



Contributed photo by NOWA

A booster for the recently completed West Project is pictured.

Water project:

Continued from Page A1

Project pump test on May 5 yielded approximately 195,000 gallons per minute, or approximately 435 cubic feet per second; a cubic foot is roughly the size of a regulation basketball. The Columbia River water used comes from existing certificated rights and municipal water rights transferred to instream rights.

Cook said the region has been making promises to Salem about what additional water resources would be able to deliver, including new jobs, more crops, energy savings, environmental benefits and replenished groundwater supplies. They're ready to follow through on those commitments.

"Now we can talk with data and facts, instead of just conceptually, about what we can do with this water," he said.

According to the news release, the total cost of the West Project was roughly \$34 million. About \$4 million of that came from an \$11 million funding package for water projects in the region that the Legislature passed in 2015. The Port of Morrow's partnership with the Columbia Improvement District allowed the district to use the port's bond rating to receive a low interest rate when taking on debt for the project.

Lisa Mittelsdorf, director of economic development for the Port of Morrow, said the port was glad to assist on such an important project for the region — a sentiment echoed by Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, and Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, who supported it in the Legislature.

"This project is vital to Umatilla Basin's economy," Hansell said in a statement. "It shows we can use our natural resources in a sustainable way to create jobs and opportunity for people in rural Oregon."

Restaurants:

Continued from Page A1

As a result of the quick return to pre-COVID-19 sales, Myers has said that he has had difficulty sourcing materials, and that supply chain slowdowns have left him worried about running out of food at times.

"About 90% of our beef was coming from one particular supplier," he said. "And now, we had to source meat from three separate suppliers to get the volumes that we require."

In addition to supply chain issues, the restaurant has faced difficulties in finding staff. Myers said that less than half of his 50 person staff have chosen to return to work and, as a result, he is being forced to pay overtime and begin hiring additional staff to fill the shortfall.

"Two of my main gals worked 70 hours this last week — each — covering for people who didn't come back," he said. "So we are hiring."

Issues with supply chain and staffing have also impacted The Pheasant Bar and Grill, where owner Cherie Bumpaous said that only 10 of her 22 employees had chosen to return to work.

Bumpaous, who is a strong proponent of reopening and a vocal voice in planning the "Reopen Hermiston & Eastern Oregon" protest planned for May 30, said that she feels the reopening is a step in the right direction but nowhere near far enough. Bumpaous takes particular objection to the requirement that bars close at 10 p.m., though she said she plans to abide by the rules.

Despite issues with staffing and the supply chain, Bumpaous said she planned to open on Wednesday morning and expects a decent crowd.

"People can't wait to get back in here," she said. "People are excited to get



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Restaurant customers dine at Nookie's Restaurant and Brewery for lunch on Tuesday afternoon, Nookie's owner Mitch Myers said that the restaurant had seen record sales over their first weekend since reopening.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

A hiring sign is taped to the front window of Nookie's Restaurant and Brewery in Hermiston on Tuesday afternoon.

back out there and back into public again."

While some area restaurants reopened their lobbies immediately when that restriction was lifted Friday, others have posted online that they will need some time to prepare to meet requirements, such as spacing tables 6 feet apart. Some have said they are sticking to take-out for now.

Hermiston Chamber of Commerce CEO Kimberly Nevil said that the chamber is focusing on distributing accurate information and

ensuring that businesses are ready to go as they reopen.

"Our members have done a very good job at pivoting through this," she said. "Overall, our chamber members have been really adaptive."

Nevil went on to add that many businesses have put in place practices that may remain after reopening, such as expanded ordering options and a more in-depth presence online.

The chamber has ordered nearly 200 yard signs for chamber members to dis-

play and advertise their reopening, and has worked with other chambers in the region to put together a "Back to Business Toolkit." The toolkit, which was distributed electronically, includes information and signage from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as suggestions for creating a reopening plan.

"I'm excited for those that have opened their doors already and I respect the ones that aren't quite ready yet," Nevil said.

HARVEST SAFETY TIPS FOR FARMWORKERS

- Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.
- Use a spotter and deployed flags to maintain safe distances from power lines and other equipment when doing field work.
- If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact us immediately by phone and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab, without touching it at the same time, and hop away to safety.
- Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipe and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

Source: Safe Electricity

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