

Local lawyer retires, passes reins to son

Hermiston's Bendixsen law offices will stay in the family

By NADA SEWIDAN
STAFF WRITER

Kurt Bendixsen, owner of Bendixsen Law, is retiring and passing his 40-year-old business to his son Cameron Bendixsen.

Bendixsen is retiring from the law office in order to serve on a three-year mission trip in the Ivory Coast of Africa, along with his wife, Susie, where they both will be senior missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Although there were moments during his tenure as a lawyer where work was stressful, he always enjoyed the people aspect of the job the most.

"It's a stressful job when people rely on you for important advice during difficult times," he said. "But my favorite part of being a lawyer is the intimacy of working with people, getting to know the details of their lives and trying to help them."

Cameron is a second generation lawyer in the firm. Bendixsen said a piece of advice he'd pass on to his son is to always remain as



Provided by Susie Bendixsen
Bendixsen family and associates in front of Bendixsen Law Offices in Hermiston. Kurt Bendixsen (left) is retiring after a 40-year career.

honest and forthcoming as possible and to be kind to fellow lawyers, judges, clients and clerks.

Although Bendixsen is retiring from practicing law, he is still considered an inactive member of the bar, which allows him to return to the firm if he wishes to do so after his mission trip.

Bendixsen recalled his first mission trip to Paris, France as a young man

in the 1970s, and how it changed the trajectory of his career and life. He said he developed discipline that led him to marry his wife once he returned and go to law school.

"I loved my mission and missionary work; it set me on track for everything that would happen to me later in life," he said. "Most of the wonderful things that have happened in my life came as

a result of that mission."

Bendixsen went to law school in Michigan following his mission trip and moved to Eastern Oregon to join Gary Reynolds, his brother-in-law, on Main Street in Hermiston. He's been there ever since and said he's never looked back.

When the Bendixsen family originally moved to Hermiston in 1987, the pop-

ulation was a lot smaller and, although the transition was difficult, it started to slowly grow on them until they came to love Hermiston.

"To Hermiston's credit, everything has improved, the schools are better, the resources are better, we've had great economic growth here," he said. "I think for Hermiston, the future looks very very bright."

He said there is a lot to love about the city. It's the city where they raised their family and built a community with recurring clients.

One of the aspects he said he'll miss about Hermiston is the people he talked to and got to know during his consultations. He recalled how in an hour consultation someone would share their inner soul with him, which led him to deeply care for the people he served as a lawyer.

As a farewell message to Hermiston, he wants to remind community members that they're in this together.

"I think these are hard times and I think it really tests who we are," he said. "We need each other so we can all be better. We need more kindness. We need to be mindful of how we treat one another. We are better together."

BPA suspends surcharge for customers

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

Utilities will get a financial break from the Bonneville Power Administration this year after the non-profit federal power marketer announced it will suspend its financial reserves surcharge through September 2021.

Purchasing wholesale power from BPA is the largest expense for area utilities, such as Umatilla Electric Cooperative and Hermiston Energy Services. According to UEC's 2019 annual report, 80% of the consumer-owned utility's expenses for the year were purchasing power.

The news release from BPA stated that suspending the surcharge will provide relief for BPA's customers that totals about \$3 million per month.

BPA Administrator and CEO Elliot Mainzer said the decision was "a result of a strong collaborative partnership with our customers."

The financial reserves surcharge is triggered when cash reserves fall below a certain threshold, generating revenue for BPA to replenish the reserves that it can use when revenues fall short of projections.

BPA is also offering other forms of relief for customers, according to the news release, including payment extensions for utilities facing financial difficulties due to COVID-19.

Walmart meets goal of hiring more veterans

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

On July 1, Walmart announced it had met its goal of hiring more than 250,000 veterans nationwide by the end of 2020.

The retailer announced the goal in 2013, starting with a goal of hiring at least 100,000 veterans by 2018. After that goal was

met, the new target was announced.

According to a news release from the company, Walmart has hired more than 265,000 veterans nationwide, including more than 2,300 veterans in Oregon.

It also created the Military Spouses Career Connection that offers military spouses hiring preference

while applying for jobs internally.

Walmart also recently announced another "hero pay" initiative for its essential workers during the pandemic. According to an email, the latest bonuses were the third in three months and added up to \$2.9 million across Oregon and \$390 million nationwide.

Full-time hourly associates and drivers were given \$300, part-time employees received \$150 and assistant managers received \$400.

"Walmart and Sam's Club associates continue to do remarkable work, and it's important we reward and appreciate them," John Furner, president and CEO of Walmart U.S., said in a statement. "All across the

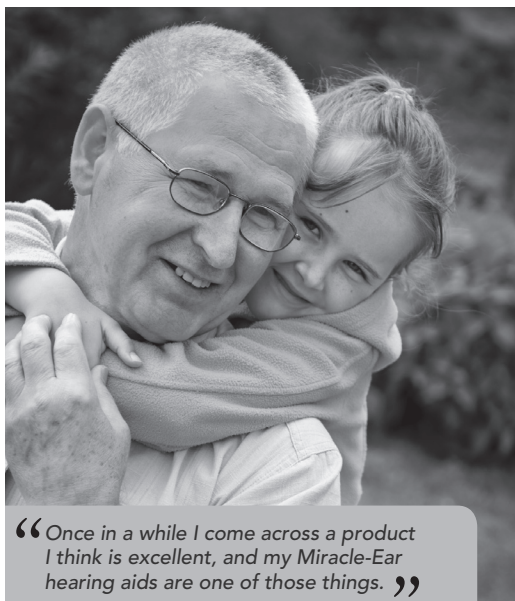
country, they're providing Americans with the food, medicine and supplies they need, while going above and beyond the normal scope of their jobs — diligently sanitizing their facilities, making customers and members feel safe and welcome, and handling difficult situations with professionalism and grace."

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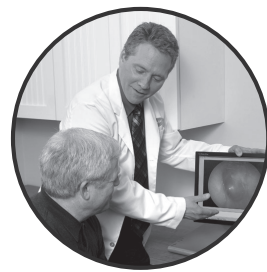
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