consulting business and will share information about his work for the Oregon Business Council and Craft 3, a non-profit financial institution dedicated to investing in people, their communities and healthy natural systems.

The no-host luncheon gathering is Tuesday, March 22, with networking starting at 11:45 a.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395. The meal, which is catered by Ixtapa, is \$10 for members and \$13 for non-members.

For more information or to RSVP, contact 541-567-6151 or [kelly@hermistonchamber.com](mailto:kelly@hermistonchamber.com).

#### Gas prices climbing again

Average retail gasoline prices in Oregon have risen 9.2 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$2.07 per gallon on Sunday, according to GasBuddy’s daily survey of 1,307 gas outlets in Oregon.

Nationally, the average price has increased 11.9 cents per gallon in the last week to \$1.93 per gallon, according to gasoline price website GasBuddy.com.

Including the change in gas prices in Oregon during the past week, prices Sunday were 80.3 cents

per gallon lower than the same day one year ago and are 16.5 cents per gallon higher than a month ago. The national average has increased 23.9 cents per gallon during the last month and stands 50.2 cents per gallon lower than this day one year ago.

Fuel prices in the Hermiston area have started rising too, but remain below the statewide average.

According to GasBuddy.com, the lowest price for regular unleaded in the greater Hermiston area on Tuesday was the Pilot travel center in Stanfield at Interstate 84 at \$1.899 and the Tesoro station in Umatilla.

All other stations were listing higher prices according to customer reports to the GasBuddy.com website.

“The cheapest gas prices of the year are now solidly behind us,” said Patrick DeHaan, senior petroleum analyst for GasBuddy. “The current upward trend is an unfortunate one that we witness every year, but the sudden jolt this time around has been enhanced by a 45 percent jump in the price of crude oil in the last

month.”

While prices are expected to increase for a while, there may be good news for consumers later this spring and summer.

“At the end of the day, we expect this rally in gasoline prices to run for another month or two before stalling out,” DeHaan said. “Perhaps the best news? Motorists still could see the cheapest average summer gasoline prices in over a decade.”

#### Chamber cancels social media sessions

A pair of business social media workshops in Umatilla have been canceled.

Due to lack of timely response, the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce canceled the March 16 sessions.

For more information, contact Karen Hutchinson-Talaski at 541-922-4825 or [karen@umatillachamber.net](mailto:karen@umatillachamber.net).

### SELF DEFENSE

Learn self-defense techniques, including: Awareness, home security, verbal de-escalation, evading and escaping maneuvers. This is a contact class. Age 12 and up. Free, but must pre-register. Call 541-667-3509.

**March 31 • 6:00 - 8:00pm**  
GSMC Conference Center 2

### POWERFUL TOOLS FOR THE CAREGIVER:

A FREE program for family caregivers. Learn how to reduce stress and relax, communicate effectively, reduce guilt and anger, make tough decisions, set goals and problem solve. **Must attend the first class.** Registration is required as space is limited. **Sign up by 3/18.**

**Tuesdays • 4:00 - 5:30pm**  
**March 22 through April 26**  
To register, call 541-667-3509

### HEALTHY FRIDAYS

FREE health screenings & health coaching: Blood pressure checks, weigh-ins, body mass index, cholesterol and glucose.

**First Friday of each month**  
**9:30 - 11:30am**  
**Third Friday of each month**  
**2:00 - 4:00pm**  
GSMC Conference Center 7 (by Education Dept)

Information or to register call (541) 667-3509 or email [healthinfo@gshealth.org](mailto:healthinfo@gshealth.org)

## OREGON CAPITAL INSIDER

A weekly email newsletter with nonpartisan reporting that goes beyond the headlines

Get the inside scoop on state government and politics with the weekly Oregon Capital Insider email newsletter.

We’re investing in Salem coverage when other news organizations are cutting back. Oregon Capital Insider is part of the EO Media Group/Pamplin Media Group Capital Bureau which is dedicated to **reporting more in-depth stories and features on state government** than any other news source.

**Oregon Capital Insider brings you:**

- Independent, non-partisan reporting on the trends, issues, and personalities in state government
- The early radar on the next election and how it impacts you
- Who’s moving up, and who’s moving out?

ACT NOW AND GET UP TO 3 SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!

Subscribe today and receive THREE Oregon Capital Insider subscriptions for only \$109 for an entire year. That’s less than \$40 a year per subscription! You can give your two gift subscriptions to a friend, coworker, or business associate. Simply provide your gift recipient’s name and email address, and we’ll send all three subscriptions for one low price.

Visit [oregoncapitalinsider.com](http://oregoncapitalinsider.com) or call 844-297-8634 for more information.