

Business Notes

Eligible Columbia Co. dairy farms may qualify for USDA disaster aid

Eligible dairy producers can now sign up for the Dairy Disaster Assistance Program (DDAP -III) at local U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) service centers.

DDAP-III will help dairy producers recover production losses resulting from a variety of adverse weather conditions in the last few years. The program provides \$16 million in benefits to dairy producers for production losses that occurred between January 1, 2005, and February 28, 2007, because of qualifying natural disasters. It compensates producers for production losses that resulted from lost herds or dumped milk when dairy plants closed or the natural disaster damaged containment equipment. Additionally, power outages, fuel shortages, and infrastructure damage may have temporarily interrupted the flow of dairy products to markets.

To be eligible for DDAP-III, dairy producers must have suffered losses in primary and contiguous counties declared or designated a natural disaster. Also, producers in counties receiving an FSA Administrator's Physical Loss Notice determination are eligible.

For Washington and surrounding counties the dates and conditions were: March 15, 2005, to June 30, 2005, for heavy winds, excessive rains and cool temperatures; March 27, 2005, to April 30, 2005, for high winds, below normal temperatures and excessive moisture; December 18, 2005, to

January 21, 2006, for severe storms, flooding, landslides and mudslides; December 14, 2006, to December 15, 2006, for winter storms and excessive moisture.

For Columbia County the dates and conditions were: December 18, 2005, to January 21, 2006, for severe storms and excessive moisture; January 27, 2006, to February 4, 2006, for severe winter storm and excessive moisture, flooding and mudslides; November 5, 2006, to November 8, 2006, for severe storms, flooding, landslides and mudslides; December 14 to December 15, 2006, for severe winter storms and flooding; January 1, 2005, to December 31, 2005, for drought.

Under proposed rules, USDA will calculate payments to eligible producers by multiplying the eligible pounds by the average price received for commercial milk production in the affected areas during the disaster for 2005 and 2006, and for the months of January and February 2007. If the total amount of funding (less any reserve established for disputed claims) is insufficient to compensate eligible producers for losses, then USDA will pay losses at two levels in an effort to more equitably distribute the limited funds and maximize the effectiveness of the program. USDA provides more information on proposed DDAP-III provisions in a fact sheet posted online at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

Wyden Town Hall at Scout Cabin on Friday

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Hawkins Park.

The meeting in Seaside will be from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. on January 4, at Seaside City Hall, 989 Broadway Street.

During his 1996 U.S. Senate campaign, Wyden promised to hold town hall meetings in every Oregon county each year. The events in Vernonia

and Seaside kick off the 12th year of these meetings, which now total over 400.

Unions offering electrical apprenticeship programs

The NECA-IBEW Electrical JATC offers a five-year apprenticeship program, and the Limited Energy Technician JATC offers a four-year apprenticeship program. Both programs combine on-the-job training (OJT) and related classroom training. Oregon-Columbia Chapter NECA and IBEW Local 48 sponsor these programs.

If accepted into the apprenticeship program, apprentices are assigned to an electrical contractor for a minimum of 8000 OJT hours; there is no guarantee of 40 hours per week. Apprentices will complete a total of 10 terms (8 terms for Limited Energy Technician) of school for NECA-IBEW Electrical JATC; classes meet at the NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center, 16021 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Costs for the programs include tools and books of approximately \$600 for the first year, less for later years. Scholarships may be available for the NECA-IBEW Electrical JATC program.

Descriptions of work performed and apprenticeship

Very little change in county employment

Columbia County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was essentially unchanged at 5.9 percent in November from the previous month (6.2%) and from one year before (6.1%). The rate was little different from the statewide rate (5.5%) but higher than the national rate (4.7%). Total employment rose by 287 to 23,292 and the number of unemployed people increased by 52 to 1,430. Total employment this November was 527 more than one year before and there were seven more people unemployed this year.

wage information is available online at www.nietc.org.

Applications will be accepted at the Electrical Training Center on January 7-11 and January 14-18 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The next application period begins July 7. Items required at the time of application include photo identification, a non-refundable \$25.00 application fee (some waivers available), high school, GED or Associate Degree transcripts and all supporting documents. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age. A NJATC aptitude test will be scheduled and applicant must receive a qualify-

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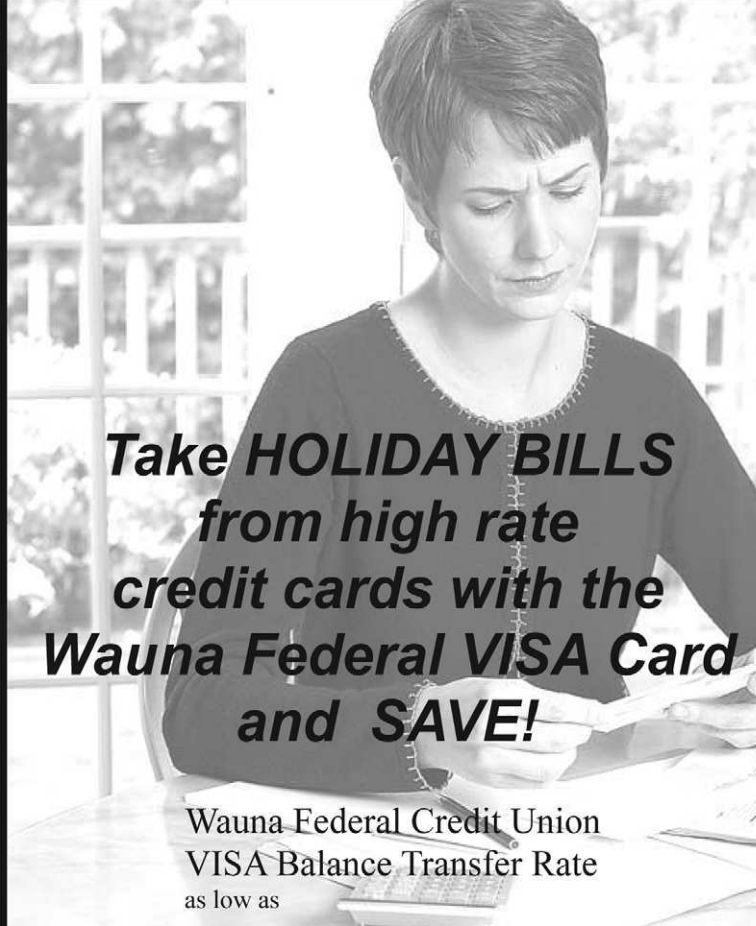
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Happy New Year!!