



DOL Announces Exempt Employee Salary Threshold to Increase Dramatically & Regularly

—Page 7

Enhancing & Promoting the Economic Vitality of Central Oregon Since 1994

Accomplished
 under 40

by **JEFF MARTIN** — CBN President/CEO
 As CBN celebrates our 18th year of honoring young business leaders in Central Oregon, we — along with our sponsor, Washington Trust Bank — thought it would be fun to reach out to some of our past award winners and ask...

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



SARAH K. HALL - 2011 AWARD WINNER

What advice would you give to your former self at the time you were featured as an Accomplished Under 40 Award recipient?

When I received the award I was a small business owner and have so much advice I would tell myself. I think one of the most important things is to make sure you have the right professional team around you when it comes to tax strategies, bookkeeping, financial planning, HR resources, etc. If you can lean on external partnerships to make your business operate more efficiently, you can focus on what you do best and the "why" you started the business in the first place.

What has changed the most in Central Oregon since then?

Growth. This town has grown exponentially in population, urbanization, social diversity and economically. For businesses and business owners, there are so many more resources and communities to help support local businesses grow.

How has your career and community involvement changed since you were selected?

After owning a community-driven business for 16 years, I was fortunate to sell to owners who would continue the loving culture of the community there. I then transitioned back into the world of finance into wealth management. I continue to be connected in our community participating in nonprofit boards, hosting financial literacy and business owner events and I enjoy networking and attending events around town. My outlook

PAGE 6

SDC Fees Hike Gives Builders Sticker Shock
Formula Update for Bend Growth-Related Infrastructure Sees Rates Rise Sharply

by **SIMON MATHER** — CBN Feature Writer

Heavy increases in fees to developers to support Bend's rapid growth-related infrastructure — along with increased builder fees and all-around rising construction costs — have some wondering whether it could provide too high a hurdle for prospective commercial projects, and stymie business expansion hopes.

System Development Charges (SDC) are fees paid when new development occurs, for the cost of infrastructure needed to serve growth. The City of Bend says SDCs pay for crucial infrastructure that is "the backbone of the community:" transportation, water and sewer systems.

The existing SDC formula, or methodology, which sets the transportation, water and sewer charges for a particular development was designed more than a decade ago, when the city's population was well under 100,000, and requires updating on a regular basis.

Bend's current population is an estimated 106,275. Per the University of Portland's 2023 estimates it is expected to

grow to 155,806 by 2045.

Updating SDC methodologies is a recurrent activity typically following updates to master plans so that project lists, upon which SDC fees are calculated, align to master plan capital project lists.

The City of Bend updated its Transportation System Plan in 2020 and the Integrated Water System Master Plan in 2021, both of which involved extensive community engagement.

City leaders say the fees needed to be evaluated for "synergy" with current City Council goals and other local priorities.

The updated approach aims to advance housing affordability while still providing sufficient revenues to fund needed infrastructure. The update began in the summer 2022 and will have the new fee schedule, methodologies and project lists implemented effective July 1 this year.

Under the revised methodologies, water, sewer, and transportation SDCs for most residential developments are tiered by square footage for single-unit and middle housing,

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Central Oregon Financial Institutions Spotlight — Pages 13-22

Mid Oregon Personnel
'Helping Other Companies to Be Successful'

by **ANDREA HINE** — CBN Feature Writer

Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the company he founded back when Prineville's economy was reliant on its five sawmills, Greg Lambert, president and co-owner of Mid Oregon Personnel, recalled that he started with no business phone, much less business cards. "But I did have drive."

Admitting that "I had to work very diligently," — which meant from 5:30am-10pm — Lambert landed his first client in the very first week. "We broke even in the third month, and were in the black one month later. I've never looked back," he said.

(Integral in getting the business started, was his wife Nancy, who did a lot of the initial hiring, and after ten years — when Mid Oregon was well established — left to pursue a career in nursing.)

Although none of the sawmills that initially helped sustain Lambert's fledgling firm remain, the values he stood by 40 years ago are just as important to him — and to his son Sam, vice president and co-owner — in 2024. "Integrity first — we live by it," said Sam Lambert. "Do the right thing

even if it hurts."

"The essence of Mid Oregon Personnel is that we always treat people — whether employer or job applicant — the way we would want to be treated," added his father.

"People aren't numbers to us," the Lamberts said. "Nor is Mid Oregon a body shop. We work hard to find the best fit,

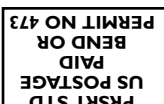


THE FATHER-SON TEAM OF GREG AND SAM LAMBERT IS SHOWN IN BELIZE ON A SCUBA DIVING ADVENTURE | PHOTO COURTESY OF MID OREGON PERSONNEL

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Bend, Oregon

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OBI Releases Inaugural Oregon Competitiveness Book, Site

On April 22, the Oregon Business and Industry (OBI) Research and Education Foundation released the inaugural Oregon Competitiveness Book, a collection of more than 50 indicators of economic competitiveness, from per-capita personal income to public school performance. For each indicator, the Oregon Competitiveness Book ranks Oregon among the 50 states.

As a companion to the Oregon Competitiveness Book, OBI has created a web page that provides context and analysis. The page sorts Oregon Competitiveness Book data into 11 categories, including business climate, taxation, wages and income, population

Continued on Page 30 ▶

EDCO Releases Largest Employers List for Central Oregon

Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO) announces the release of the 2024 Central Oregon Largest Employers List, complete with breakouts of the top employers in each Central Oregon community. This data, collected by EDCO annually for the past 23 years, is the most comprehensive major employer list in Central Oregon.

This year the top 50 private companies collectively employ 22,340 Central Oregonians, or roughly 20%

of the region's March 2024 annual average total non-farm employment of 107,550. St. Charles Health System tops the list again, employing 4,791 people regionwide, an 8.9% increase since last year at the same time.

The top five traded-sector businesses, those that primarily sell their goods or services outside the local market and

Continued on Page 6 ▶

RECENT TRANSACTIONS

Brokers **Russell Huntamer, CCIM** and **Eli Harrison** with **Compass Commercial Real Estate Services** represented the tenant, **M's Bakery**, in the lease of a 1,711 SF restaurant space located in the Old Mill District at 330 SW Powerhouse Drive in Bend.

Compass Commercial Real Estate Services brokers **Russell Huntamer, CCIM** and **Eli Harrison** represented the buyer, **Best Care Treatment Services, Inc.**, in the acquisition of a 2.27 acre parcel on NW 4th Street in Madras. The commercial land sold for \$225,000.

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Commissioner Stephenson Announces Oregon Minimum Wage Determination

Commissioner Christina Stephenson announces the annual adjustment to Oregon's minimum wage rates, effective July 1, 2024. This adjustment is in accordance with ORS 653.025(5) and is based on the increase, if any, to the U.S. City Average Consumer Price Index (CPI) for All Urban Consumers for All Items from March of the preceding year to March of the current year.

increase as follows:

- Portland Metro Minimum Wage: \$15.95 per hour
 - Standard Minimum Wage: \$14.70 per hour
 - Non-Urban Minimum Wage: \$13.70 per hour
- Indexing the minimum wage to

The minimum wage rates will

Continued on Page 30 ▶

Jefferson, Crook & Deschutes Counties WorkSource Benefits Navigator Request for Proposal

On April 15, East Cascades Works (EC Works) launched its search for a WorkSource Benefits Navigator provider in Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes Counties and is inviting proposals from qualified entities interested in providing comprehensive Benefits Navigation services. Duties include meeting with customers to access resources needed to find and keep a job, collaborating with local partners, maintaining customer data, utilizing technology

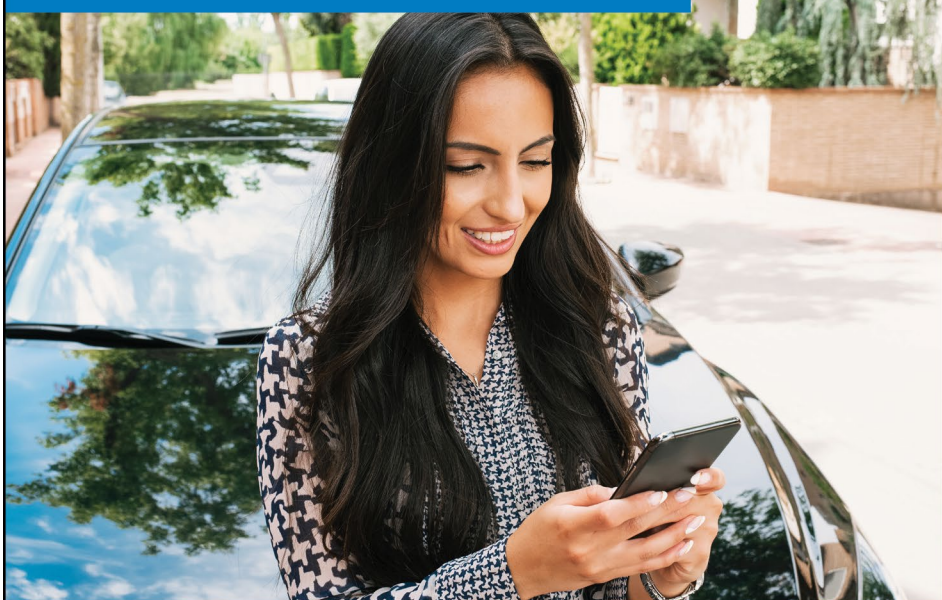
platforms for communication, attending required trainings and conferences, and facilitating outreach to community partners and customers who live in rural parts of the region.

This program is supported through a Future Ready Oregon Workforce Benefits Navigator Grant from the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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Get big rebates on EV charging stations

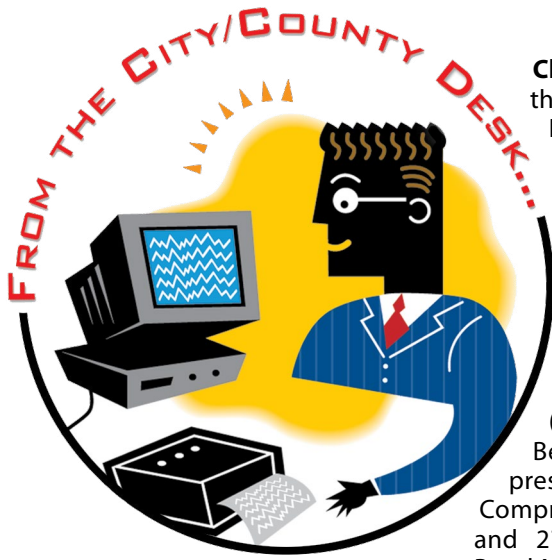


Looking for an easy way to offer a welcome perk, or amenity, for your employees, tenants or customers? Consider on-site electric vehicle charging stations.

Pacific Power is offering significant rebates of **up to \$1,000** per port for installing EV charging stations at your business or multifamily property, as well as free on-site technical assistance to help you understand charging options and costs.

For more details and to apply, visit PacificPower.net/EV.





BEND

◆ The Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO) Policy Board will consider approval of two amendments to the MTIP at their next meeting, on 19, 2024, at 12pm. Public comments can be submitted via email for the next three weeks to kkennedy@bendoregon.gov, or during Public Comment at the hybrid (in-person/online) Bend MPO Policy Board meeting.

In-person meeting information, including a Zoom link to attend online, will be posted to the BMPO Policy Board webpage one week prior to the meeting date.

Summary of Amendment

Project Key Number: 23056

Project Name & Description: Local STBG allocation FFY26-27 — Bend MPO.

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funding for the Bend MPO to use on projects to be determined through their project selection process and budget development. Comprised of funding from FY25, 26 and 27 estimated allocations.

Changes: Remove the project from the ODOT's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and MPO MTIP due to change in funding source.

Project Key Number: 23059

Project Name & Description: Local STBG FFY25-27 — City of Bend Street Maintenance.

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funding for the city of Bend to use on maintenance, preservation and signal projects. Comprised of funding from FY25, 26 and 27 estimated allocations from Bend MPO.

Changes: Remove the project from the ODOT's STIP and MPO MTIP due to change in funding source.

Sign up to have notifications sent directly to your inbox through the **Subscribe page**. From the News list, select Bend MPO.

DESCHUTES COUNTY

◆ Deschutes County recently released reports that show the room tax collection results for FY 2023-24, updated through the month of March 2024.

Please keep in mind that these funds are recorded on a cash basis; therefore, this information reflects the results of payments for activity through February 2024.

To access the full report go to CascadeBusNews.com and search *Transient Room Tax Collections*.

◆ The May 21, 2024 Primary Election is underway, and the Deschutes County Elections Office is sharing some important information with voters.

If you are an active registered voter in the County, you should expect to receive an official primary ballot by mail in early May. Once you vote your ballot, you can return it either by mail or at any of the secure, official drop boxes available throughout Deschutes County.

In Oregon, the two major political parties, Democratic and Republican, have chosen to hold closed primaries. This means that only voters who are affiliated with one of these political parties can vote in that party's primary.

Here are some important dates you should know for the 2024 Primary Election:

- April 30 — Deadline to register to vote, update your voter registration, or affiliate with a major political party.
- May 1 — Ballots mailed to voters. All ballots include a postage-paid return envelope for you to mail in your voted ballot, or if you prefer, you can drop it off at an official ballot drop box location.
- May 3 — Deschutes County drop boxes open for voted ballots. Visit the Deschutes County Clerk website to find a drop box location near you.
- May 21 — Election Day. Ballots must be received at a drop box by 8pm or postmarked by the United States Postal Service (USPS) by this date and received by the Clerk's Office by Tuesday, May 28, 2024 to be counted.

You can find more information and the answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the County Clerk/Elections website.

◆ On April 10, the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners voted to accept grant funds from the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) for the county Wolf Depredation and Financial Compensation program.

The grant funds, totaling \$32,620.75, will be used to reimburse ranchers whose livestock or working dogs have been confirmed to be missing, injured, or killed due to wolf depredation. The funds will also go towards the implementation of livestock management techniques and other preventative measures that discourage wolf depredation of livestock.

"This is the first grant awarded to the county since it established the Wolf Depredation and Financial Assistance Committee last May," said Phil Chang, County Commissioner and Chair of the Committee.

"These funds will help reduce conflicts between livestock producers and wolves returning to Deschutes County through direct

compensation for losses and by supporting work with ranchers to prevent future depredation."

ODA offers the grant once a year to counties that have an established committee to oversee wolf depredation compensation and assistance for preventative measures. The Deschutes Board of County Commissioners established a Wolf Depredation and Financial Compensation Committee in May of 2023. The committee has been meeting regularly since June.

◆ On Wednesday, May 8, the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners (BOCC) will hold a public hearing where residents can provide their input on allowing recreational vehicles (RVs) to be used as rental dwellings.

Following the adoption of Oregon Senate Bill (SB) 1013, which became law in January 2024, the BOCC is considering whether to amend Deschutes County zoning code and permit property owners in rural residential areas to rent out a location for an RV on their property subject to certain conditions.

Conditions Outlined in SB 1013

The baseline criteria for RVs as rental dwellings include:

- A single-family dwelling that is occupied as the primary residence of the property owner must be sited on the property
- The RV must be owned or leased by the tenant
- The property owner must provide essential services to the RV space, which are defined as sewage disposal, water supply, electrical supply and, if required by applicable law, any drainage system

SB 1013 prohibits the following:

- The RV cannot be utilized as a short-term rental
- RVs as rental dwellings are not allowed in urban reserves
- There are no other dwelling units on the property besides the primary single-family dwelling and no portion of the single-family dwelling is rented as a dwelling

The public hearing is scheduled to occur during the 9am BOCC meeting at the Deschutes Services Building, 1300 NW Wall St. in Bend. Residents can attend the meeting in person or participate virtually. Participants will have three minutes to provide testimony. The meeting agenda and virtual log in information can be found at deschutes.org/meetings.

For additional information visit deschutes.org/rvamendments.

Written testimony may be emailed to tanya.saltzman@deschutes.org.

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Residential, Commercial, & Vacant Property



The Keys to Cash Flow

by Expert DAVE GROTJAHN —
Central Oregon Community College

Question:

I'm running a profitable business as represented by my accounting statements, but somehow, I keep experiencing cash flow shortages, what's happening and can I fix it?

A Congratulations on running a profitable business. Several factors can contribute to negative cash flow and are generally not found on your income statement, but rather on your balance sheet:

- 1) **Accounts receivable:** Your customers may be taking longer to pay their invoices, impacting cash inflow. Remedies are following up on late payments, implementing stricter payment terms, or offering discounts for early payments.
- 2) **Accounts payable:** Negotiate favorable payment terms with your suppliers. Longer terms provide more time to generate cash from sales.
- 3) **Inventory:** Large balances can tie up cash. Review inventory practices and examine reorder lead times to ensure stock levels are optimized without overcommitting funds and impacting customer demand.
- 4) **Capital expenditures:** Large purchases can strain cash flow. Evaluate the necessity and plan timing to align with cash availability.
- 5) **Debt repayments:** Consider renegotiating loan terms or restructuring your debt to ease cash flow.

Other considerations that can impact cash flow are seasonal business fluctuations and unforeseen expenses. Incorporating a management reserve strategy can help address and mitigate these risks. Many of our clients routinely save 20 percent for this purpose.

Cash flow is the lifeblood of any business and having a financial plan with a periodic understanding of the data are your keys to ensuring you have sufficient cash for your business.

Central Oregon Community College has a Small Business Development Center that offers free, confidential professional business advising and a variety of low-cost courses to help entrepreneurs through the business lifecycle: cocc.edu/sbdc.

About the Expert: Dave Grotjahn is a business advisor with COCC's Small Business Development Center. He is a retired senior finance leader from Boeing Commercial Airplanes where he led investor relations, estimating & pricing and financial planning teams across many programs. He also supports Habitat for Humanity as a financial mentor, assisting clients in attaining home ownership. Grotjahn will be facilitating "Business Planning Made Easy" through the Small Business Development Center beginning in May 2024.

cocc.edu/sbdc



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Where are they now?

Continued from page 1

on community involvement has changed to be more service-driven, giving back to this amazing place we live.

What did it mean to you to receive the award?

I remember feeling honored that someone in the community took the time to nominate me. I think as business owners, it can be easy to feel you are on an island alone at times. It was inspiring to be recognized with a group of incredible individuals all striving to achieve great things in their careers.

What are some of your proudest accomplishments that make you who you are today?

I am proud I had a successful business in this town for a long period of time that positively impacted the kids of our community. I also am fortunate for many business relationships and lifelong friendships that came out of the season of my life. Moreover, I am extremely proud of the fact that three wonderful employees

took that business over, and have created something even more special by building their own legacy there.

What advice would you give to this year's — and future — recipients of Accomplished Under 40 Award?

To take a moment and really acknowledge to yourself the things you are proud of that you have accomplished. Whether your achievements are career, family, financial, social, or travel-related make sure you take the space and time to let yourself know you are succeeding at what matters to you. I would also say to find mentors and role models to keep pushing you, hold you accountable and get your mind firing in different way. Remember to change these as you shift in your career as well.

What question would you ask yourself for this interview?

"What was one roadblock that you were giving to yourself at the time of receiving this award and how could you have changed that back then?" I think I had a false sense of "how" I could have really grown my business. I had my own perception of "just being a small business". I feel that had I sought out more mentors in the industry earlier and really seen the potential for business and analytical growth, not just artistic growth, I could have created a broader variety of opportunities within that business ownership.

Largest Employers List

Continued from page 6

bring revenue into the region from national or international markets, include:

1. Les Schwab Headquarters & Tire Centers (Regional, Oregon) — Started as a small shop in Prineville, Oregon in 1952, Les Schwab Tire Centers now employs over 7,000 people across the country.
2. Bright Wood Corporation (Regional, Oregon) — The largest independent manufacturer of window and patio door components and engineered dimension lumber in the U.S.
3. BASX Solutions (Redmond) — An industry-leader in manufacturing high efficiency data center cooling solutions, cleanroom systems, custom HVAC systems, and modular solutions.
4. Epic Aircraft, LLC (Bend) — Leading designer and manufacturer of high-performance, all-composite, six-seat single-engine turboprop aircraft.
5. Lonza, formerly Bend Research (Bend) — A leading global provider of integrated healthcare solutions ranging from early phase development to custom development and manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredients.

Of these five top traded-sector businesses, BASX Solutions saw the highest percentage increase in new jobs since last year, adding 133 new positions. The company is expecting to continue this employment growth into 2025.

Jon Stark, CEO of EDCO, said, "Private, traded-sector business makes Central Oregon more resilient in times of economic shifts and enriches the quality of life across our communities. At EDCO, we are dedicated to supporting these businesses as they face and overcome challenges related to workforce development, market

research, land use, physical space needs, and access to capital, among other things. Our engagement with over 400 traded-sector companies annually ensures business leaders have the pivotal tools and resources they need to grow. It's gratifying to see these companies flourish and increase employment opportunities for Central Oregonians."

When evaluating the region for investment and new or expanded operations, companies often turn to EDCO for information about the existing employment base and largest private employers from both the traded-sector (ex. high technology, advanced manufacturing and scientific) and non-traded sector (ex. retail, education, healthcare, hospitality, and construction). EDCO's regional list features private (for-profit and non-profit) employers, while those at the individual community level include both private and public employers.

To view the lists in their entirety, go to edcoinfo.com/people-infrastructure.

Data for the lists are self-reported and not audited and should only be used as an informational guideline. Businesses are asked to provide the total number of employees, not full-time equivalency, during their most recent pay period or, for companies with seasonal patterns of employment, their seasonal high. Numbers only include employees working in Central Oregon and contain contractors or interns if they are full-time and long-term. Some businesses chose not to participate in these lists and are therefore excluded.

About Economic Development for Central Oregon:

EDCO is a non-profit corporation supported by private and public members and stakeholders, whose mission is to create middle-class jobs in Central Oregon by: recruiting new employers to move to the region; helping entrepreneurs start new, scalable businesses; and working with businesses that are already here to grow their operations.

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DOL Announces Salary Threshold for “Exempt” Employees to Increase Dramatically & Regularly

by NICOLE ELGIN, Partner — Barran Liebman LLP

On April 23, 2024, the Department of Labor’s (DOL) Wage and Hour Division (WHD) announced that it was issuing a Final Rule titled “Defining and Delimiting the Exemptions for Executive, Administrative, Professional, Outside Sales, and Computer Employees.” The rule is set to take effect on July 1, 2024, and most importantly, dramatically increases the salary thresholds that an employee must be paid to be properly classified as “exempt” under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The DOL’s press release noted that it received more than 33,000 comments in this rulemaking process.



Taking a step back, when an employer categorizes an employee’s role as “exempt,” it generally means that the role is exempt from minimum wage and overtime requirements. Specifically, the regulations state that the FLSA “provides an exemption from the Act’s minimum wage and overtime requirements for any employee employed in a bona fide executive, administrative, or professional capacity...”

Of course, the law only allows these exemptions in limited situations and there are several requirements that the employer must follow in order to maintain this exemption. There are several classifications that may be exempt, and the three most common exemptions are for executive, administrative, and professional employees. These are often referred to as the EAP exemptions or the “white collar” exemptions.

EAP Exempt Requirements

There are three main requirements for the executive, administrative, and professional exemptions:

1. The employee must be paid on a salary basis, meaning their pay for any particular workweek is a fixed amount and is not reduced due to the quality or quantity of work performed. Salaried exempt employees generally must be paid the same for each workweek in which they perform any work, regardless of how few or how many hours the employee spent working. There are specific, and limited, exceptions to that general rule that may allow the employer to reduce the amount of the salaried exempt employee’s pay for any given workweek.
2. The employee’s wages must meet or exceed the salary threshold. The DOL’s new language around this requirement refers to this as a “salary level,” but it is effectively the same thing. Currently, the salary threshold is \$684 per

workweek (\$35,568 per year). Under the new rule, that salary threshold is set to increase to \$844 per week (\$43,888 per year) on July 1, 2024. It will then increase to \$1,128 per week (\$58,656 per year) on January 1, 2025. Then, on July 1, 2027, and every three years thereafter, the salary threshold will increase to reflect current earnings data.

3. The employee’s day-to-day duties of their job must meet either the executive, administrative, or professional “duties test.” There are extensive regulations at 29 CFR Part 541 defining these duties tests and providing examples of the types of employees that are (or are generally not) captured in these exemptions. For example, an “employee employed in a bona fide executive capacity” is one “whose primary duty is management of the enterprise in which the employee is employed or of a customarily recognized department or subdivision thereof, who customarily and regularly directs the work of two or more employees, and who has the authority to hire or fire other employees or whose suggestions and recommendations as to the hiring, firing, advancement, promotion or any other change of status of other employees are given particular weight.”

Highly Compensated Employee Salary Threshold

Another aspect of the Final Rule is to increase the salary threshold for the “highly compensated employee” (HCE) exemption. The HCE salary threshold is currently \$107,431, including at least \$684 per workweek paid on a salary or fee basis. Under the Final Rule, on July 1, 2024, that threshold is set to increase to \$132,964 per year, including at least \$844 per week paid on a salary or fee basis. Also with the Final Rule, on January 1, 2025, that amount is set to increase to \$151,164 per year, including at least \$1,128 per week paid on a salary or fee basis. Keep in mind that multiple states have wage and hour laws (including Oregon) that do not include the HCE exemption.

Challenges Anticipated

Many may remember the DOL’s attempt in 2016 to increase these salary thresholds. Back then, a week before the rule was set to take effect, a federal judge blocked the rule from implementation. That salary threshold increase ultimately never went into effect. Employers should plan for compliance, but can also expect similar challenges and litigation to the Final Rule.

Nicole Elgin is a partner at Barran Liebman LLP, where she represents employers in a broad range of labor relations and employment law matters. For questions, contact her at 503-276-2109 or nelgin@barran.com. barran.com



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Mid Oregon Personnel

Continued from page 1

and would rather not fill a job than fill it with the wrong person. As a result, clients have a much higher retention rate than is typical for our industry."

"If you're trusting us to hire for you, in effect you're saying that 'we're trusting you with the future of your business,'" said Sam Lambert. "We take this very seriously, as — in effect — we're helping other companies to be successful."

"This is because perception of your company is closely tied to the people you hire," he elaborated. "If, for example, the employee who answers the phone doesn't take their job seriously, you could lose an account, or adversely affect sales of your products. This is true across industries — whether a business is service-oriented or a manufacturing operation. If employees' work is of poor quality, it will burn you, and be expensive in the long run."

To prevent this from happening, Mid Oregon Personnel has built its reputation on relationships — person-to-person interviews with clients and would-be applicants to understand their needs and goals. "We get to know our clients really well," said Sam Lambert, "by visiting their facilities, talking to employees, and learning who would make a good employee in their given culture (as this differs from company to company)."

"We also spend time talking with applicants to discover who they are, and what drives them. As we've experienced, while skills can be taught to a certain extent, personality makes the placement."

Only then, agree the Lamberts, "are we able to work on finding the best fit for both the employee and the company looking to hire." "We do the best we can for everybody," said Greg.

As a result of this approach, "both my dad and I have had people come up to us, in the grocery store or around town — sometimes years after a placement — and tell us that 'you put me in a position I didn't think I could handle, and it changed my life.' These moments are really, really special," said Sam Lambert.

Another endorsement of Mid Oregon's modus operandi is the fact that, as he pointed out, "one client has been with us for 40 years — the entirety of our existence — even through four or five ownership changes."

Like his father, who had not planned to get into the staffing industry, Sam Lambert was working for a manufacturing company — and had just been passed over for a promotion — when deciding to jump into the field. "Starting at the front desk in our Bend office, which was underperforming, I filed papers and answered the phone — and the first job I ever filled was the one I had left (after ironically being offered that once-desired promotion)."

Four years after joining Mid Oregon Personnel, he took on managing the Bend office, and subsequently took over the one in Redmond. He now runs the firm's day-to-day operations.

In addition to having "an extremely close" father-son relationship (the two



GREG LAMBERT (SHOWN ON A DIVE BOAT IN THE BAHAMAS) FOUNDED MID OREGON PERSONNEL 40 YEARS AGO | PHOTO COURTESY OF MID OREGON PERSONNEL

men are both scuba divers and "have traveled the world together"), Greg and Sam Lambert "share a lot of the same philosophies, want the same things for the business, and tend to dream pretty big. There's no ego involved," said Sam. "We're always thinking five or 10 years down the road — taking into account advances in technology and factors such as the economy — and work very hard to be positioned for hard times so we can take a hit if we have to."

"Our staff is phenomenal," he said, "as strong a team as we've ever had. They really care a lot about the communities in which they work, are invested in them, and are consequently able to have a long-term impact. I'm so proud of them."

While not comfortable providing any specifics, due to the proprietary nature of Mid Oregon's expansion plans, Sam Lambert said that "there's a possibility we may have offices in other states, which is really, really exciting."

Whatever direction Greg and Sam Lambert pursue to help ensure Mid Oregon Personnel's continued success (while freely admitting that "no one gets it right every time, and despite our experience in hiring, it's not like we've never made a mistake"), their loyalty to the firm's original locale — like their commitment to integrity — will remain unchanged. "Mid Oregon Personnel is a locally grown, Central Oregon original. It has been a privilege," they said.

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G.A. Rogers & Associates Wins ClearlyRated's 2024 Best of Staffing Client & Talent Awards

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ClearlyRated's Best of Staffing Award winners achieve satisfaction scores from clients and placed job seekers that are within the top 2% of the industry. In 2024, G.A. Rogers and Associates earned these awards for the third consecutive year.

G.A. Rogers & Associates, an executive and managerial recruiting firm, recently announced that it earned ClearlyRated's Best of Staffing Client and Talent Awards for a third consecutive year. This extraordinary achievement, awarded for superior service to clients and candidates, ranks the brand among the top 2% of staffing agencies in the U.S. and Canada.

Each year, less than 2% of firms earn the Best of Staffing designation, placing G.A. Rogers & Associates among elite organizations. This year:

- G.A. Rogers & Associates received satisfaction scores of 9 or 10 out of 10 from 100% of placed job candidates, doubling the industry's average of 50%.

- G.A. Rogers & Associates received a Net Promoter Score from talent, more than triple the average of 30 in 2023.

Best of Staffing winners like G.A. Rogers & Associates have proven to be industry leaders in service quality. On average, customers who work with winning agencies are more likely to be completely satisfied with the services provided, compared to those working with non-winning agencies.

be recognized for providing a great experience for the employers and professionals who trust us to help them grow their companies and careers."

"By consistently focusing on what matters most to each person that interacts with our brand—and leveraging G.A. Rogers & Associates' proven processes, cutting-edge technology, and robust network—we're proud to help our professionals reach their goals," continued Fernandez. "We look forward to developing new ways to deliver world-class service and exceptional results to our valued clients and candidates."

"I'm so excited to introduce the 2024 Best of Staffing winners alongside their verified ratings and reviews on ClearlyRated.com," said ClearlyRated Founder and CEO Eric Gregg. "These firms have proven their commitment to providing outstanding experiences and superior service. They're raising the bar for excellence, and I couldn't be more proud to celebrate their success—cheers to you all!"

About G.A. Rogers & Associates:

A division of PrideStaff, G.A. Rogers & Associates specializes in executive and professional recruiting.

The parent company was founded in the 1970s as 100% company-owned units and began staffing franchising in 1995. They operate offices in North America to serve thousands of clients. With 40 plus years in the staffing business, headquartered in

Central California, all PrideStaff brands offer the resources and expertise of a national firm, with the spirit, dedication, and personal service of smaller,



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entrepreneurial firms. For more information on G.A. Rogers & Associates services, visit our website.

PrideStaff and G.A. Rogers & Associates shared Mission: Consistently provide client experiences focused on what they value most.

About ClearlyRated:

Rooted in satisfaction research for professional service firms, ClearlyRated utilizes a Net Promoter Score survey program to help professional service firms measure their service experience, build online reputation, and differentiate on service quality.

About Best of Staffing:

ClearlyRated's Best of Staffing Award is the only award in the U.S. and Canada that recognizes staffing agencies that have proven superior service quality based entirely on ratings provided by their clients, placed talent, and internal employees. Award winners are showcased by city and area of expertise on ClearlyRated.com — an online business directory that helps buyers of professional services find service leaders and vet prospective firms with the help of validated client ratings and testimonials.

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Each year, less than 2% of firms earn the Best of Staffing designation. This places G.A. Rogers & Associates amongst the most service focused brands in the staffing industry.

"We're thrilled to earn these prestigious awards for a third consecutive year," said G.A. Rogers & Associates Vice President, Ashli Fernandez. "It's an honor to

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Move to Give Community “Seat at Table”

City Club Forum Floats Idea of Citizens Assembly to Tackle Topics in “Bend” Way

by SIMON MATHER — CBN Feature Writer

A recent City Club of Central Oregon forum asked whether Citizens Assemblies — an idea which has been gaining significant traction worldwide — could be a fresh way for local residents to own complex issues and contribute productively in a distinctly “Bend” way?

Discussion of this unique model for civics engagement, moderated by *Source* Editor Nicole Vulcan, took place at Bend’s Unitarian Fellowship of Central Oregon, with panelists Alex Renirie from Health Democracy, Josh Burgess of the Central Oregon Civics Action Project (COCAP) and Bend City Councilor Megan Perkins.

Claudia Chwalisz of Democracy First opened the thought-provoking conversation via video link by asking attendees to imagine that they receive an invitation one day from their mayor, inviting them to serve as a member of their city’s newly established permanent Citizens’ Assembly. “You will be one of 100 others like you — people who are not politicians or even necessarily party members,” she said. “All of you were drawn by lot through a fair and random process called a civic lottery.

“Together, you are broadly representative of the community — a mix of bakers, doctors, students, accountants, shopkeepers and more. You are young and old and from many backgrounds — everybody living in the city over age 16 is eligible, and anyone can take part regardless of citizenship status.

“Essentially, this group of 100 people is a microcosm of the wider public. Your mandate lasts for one year, after which a new group of people will be drawn by lot.”

Chwalisz emphasized this is not just a “thought experiment.” Since the 1980s, a wave of such citizens’ assemblies has been building, and it has been gaining momentum since 2010.

Over the past four decades, hundreds of thousands of people around the world have received invitations from heads of state, ministers, mayors, and other public authorities to serve as members of over 500 citizens’

assemblies and other deliberative processes to inform policymaking.

Important decisions have been shaped by everyday people about ten-year, \$5 billion strategic plans, 30-year infrastructure investment strategies, tackling online hate speech and harassment, taking preventative action against increased flood risks, improving air quality, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and many other issues. “As governance systems are failing to address some of society’s most pressing issues and trust between citizens and government is faltering, these new institutions embody the potential of democratic renewal,” Chwalisz added.

“They create the democratic spaces for everyday people to grapple with the complexity of policy issues, listen to one another and find common ground. In doing so, they create the

conditions to overcome polarization and strengthen societal cohesion. They bring out the collective intelligence of society — the principle that many diverse people will come to better decisions than more homogeneous groups.

“Research also shows that being a member of a deliberative body strengthens people’s agency. It creates a collective consciousness and allows us to harness our collective capacity.

“Moreover, deliberative institutions strengthen democracy by extending the privilege of representation to a much larger and more diverse group of people, allowing them to play an important role in shaping decisions affecting people’s lives.”

Burgess observed that Bend in particular already had a populous active in civil discussions. “The vision in forming a local citizens assembly is to help shape a



(L-R) MODERATOR NICOLE VULCAN JOINED BY PANELISTS JOSH BURGESS FROM THE CENTRAL OREGON CIVICS ACTION LAB, ALEX RENNIE OF HEALTH DEMOCRACY AND BEND CITY COUNCILOR MEGAN PERKINS | PHOTO BY SIMON MATHER

more vibrant community offering a chance to have a ‘seat at the table’ and create a civil engagement hub,” he said. “People have low faith in public institutions, and this is a way we can learn about each other and gain empathy.”

Renirie said that participation in citizens assemblies was usually by special invitation, with a request to join a unique supplement to democracy. “We take demographic data and select targets and make it easy to participate. Generally, we have one hundred percent retention, reflective of the community interest.”

“We often learn about information in something of a bubble,” Perkins said. “City council wants to see what people think and this is an innovative way to

Continued on Next Page ▶

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COIC Opens 30-Day Public Comment Period for the 2024-2028 Central Oregon Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

by **DEREK HOFBAUER, Outreach & Engagement Administrator — Cascades East Transit | Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council**

The Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) is holding a public comment period from April 22, 2024 until May 22, 2024 for the 2024-2028 Central Oregon Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS is an asset-based, strategy driven plan for regional economic development.

The CEDS articulates the region's priority community economic development needs and is built with guidance from the Board-appointed Strategy Committee, a collaborative group of regional partners from a broad array of perspectives. The document identifies strategies to build regional and community capacity and readiness to support business retention, expansion, recruitment, and to improve economic resilience. Strategies and projects include public infrastructure, community facilities, capital needs, project development, and coordination needs and policies.

COIC is seeking public input on the content of the CEDS document that is available on COIC's website at coic.org/ceds. The Public Comment period is open through May 22, 2024. A form is available on the website for members of the

public to submit comments.

Significant CEDS outcomes include Regional Priority Issues and Key Initiatives. Priority Issues are the top categories and topics that impact the region's overall economic development, stability, livability, and ability to grow. Key Initiatives are detailed projects or strategies that will be deployed by regional partners to address regional Priority Issues. The CEDS also includes sections on the region's economic profile; local community profiles, priority issues, projects; and a section on regional resilience.

COIC is a Council of Governments and serves as the federally designated Economic Development District (EDD) for Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson Counties, and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. As part of the EDD role, COIC prepares a CEDS every five years. COIC's Board of Directors governs the CEDS and is responsible for approving the plan.

coic.org

City Club

Continued from previous page

make that happen."

"It is imperative to have buy-in from local government in this process," Burgess continued. "Final Memos of Understanding are signed at the end of assemblies where they receive and debate recommendations."

Renirie said an average of two-thirds of the recommendations from California assemblies were formally adopted, adding: "It is our job to earn the trust of those who participate, as often people may come in distrustful."

"We have been engaged across the Central Oregon community find out what is important to people, it is critical to get the community broadly involved," Burgess added. "The first suggested topic for the prospective Bend assembly is youth homelessness, which I think is an issue everyone can get behind."

Answering a question from a high school teacher regarding young people being distrustful of government and institutions, Burgess said civics engagement would see students help with moderation, and Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) had received a grant to study youth challenges.

"The core to sustainability for a Bend Citizens Assembly is to work with the City's budget; COIC is also a critical part," Burgess said. "We need to find a way to

get sustainable and philanthropic funding and are reaching out to the broader community. Government is divided and this is an opportunity to take an above-ground view."

With its mission to support the region as a trusted partner helping communities identify and address unique and common needs through "collaboration, shared service delivery, technical assistance, information sharing and resource development," COIC Executive Director Tammy Baney said it was well positioned to help facilitate exploration of relevant issues.

Regarding a question on how invitees are sorted, Renirie said that assembly organizers work with data from the county GIS department in compiling randomized lists, and anyone from the household can get involved.

Burgess said that assemblies look for a "supermajority" for consensus and there was a high, 75-80%, hurdle for any agreed opinion.

Vulcan suggested asking the community to submit topic ideas through a survey and emphasized the value of citizens assemblies in supporting conversations.

About COCAP:

As a new community entity, the Central Oregon Civic Action Project (COCAP) is a partnership between nonprofits (Dem Next and Healthy Democracy), OSU-Cascades and local governments. Their long-term aims are to improve local governance and help bring Central Oregonians together through service to our community.

healthydemocracy.org

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SDC Fees Hike

Continued from page 1

with higher square footage dwelling units assessed a higher SDC than lower square footage dwelling units.

SDCs for most non-residential developments are also charged based on the square footage of a development, according to formulas described in the methodologies.

The City proposed updates to the formula for these fees to “enhance transparency, recover growth costs and align with Council priorities, such as housing production, housing affordability and complete communities.”

But the end result is almost a doubling of SDC fees in some cases, and there are concerns that the change represents a daunting challenge in adding costs for new development that could deter business expansion or new development, with any increases incurred passed along to customers.

In the commercial arena, Walt Ramage, principal broker with NAI Cascade Commercial Real Estate Services, said the Central Oregon community should be alarmed about potential scenarios regarding limiting medical opportunities for a growing population. “If a medical professional wanted to build for their practice and own the real estate, initially developable land is already hard to find, and even if you do, the proposition is expensive,” Ramage said. “But this would be exacerbated by the City of Bend’s plan to significantly increase Systems Development Charges.

“Under the new methodology, for instance, the transportation SDC fee for some commercial construction would go from \$15,000 per 1,000 sq. ft. to \$39,382 per 1,000 sq. ft. — which represents a staggering 262% increase.

“If, say, you wanted to build a 7,000-square-foot medical building, the hard and soft costs involved, including increased SDC’s, would translate to the equivalent of around \$5 per sq. ft. per month in rent. This is challenging at a time when we need more medical services, considering we have a growing, and aging, population.”

“It appears the City may be playing catch up regarding infrastructure, and the cost implications of past elected officials’ bad decisions will be put back on the private sector.”

A public meeting on the SDCs proposal will be held May 1, with the adoption of an increase set for July 1, though officials indicated they may be phased in.

Public comment included support for a tiered approach, while there was concern regarding projects’ feasibility in the non-residential sector and requests for phasing in of the higher rates.

A City of Bend staff PowerPoint presentation included the example of a potential 26,000-square-foot medical building with a value of \$11.1 million and fees going from a current \$467,300 to \$905,974 under the new methodology. Together with building permit review and other fees, total charges would represent 10.8% of building evaluation, versus 6.7% under the previous framework.

In the example of a proposed stand-alone veterinary clinic use which would see increases in the higher range, transportation SDCs would go from \$15,000 per 1,000 sq. ft. to \$38,200/1,000 sq. ft.

The methodology and code updates would lower fees for some while increasing

fees for others, based on factors such as house size and building types.

Building, planning, and engineering fees and other fees for some developments have already gone up some 60% so this is another tough pill to swallow for prospective developers.

Medical and veterinary offices are among the most impacted by the proposed changes. Public comment has advocated for the City to consider exemptions for medical facilities, with a proposed compromise on rates for Bend’s hospital campus and Medical Overlay District.

The Bend Chamber of Commerce, the Central Oregon Association of Realtors and the Central Oregon Business Association penned a letter with more than 60 signatures expressing support for some aspects of the proposed changes and strong opposition to others.

In particular, the organizations were “highly concerned by the potential impact of such a significant increase to commercial SDCs.”

The letter continued: “The cost of affordable housing initiatives should not be borne solely by Bend’s businesses and commercial property owners and tenants.”

To account for those concerns and others, the City Council extended the public hearing to approved an ordinance updating the city’s code to streamline internal SDC processes.

May 1 sees a continuation of the public hearing that began Jan. 17 for the public to provide additional comment on the revised reports or fee schedule, and for Council to consider for adoption.

On that January date, the Bend City Council held a first reading of code changes related to SDCs but continued the public hearing on adoption of the methodologies and fee schedule in response to an overwhelming call for additional public comment.

The changes to Bend Municipal Code went into effect March 7, 2024.

On February 21, 2024, Bend City Council held a work session to summarize public comments received and review recommended adjustments to the methodologies, project lists, and fee schedule. Council provided guidance to phase-in SDC rates over a three-year period for non-residential uses that would experience notable fee increases under the proposed methodology.

Sarah Hutson, Senior Management Analyst for the City of Bend, said these charges, and the way they were calculated was overdue for an update. Hutson stated: “What often precipitates a methodology update is infrastructure master plan updates,” with recently updated water and transportation master plans prompting the changes to SDCs, to “stay in line with the City’s goals.”

This update would change how residential SDCs are figured, basing fees on the size of a home. For housing, fees are currently the same across the board at \$21,760. The update would create a tiered system, charging people with smaller homes lower rates and those with larger homes higher rates.

With the new code, a house between 600 and 1200 square feet would incur \$16,139 in SDCs. For a home larger than 3,000 square feet, the charges would increase to \$31,080. “By scaling it, we think that there will be alignment with

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What is your 2024 outlook on Central Oregon's commercial real estate market?

I would say cautiously optimistic. Commercial vacancy rates across the region are still considered very low in most key sectors, including retail and industrial where vacancy rates in Bend have remained in the 2% and 3% range.

Nationwide, office space has been a concern — especially in major metro markets where large office buildings are facing significant vacancy rates and a reduction in value. Bend and surrounding areas have fared much better due to consistent demand. Because of this, our vacancy rate remains under half of the national average.

With respect to values, commercial real estate has remained high as cap rates in Central Oregon have been slow to increase with higher financing costs. This demonstrates the demand for real estate in Central Oregon where investors continue to deploy their liquidity. Investors and developers seem optimistic about the long-term appreciation of real estate values and future rent costs. As such, they are willing to accept a lower cap rate or put more equity into the project based on the perceived risk or lack thereof. There is no current indication of this slowing, and we expect this to continue throughout the year.

Multifamily inventory is an area we continue to monitor. This sector saw the largest increase in vacancy in 2023 where it now sits at nearly 10%. In

Bend, multifamily inventory has doubled over the last decade. There are several significantly large projects in the works that are expected to increase inventory by another 10% in the coming year. Rental rates and vacancies will be watched closely to see how the market absorbs this inventory and the impact it will have on the space.

In comparison to other regions, how is Central Oregon faring economically?

In Central Oregon, due to our region's draws — high quality of life, abundance of outdoor recreation, vibrant local business community — we have done really well compared to many other markets. Our region is a magnet for tourism, and the strong presence of remote workers has strengthened our local economy. You can visit downtown Bend on just about any night and restaurants are busy. There seems to be an ever-present "buzz" of activity. This positive atmosphere and related community support have helped insulate the local economy from many challenges other markets are facing.

What are the key market indicators you're watching in the months ahead?

Inflation reports are top of mind. While we've been trending in the right direction toward the Federal Reserve's target 2% range, March marked the second consecutive month of an increase and inflation is

not cooling at the rate wanted or expected. Inflation is pivotal in determining if and when the Fed lowers interest rates, so it carries a lot of weight. At the last Federal Open Market Committee meeting, Chairman Powell indicated three rate cuts this year (a total of 0.75%). With corporate earnings, unemployment, and jobs reports continuing to be positive and the recent increase in inflation, all eyes will be on the next FOMC meeting in May. There is a strong likelihood that they may adjust their outlook for reductions.

What is your view on the current interest rate environment?

A strong consumer reaction accompanied the initial raises. Discussions were then focused on how big of a recession was expected, but this was more of an emotional response. All things considered, the economy has absorbed and handled the higher rates relatively well. The outcome has so far mostly aligned with the Fed's goal of creating a "soft landing." I do think rates will continue to come back down from where they are now (hovering around 7%), but not to where they were. The rate environment was artificially low for such a long period of time. Looking at the macro picture, beyond the past three to four years, 3% is just not typical and should not be a

Continued on Page 16 ▶

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Idaho First Bank 1002 NW Bond St., Ste. 101 Bend, OR 97703	541-948-8680	N/A	www.idahofirstbank.com mwinter@idahofirstbank.com	Marianne Winter	5	2020	\$529,651,845	\$602,533,731	\$496,443,569	1.00%	11.20%	(1) Bend, (6) locations in Idaho
JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association 450 NW Franklin Bend, OR 97701	541-382-2866	541-388-2742	www.chase.com daniela.gill@chase.com	Daniela Gill	12	1955	\$295.7 Million	\$1.91 Trillion	\$15.1 Billion	0.84%	8.82%	Bend (3), Redmond (2), Prineville (1)
Summit Bank 560 SW Columbia St. Bend, OR 97702	541-317-8000	N/A	www.sbko.bank goconnell@sbko.bank	Gary O'Connell	23	2015	\$917 Million at FYE 2023	\$1.08 Billion at FYE 2023	\$910 Million at FYE 2023	0.85% FYE 2023	9.89% FYE 2023	Bend, Eugene, Portland & Redmond
U.S. Bank 1025 NW Bond St. Bend, OR 97703	541-388-8722	N/A	www.usbank.com wendy.mcgrane@usbank.com	Wendy McGrane	125	1937	\$1,060,199,000 as of 6/30/2023 (Deschutes, Jefferson & Crook Counties)	\$683.6 Billion as of 3/31/2024	\$367 Billion as of 3/31/2024	.81% as of 3/31/2024	10.00% as of 3/31/2024	In Central Oregon: Bend (6), La Pine (1), Redmond (1), Sisters (1), Madras (1), Prineville (1)
Umpqua Bank 805 NW Bond St. Bend, OR 97703	541-322-4401	N/A	www.umpquabank.com laurierobertson@umpquabank.com	Laurie Robertson	75	1993	\$591,494,000	\$51,989,593	\$37,170,598	1.02%	16.90%	Bend (4), Redmond (1), Madras (1)
Washington Federal 572 SW Bluff Dr., Ste. 110 Bend, OR 97702	541-330-1807	541-330-6928	www.washingtonfederal.com dave.huckins@wafd.com	Dave Huckins	56	1917	\$252 Million	\$14.9 Billion	\$9.9 Billion	1.12%	8.33%	La Pine (1), Gilchrist (1), Bend (2), Redmond (1), Prineville (1), Madras (1), Sisters (1)
Washington Trust Bank 1219 NE Third St., Ste. 120 Bend, OR 97701	541-516-8320	N/A	www.watrust.com/centraloregon cjallen@watrust.com	Cory J. Allen	11	2021	\$30,000,000	\$11,435,840,000	\$6,510,128,000	0.39%	5.18%	42 branches
Wells Fargo 960 NW Wall St. Bend, OR 97701	541-388-0540	541-388-0579	www.wellsfargo.com Michael.Orlowski@wellsfargo.com	Michael Orlowski	135	1936	\$663.7 Million	\$1.6 Trillion	\$895 Billion	1.32%	14%	Bend (3), Redmond (2), Madras (1), Prineville (1)

CBN has made every effort to ensure that all information is accurate and up-to-date. We cannot, however, guarantee it. Please contact us immediately if you know that certain information is not correct or you would like to be added to a list, 541-388-5665 or email cbn@cascadebusnews.com.

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Washington Trust Bank ~ Cory Allen

Continued from page 13

target range for borrowers.

Additional Comments?

Our housing inventory levels have been and remain very low. This has kept new construction moving forward and protected Central Oregon home values. A large part of this is due to the higher interest rate environment which has

discouraged movement in the market. It's understandable: if you were lucky enough to lock in a 3% mortgage rate, it makes sense that homeowners who don't have to sell would rather hold on to their property and rate. Currently, most of the residential inventory coming online is new construction.

Key economic indicators in the region continue to be favorable. The technology industry remains strong for software and hardware, the aviation and aerospace industry is another bright spot, and the outdoor/recreation industry continues to flourish and grow. The fundamental qualities that make Central Oregon an attractive place to live and do business remain in place, and I feel optimistic about prospects for the region and general business environment.



Wendy McGrane
Vice President | Business Banking Team Manager
US Bank
usbank.com

What is your 2024 outlook on Central Oregon's commercial real estate market?

Overall, we have an optimistic outlook on the commercial real estate market through the remainder of this year. We are seeing significant activity in the OOCRE space, where businesses are looking to acquire or finance real estate that they intend to occupy. That includes existing buildings and new construction, which shows us that the market is healthy.

In comparison to other regions, how is Central Oregon faring economically?

Unsurprisingly, everything hinges around the area's rapid population growth. As remote work becomes more accessible, and people are leaving metro areas in droves for a seemingly quieter and slower lifestyle, Central Oregon remains a suitable destination. However, more people means more than just traffic. The rising cost of living and cost of housing to support a local workforce has made it more challenging to attract new businesses and industry to the area. It's not uncommon to hear

our business clients share their challenges when it comes to attracting and retaining employees, and because of it having to manage their businesses with higher operating costs.

Fortunately, there are local business organizations, including EDCO and the Bend Chamber, that are working tirelessly to remove or lessen these obstacles in an effort to encourage business growth. Central Oregon also boasts a collaborative business environment, where businesses support and connect with each other. Together, those factors give Central Oregon a positive economic outlook.

What are the key market indicators you're watching in the months ahead?

The benchmarks that were previously strong short-term economic indicators aren't as bulletproof as they used to be. However, there are a few metrics that our team looks to when attempting to map out the future. Consumer debt often directly impacts businesses that sell discretionary goods and services, and vacancy and absorption rates

can tell you how healthy the CRE market is. Also, our team pays close attention to which businesses are expanding or moving to Central Oregon. The Oregon Employment Department does a good job highlighting this, as well as employment growth.

What is your view on the current interest rate environment?

It's the bank's view that while it seems that the next move for Fed monetary policy is a cut, the question is when. Earlier in the year it seemed that they would begin to cut rates in June. But with the recent pricing strength, it may be pushed out later in the year.

With higher interest rates, we're having different conversations with businesses, who have been more cautious about financing capital expenditures. Businesses are being more strategic about

Continued on Next Page ▶

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US Bank ~ Wendy McGrane
Continued from previous page

leveraging their cash to maximize earnings and efficiencies while minimizing fees. Everyone is adapting to this higher-rate environment, and we're expecting that many businesses will choose to move forward with financing their capital expenditures as they accept this new normal.

Additional Comments?

Regardless of the economic environment, our team at U.S. Bank knows that


it is critical to have meaningful conversations with our business customers on a consistent basis to ensure that we are supporting their short- and long-term goals. We've recently expanded our team of local business bankers in an effort to deepen relationships with our existing clients, as well as establish new relationships with businesses that we don't yet work with.

Even though the downtown Bend branch is currently under construction for a welcomed upgrade, which will be completed later this summer, we're still open for business. Our business bankers are accessible to meet wherever and whenever is most convenient for our business clients.


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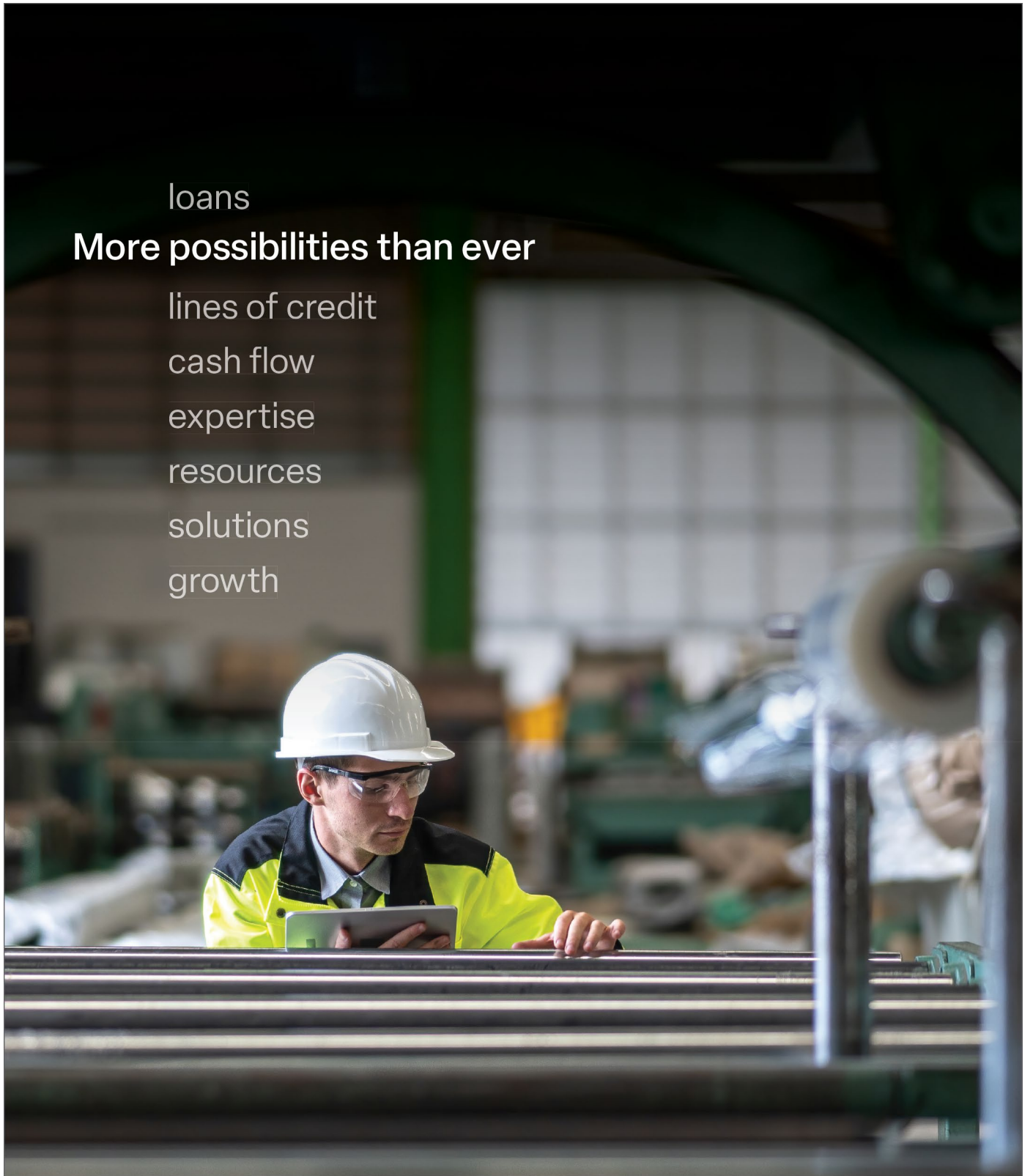
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What is your 2024 outlook on Central Oregon's commercial real estate market?

The outlook for Central Oregon's commercial real estate market in 2024 will be influenced by rather unpredictable economic conditions nationally, continued local population growth, industry trends, and government policies. It's a little bit of a mixed bag given that we've seen some softening with negative absorption over the last year or so, leasing has slowed modestly, and interest rates are not coming down as anticipated. That said, our population continues to grow, vacancy rates remain low in comparison to national averages, and Bend in particular — along with the greater Central Oregon geographic area — remains an economic hot spot. Additionally, we are seeing continued new construction in Central Oregon indicating confidence in the market generally. I believe we have reasons to remain cautiously optimistic for the remainder of 2024.

In comparison to other regions, how is Central Oregon faring economically?

Central Oregon's economy remains vibrant and in the last decade has seen extraordinarily sustained GDP, job and population growth. Central Oregon provides entrepreneurial support and incentives with both Redmond and Bend ranking highly as "best cities" to start a business. The Central Oregon lifestyle with its communities offering a small-town feel, big amenities and breathtaking scenery is hard to beat. What needs to remain a focal point for our local and regional leaders, however, is the relatively high cost of living in Central Oregon compared to other regions. Creating affordable living for

workers is a complex issue that requires collaboration between government, businesses, and community organizations.

What are the key market indicators you're watching in the months ahead?

Opinions remain varied between the eventual realization of a full-blown recession or the preferred "soft landing" that we keep hearing about in the news. Of concern is that although economic data looks good on the surface, could it really be the calm before the storm? Inflation is proving stubborn, interest rates are not coming down as analysts had predicted, and we are beginning to see weakness in consumer spending. Key factors I'm tuning into are household debt levels and delinquency rates. U.S. household debt is at an all-time high and increased delinquency rates are being reported across all age groups. Although there are many factors that need to be weighed along with these metrics in a broader economic context, a significant rise in household debt and delinquency rates has historically signaled a recession could be in the cards.

What is your view on the current interest rate environment?

Although the Fed has signaled that they still expect to cut rates later this year, frankly, I would not be surprised if interest rates remain at current levels until early 2025. Once rates do drop, the question will then become how far have economic conditions deteriorated to provide the incentive for the Fed to take action?

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Gary O'Connell
 EVP, Market President
 Summit Bank
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What is your 2024 outlook on Central Oregon's commercial real estate market?

In a recent discussion we had with community leaders about this local topic, the common outlook was that demand will continue softening in some areas such as multi-family and hospitality. Yet, prices continue to be resilient, in particular in light industrial land and buildings. There is a strong sense of "dry powder" out there - potential buyers waiting on the sidelines for lower prices to trigger deals. Adding to this, many have been waiting for a price correction for quite some time, and it has yet to happen. The result? High prices indicate that many sellers are not yet motivated, with some sitting on lower-rate financing from three or more years ago. With lower holding costs, it gives them greater capacity to ride out the cycle of buyers reluctant to enter. In summary, there are mixed signals and the struggle is to balance the short-term outlook with the long-term need. For example, take Multi-family. The market has cooled due to recent supply-side activity, but long term, the market needs more units and many remain bullish.

In comparison to other regions, how is Central Oregon faring economically?

Like the answer above, there are mixed signals. There certainly is not a one-size-fits-all answer. The difference between Central Oregon and other regions economically has narrowed somewhat in terms of the greater volatility our region has been known for in the past due to concentrations of employment in housing and tourism, for example. We suspect it is less volatile today. This is a result of job and industry diversification we have seen over time. We have seen indications of a post-Covid-19 hangover or correction in some sectors. Outdoor recreation and outdoor product companies come to mind. Contracting and the trades, a sector battered during the Great Recession 15 years ago, continue to indicate healthy forecasts and pipelines despite some expecting a correction. If we had to point out one key difference from other regions, we continue to see front-end activity about prospective employers relocating to Central Oregon. We do not, however, hear about prospective employers moving to Portland.

What are the key market indicators you're watching in the months ahead?

Who isn't watching interest rates? The question is, what does a business owner or investor do about it? Our advice: do not forecast interest decreases in your

business or investment plan in order to get the deal to pencil out. This is a fluid topic and the outlook may change by the time this article is published. We thought we may have experienced a reduction of the Fed Funds rate as early as January of this year, a year when many businesses projected rate cuts of .75% to 2.0%. January came and passed with no change. Next, the smart money said to expect a rate cut this June. Now, that sentiment has shifted, too. A *WSJ* article last week suggested that we may not see any rate cuts this year whatsoever. Similarly, the long rates (such as the 10 Year Treasury) recently reached a six-month high. Higher than expected rates can increase the cost of debt capital to business, obviously. To account for this, we have seen the highest-performing businesses tighten their belts while remaining on the offensive, doing so through a heightened level of focus, discipline, efficiency and strategy. Should there be a reprieve in interest rates, they stand to benefit even more.

Besides interest rates, another indicator we keep an eye on is business merger and acquisition activity. Different factors contributing to potential business sales listings include fatigue, retirement, competitive forces, and success. And on the buy side, we see an emerging class of new and existing business owners hungry to capitalize on acquisition opportunities for the purpose of scale, efficiency and other factors.

What is your view on the current interest rate environment?

Our view is that it is not higher rates themselves that keep people awake at night. It is the dynamic nature of the changing rates markets combined with uncertainty about future expectations that keep them awake. We have seen modest signs of people adjusting to and even accepting this current rate environment. Should rates stabilize and hold steady through the end of the year, which is very possible given the stubbornness of inflation, we expect that people will continue to adapt to this new normal. One area of concern is the refinance market. There are a disproportionately large number of low-rate commercial real estate loans maturing across the country in the next year. Many maturing loans, typically of a ten-year nature and thus from the 2014-2015 vintage, have a lower rate that will now have a higher rate when rolled over to a new loan. In order for the loan to qualify for rollover to a new loan at a potentially higher rate than the matured rate, many owners and borrowers may have to re-margin (ie, pay down) their loans. While banks attempt to work with their borrowers through this dynamic, there is industry concern about the level of impact this could have in our markets along with any ripple effects. We are keeping a watchful eye on this area.

Additional Comments?

Thanks to all the bankers who contributed to this article. Our industry needs to work closely with our clients and communities over the next 12-24 to work together, and through any market adversity that we may face. Summit Bank opened our second Central Oregon Branch Office in Redmond on April 19. The timing is fortunate, as it gives the region another location to work with their local business bank. Thank you.



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Wendy McGrane, Business Banking Manager
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Credit Unions *(Listed Alphabetically)*

The financials listed are the most current information provided by the financial institution. In some cases it is as of April 2023, but for some of the entities it is information based on the previous quarter.

Company / Address	Phone	Fax	WebSite/Email	Contact	Staff	CO Year Est.	Local Deposits	Assets	Net Loans	Members	t
First Community Credit Union 62080 Dean Swift Rd., Ste. 180 Bend, OR 97701	541-382-7280	541-388-5485	www.myfirstccu.org matt.nicassio@firstccu.org	Matt Nicassio	7	1957	N/A	\$1,727,759,000	\$599,436,815	87,000	Member-owned financial cooperative, currently operating 28 branches throughout Oregon & are open to everyone in the community. Offer a full array of financial products & services to consumers & small businesses; delivered by local professionals & through convenient technology.
Mid Oregon Credit Union PO Box 6749 Bend, OR 97701	541-382-1795	N/A	www.midoregon.com kyle@midoregon.com	Kevin Cole	153	1957	\$634.9 Million (as of 3/31/24)	\$717.1 Million (as of 3/31/24)	\$611.1 Million (as of 3/31/24)	47,015	Persons who live, worship, work or go to school & businesses & legal entities located in Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson, Lake & Wheeler counties & Northern Klamath County that is part of the COCC tax district.
Northwest Community Credit Union 61490 S Hwy. 97 Bend, OR 97702	541-382-2458	541-382-0244	www.nwcu.com adettwyler@nwcu.com	Arden Dettwyler	10	1949	\$1,652 Million for State of Oregon	\$1,831 Million	\$1,177 Million	107,318	Deschutes, Douglas, Jackson, Jefferson, Josephine, Klamath, Lane, Linn, Marion, Multnomah & Washington Counties.
OnPoint Community Credit Union 950 NW Bond St., Bend 61276 S Hwy. 97, Ste. 100, Bend Veterans Way, Redmond	541-749-2240	541-749-1792	www.onpointcu.com stephen.wymer@onpointcu.com	Stephen Wymer	35	1932	\$400 Million	\$10 Billion	\$6 Billion	50,000 Central Oregon/ 500,000 OR & WA	28 Oregon Counties & several counties in Washington: Benton, Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Coos, Crook, Curry, Deschutes, Douglas, Gilliam, Hood River, Jackson, Jefferson, Josephine, Klamath, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Morrow, Multnomah, Polk, Sherman, Tillamook, Wasco, Washington, Wheeler, Yamhill, Clark & Skamania in Washington.
Oregonians Credit Union 110 NE Fifth St. Prineville, OR 97754	541-447-4995	541-447-5369	www.oregonianscu.com memberservices@ofcu.com	Tricia Wanous	5	1936	\$13 Million	\$300 Million	\$100 Million	23,000	Any person who's company is a member of the Prineville Chamber of Commerce or family members.
SELCO Community Credit Union 88 SW Industrial Way Bend, OR 97702	541-312-1842	541-744-7782	www.selco.org swagner@selco.org	Sandy Wagner	58	2000	\$501 Million Local	\$2.7 Billion in all of SELCO	\$1.88 Billion in all of SELCO	150,000+ in all of SELCO	Eligible to anyone who lives in the 27 Oregon or 8 Washington counties SELCO serves.

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Kevin Cole
President /CEO
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What is your 2024 outlook on Central Oregon’s commercial real estate market?

Commercial real estate in the office segment is challenging. However, demand for retail and industrial properties remains strong, and vacancies, while increasing in some areas, are not reaching levels seen in other markets. The multi-family residential sector is relatively stable, although competition is growing with more supply coming onto the market. In the long term, a more balanced relationship between supply and demand will be beneficial for the Central Oregon economy, allowing growing businesses to upgrade their premises or expand their operations. Rent stabilization will also help local companies to attract and retain employees.

In comparison to other regions, how is Central Oregon faring economically?

Central Oregon continues to be the strongest region in Oregon and lacks some of the challenges with commercial real estate that plague the Portland and Salem markets. Many people are choosing to live in Central Oregon, which is having a positive impact on the local economy. However, there are some business climate challenges specific to Bend, including a significant increase in permit fees, development charges, and a new transportation system fee on utilities. Unfortunately, the city’s funding strategy may lead to a decrease in future economic growth

What are the key market indicators you’re watching in the months ahead?

We monitor employment data at the county level as well as commercial real estate vacancy rates. There is a lot of noise in the national unemployment rate due

to the number of people who hold multiple jobs and the growth in part-time jobs. This makes it difficult to accurately gauge. Additionally, room tax data and house prices are important local indicators. As Mid Oregon members represent a diverse mix of consumers and businesses in Central Oregon, we can typically assess the health of the local economy based on how they save and spend money.

What is your view on the current interest rate environment?

The inflation rate as of now stands at 3.5%. The Federal Funds rate is 5.5%, which means the “real” interest rate is 2%. This is only a slightly restrictive interest rate environment, which is why inflation is not declining more rapidly. For many commodities, insurance, food, and services, prices are still rising well above 3.5% annually. At present, the inflation data look eerily similar to the early 1980s when there was a second cycle of inflation after people believed it was going down. At this point, the risks are fairly balanced between higher and lower rates.

Additional Comments?

Mid Oregon is optimistic about the future of Central Oregon. We are currently constructing our eighth branch in the Old Mill District of Bend, which will also provide additional space for our Lending and Wealth Management teams. We look forward to being closer to our members in the South and West areas of Bend.

Where you bank matters to the local economy. When you bank with Mid Oregon, 95 percent of your deposits are loaned out to Central Oregonians and local businesses, making a significant impact on the community—especially during times when credit availability is limited.



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Sandy Wagner
Central Oregon Regional Manager
SELCO Community Credit Union
selco.org

What is your 2024 outlook on Central Oregon's commercial real estate market?

The Central Oregon market offers reasons for cautious optimism, but this is a challenging environment with many dynamic factors in play.

In comparison to other regions, how is Central Oregon faring economically?

Central Oregon faces some significant headwinds — perhaps none as strong as housing affordability. But overall, the region's economy is robust and continues to attract investment and talent.

The sustained growth that Central Oregon has experienced certainly comes with downsides,

including pressure on infrastructure. But it also puts the region in better shape than many regions in Oregon, where growth is mostly stagnant. The tourism sector has thrived and will continue to act as a buoy for Central Oregon's economy. And other sectors, including outdoor-related businesses, continue to grow in positive and exciting ways.

What are the key market indicators you're watching in the months ahead?

Like others, we'd like to see more movement in the real estate market, and I think we will as new construction ramps up.

Employment is always a tell-tale indicator, of course. And with summer coming, we also want to see tourism, which has become such an important part of

our economy, remain strong.

What is your view on the current interest rate environment?

I think we're in a holding period for the time being, and I don't think we'll see a dramatic change in rates for the foreseeable future. Even though rates are high compared with just a few years ago, they fall within the ranges we've seen historically

Additional Comments?

In the past couple decades, our economy has become much broader and more diverse. Despite the real issues facing Central Oregonians, we're more prepared for economic challenges than ever before.

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A New Parent's Financial Planning Checklist

by **STU MALAKOFF, CFP, CDFIA, CPFA, CRPC, Certified Financial Planner, President — Bend Wealth Advisors**

Let's face it, welcoming a new baby is a whirlwind of emotions. Pure joy? Absolutely! Sleep deprivation? You bet! Questions about the future, especially financially? Definitely!



Not to worry... here are some financial planning suggestions for new parents which I hope will provide some clarity and confidence as you launch your new adventure and will also help your child to successfully launch when they reach adulthood.

- ✓ **Dig deep into your budget.** Get a clear picture of your current and future monthly spending. Consider your income: will it remain stable after the baby arrives? Will you or your partner be working less? Factor in the new ongoing costs your family will incur, like childcare, healthcare premiums, groceries, and baby supplies. Once you understand your post-baby expenses, run a cash flow analysis to determine your new discretionary income.
- ✓ **Start an emergency fund.** Expect the unexpected when you are a parent. Having an emergency fund that will cover 6-12 months of expenses will be a huge stress reducer when life happens.
- ✓ **Review the parental leave policies at your employer.** Providing time for new parents to be with their family is an increasingly common employee benefit; consider taking advantage of it.
- ✓ **Consider long-term disability insurance.** If an earning parent can't work, disability insurance can provide an effective income replacement.
- ✓ **Evaluate your life insurance coverage.** Whether you're a one or a two-earner household, every parent should address the financial risk of an untimely demise. At a minimum, the death benefit should either serve as an income replacement, or it should sufficiently offset the costs of dependent care. A GoFundMe page is not a plan you can hang your hat on.
- ✓ **Review your beneficiaries.** Your retirement accounts (401k/403B/Simple/SEP/IRA/Roth) and life insurance policies allow you to seamlessly direct where these assets will flow upon your demise. Keep in mind that the beneficiary designations for these accounts will supersede what you've specified in your Will.
- ✓ **Prepare your estate planning documents.** Who will take care of your children (i.e. be their guardian) if you're not around? If you're not able to make decisions due to a physical or mental disability, who'll be authorized to stand in your place? The basic building blocks of an estate plan - a Will, Durable Power of Attorney, and health care proxy - document your preferences so that you can control a variety of outcomes.
- ✓ **Add your child to your health insurance plan.** This should typically be completed 30 days after birth or adoption.
- ✓ **Know the tax breaks.** Uncle Sam provides a number of potential tax benefits for your family, such as a dependent care flexible spending account (which can provide a deduction for qualified dependent care expenses) and a child tax credit of up to \$2,000. Check with your tax advisor to learn how you can benefit.
- ✓ **Start saving for college.** The Oregon 529 plan provides tax-deferred savings and tax-free withdrawals for qualified education expenses. And you get up to a \$360 annual tax credit on your Oregon state income taxes.

A few years ago, my meticulous planning for my own children's education reached a major milestone. Seeing my youngest (of 3!) secure a rewarding position in the aerospace industry with their Carnegie Mellon Mechanical Engineering degree, all student loan-free, was a mission accomplished! This firsthand experience has fueled my passion for helping new parents like you avoid financial stress and navigate the complexities of education planning.

For those of you who are just starting the exciting and rewarding journey of parenthood, or are midway through, plenty of twists and turns lie ahead. My advice is that you take control of the financial aspects of parenting, and then enjoy the ride!

At Bend Wealth Advisors, we understand that financial planning isn't one-size-fits-all. We work with families in all phases of life, so we'll meet you where you're at now. If you want to learn more about how you can plan for your family's future, please reach out.

Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC. Investment advisory services are offered through Raymond James Financial Services Advisors, Inc. Bend Wealth Advisors is not a registered broker/dealer and is independent of Raymond James Financial Services.

The information has been obtained from sources considered to be reliable, but we do not guarantee that it is accurate or complete, it is not a statement of all available data necessary for making an investment decision, and it does not constitute a recommendation. Any opinions are those of Stuart Malakoff and not necessarily those of Raymond James.

Favorable state tax treatment for investing in Section 529 college savings plans may be limited to investments made in plans offered by your home state. Investors should consult a tax advisor about any state tax consequences of an investment in a 529 plan.

Neither Raymond James Financial Services nor any Raymond James Financial Advisor renders advice on tax issues, these matters should be discussed with the appropriate professional.

Every investor's situation is unique, and you should consider your investment goals, risk tolerance and time horizon before making any investment. Prior to making an investment decision, please consult with your financial advisor about your individual situation.

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A Strategic Approach for Business Owners

Maximizing Tax Benefits through Donor Advised Funds

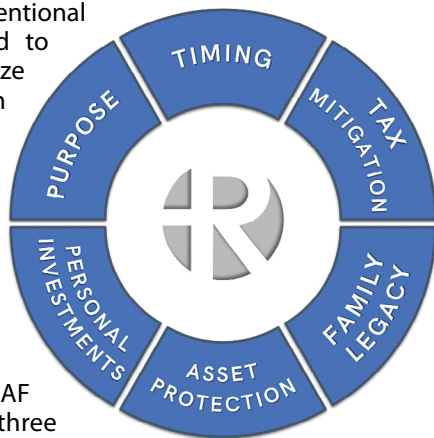
by **DAVID ROSELL** — Rosell Wealth Management

In the realm of financial planning, business owners grapple with a plethora of challenges, ranging from cash flow management to the complexities of taxation. These hurdles amplify in significance when they contemplate selling their businesses. Our innovative program, The 6% Advantage, aims to streamline this complexity by identifying six key opportunities that, when leveraged effectively, can truly transform the game.



As advisors, our mandate transcends conventional investment strategies. We are committed to delivering solutions that not only optimize financial outcomes but also resonate with our clients' philanthropic aspirations. A cornerstone of our approach is the Donor Advised Fund (DAF), a dynamic tool renowned for its versatility. Not only does the DAF facilitate charitable giving, but it also offers substantial tax benefits for business owners, especially those on the brink of divesting their enterprises.

When harnessed appropriately, the DAF becomes instrumental in addressing three critical facets of our 6% Advantage framework: Tax Mitigation, Family Legacy, and Purpose. Let's delve into how the strategic implementation of DAFs.



planning by facilitating strategic charitable giving. Contributions to a DAF remove assets from the donor's estate, potentially reducing estate tax liabilities. Furthermore, DAFs offer flexibility in distributing charitable grants, allowing owners to involve family members in philanthropic endeavors and instill a culture of giving across generations.



Case Study: Rosell Wealth Management

At Rosell Wealth Management, we recognize the intrinsic link between philanthropy and financial planning. That's why we've incorporated a Donor Advised Fund into our company's philanthropic endeavors. Named in honor of a remarkable individual who has made significant contributions to our community without seeking recognition, we proudly present the James A. Lee Community Gift Fund.

Each year, we allocate a predetermined percentage of our annual profits to our DAF, which is now housed within the Oregon Community Foundation. This initiative reflects our core values and mission, providing our clients with the opportunity to nominate local nonprofits close to their hearts and apply for grants through our fund. Through our annual gala, we celebrate this commitment by distributing checks to these deserving organizations.

Our dedication to philanthropy transcends mere altruism; it embodies a strategic approach to wealth management that enriches both our community and our clients' experiences. By empowering our clients to support causes they are passionate about, we foster a sense of purpose and fulfillment while making a tangible difference in the lives of others.

Conclusion: A Strategic Imperative

The utilization of Donor Advised Funds represents a win-win scenario for business owners seeking to optimize their financial outcomes while making a meaningful impact through philanthropy. By integrating DAFs into their wealth management strategies, owners can effectively navigate tax complexities, preserve wealth, and leave a lasting legacy of generosity. As advisors, our mission is to empower business owners to achieve their financial and philanthropic goals through strategic planning and innovative solutions.

In essence, the strategic integration of Donor Advised Funds into our 6% Advantage program epitomizes our commitment to simplifying complexity and unlocking transformative opportunities for our clients. By harnessing the power of DAFs, business owners can navigate the challenges of taxation, cultivate a lasting family legacy, and fulfill their sense of purpose. As advisors, we stand ready to guide our clients on this journey, empowering them to achieve financial success while making a meaningful difference in the world. To learn more about how Rosell Wealth Management can help you maximize tax benefits through strategic charitable giving, please contact us at 541-390-3832.

David Rosell is the president of Rosell Wealth Management in Bend. RosellWealthManagement.com. He is the author of three books. Find Rosell's books at local bookstores, Amazon, Audible as well as Redmond Airport. Investment advisory services offered through Valmark Advisers, Inc. an SEC Registered Investment Advisor Securities offered through Valmark Securities, Inc. Member FINRA, SIPC 130 Springside Drive, Ste 300 Akron, Ohio 44333-2431. (800) 765-5201. Rosell Wealth Management is a separate entity from Valmark Securities, Inc. and Valmark Advisers, Inc.

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Understanding Donor Advised Funds

Donor Advised Funds serve as charitable giving accounts administered by public charities or community foundations. Contributors can make irrevocable donations of cash, securities, or other assets to the DAF, receive an immediate tax deduction, and subsequently recommend grants to qualified charitable organizations over time. This structure provides flexibility, allowing donors to support charitable causes while potentially maximizing tax benefits.

Minimizing Capital Gains Taxes

For business owners contemplating the sale of their businesses, capital gains taxes often represent a substantial concern. However, strategic utilization of a Donor Advised Fund can mitigate this tax burden. By contributing appreciated assets such as stocks, real estate, or even shares of their business to the DAF, owners can eliminate capital gains taxes on the donated assets. This approach not only supports charitable endeavors but also allows for the preservation of wealth that would otherwise be eroded by taxation.

Optimizing Income Tax Planning

In addition to capital gains considerations, business owners must navigate income tax implications, especially as they transition from active involvement in their businesses to retirement or other pursuits. Donor Advised Funds offer a tax-efficient strategy for managing income tax liabilities. By contributing a portion of the proceeds from the sale of their businesses to a DAF, owners can potentially reduce their taxable income in the year of the sale. Furthermore, ongoing contributions to the DAF can generate additional tax deductions, providing long-term benefits for income tax planning.

Estate Planning Benefits

Estate taxes pose yet another challenge for business owners seeking to preserve wealth for future generations. Donor Advised Funds can play a vital role in estate



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Central Oregon Community College (COCC) announces that students **Anthony Alegria, Kris Kent** and **Jordan Taylor** have been selected to represent the college on the Oregon Community College Association's (OCCA) 2024 All-Oregon Academic Team. Additionally, Kent was chosen as a national Coca-Cola Academic Team Bronze Scholar recipient by the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

The students were honored at the OCCA's All-Oregon Academic Team luncheon event on April 19 at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, with state Rep. Tawna Sanchez, D-Portland, providing the keynote address.

To earn the team distinction, students must demonstrate academic excellence and intellectual rigor combined with leadership and service. A minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA and completion of at least 54 credits is required. Nominated by a faculty member, finalists undergo a review process by the college's committee for academic excellence.

An aviation student, Alegria of Washington state is earning a professional airplane pilot degree while attaining a 4.0 GPA and conducting a work-study position with COCC's veterans department. Alegria is a former U.S. Marine sergeant whose airbase service inspired him to become a pilot. He plans to initially become a flight instructor locally and then attend the



Oregon Institute of Technology for a bachelor's degree in operational management, with the goal of working for a major airline carrier.

Kent, originally of Ravena, New York, is an aviation student earning a degree as a professional helicopter pilot. The dean's list student, with a 4.0 GPA, is a U.S. Army veteran and former EMT and firefighter. Kent was recently named a 2024 Coca-Cola Academic Team Bronze Scholar — one of just 50 in the country — by the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, a scholarship administered by the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. He aspires to serve as a helicopter flight instructor in Central Oregon and eventually transition to aerial pilot work in forestry or agriculture.

Taylor of Bend is a natural resources student who hopes to work in the field of wildlife conservation, contributing to the protection of endangered species and habitats. The dean's list student, with a 3.9 GPA, is planning to transfer to Oregon State University for a bachelor's degree in natural resources. She envisions a career working closely with organizations and agencies dedicated to preserving biodiversity and finding sustainable solutions to environmental challenges.

The All-Oregon Academic Team is part of the All-State Community College Academic Team program that started in 1994 in the states of Mississippi and Missouri. Today, 38 states host All-State Academic Team programs each year, focusing on two-year colleges and recognizing exceptional students. The OCCA sponsors the annual event, in partnership with the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, which awards some \$37 million in scholarships nationally to community college students.

Newport Avenue Landscaping has announced that **Ryan Nopp** has joined our team as a commercial business developer. As we have expanded into the commercial landscaping market over the past four years, Nopp's appointment is instrumental

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Businesses Serving Community

VISIT CENTRAL OREGON

Visit Central Oregon has announced that 15 recipients will be awarded a total of \$450,000 in grant money as part of the Central Oregon Future Fund. The grant program to support local tourism projects benefiting both visitors and residents is in its second annual cycle. Visit Central Oregon selected the 15 recipients from a total of 26 applications requesting more than \$1 million in funding.

The recipients represent a wide range of tourism-related projects — from a new and innovative series of exhibitions focusing on diverse stories and cultures, including those of Indigenous and Latinx communities at the High Desert Museum to supporting rural Antelope with a catalytic hub for travelers to use restrooms, refill on water, and to be use as a multi-use outdoor event space for their community.

Each has at least one thing in common: Every project awarded a Central Oregon Future Fund grant emphasized sustainable tourism programs and enhancements in line with the Fund's pillars of promoting accessible adventure, cultural tourism, and stewardship. The 26 applications included seven access adventure projects, 13 cultural tourism projects, and six stewardship projects. The 15 applicants being awarded include four access adventure projects, seven cultural tourism projects, and four stewardship projects.

The 2024 Central Oregon Future Fund Grantees include:

Antelope 3, LLC — Antelope Pavilion (\$50,000): The Antelope Pavilion project will provide a safe and inclusive "stopping place" for travelers looking to use restrooms, refill on water, and/or relax. It will also serve to kickstart the local economy by providing a multi-use outdoor event space.

Asterisk Astronomy — Astronomy Education (\$16,155): This project will enhance the visitor experience at Asterisk Observatory — an astrotourism site hosted at The Spot at Smith Rock, which provides astronomy outreach and education.

Bend Endurance Academy — Enhancement and Accessibility Project (\$13,200): Event outreach and adaptive climbing enhancements that aim to increase capacity and successfully draw climbing competitions, camps, and clinics during non-peak seasons.

Central Oregon Trail Alliance — Cline Butte Mountain Bike Trail Enhancement (\$45,900): The project will build 2.5 miles of well-designed and sustainable new trail at Cline Butte, mitigating the impact for years to come. The trail system is already popular with residents and travelers due to its proximity to resort destinations and the communities of Tumalo, Redmond, Bend, and Sisters.

DarkSky Oregon — Beautiful Oregon Night Skies Educational Outreach (\$24,500): "Beautiful Oregon Night Skies" seeks to halt and reverse the disappearance of our starry night skies in Central Oregon through educational outreach with creative public service announcements that encourage voluntary change of outdoor lighting.

Ensoterra — Improving Adaptive Water Sports and Accessibility in Central Oregon (\$21,865): Marketing and outreach strategies of Ensoterra's programs for improving accessibility and knowledge for anyone with a disability to enjoy the best fishing, kayaking, and standup-paddleboarding locations throughout Central Oregon.

Explore Prineville — High Desert Moonfest (\$28,725): The High Desert Moonfest is a Harvest to Heritage celebration. Set for late October, this event celebrates an end to the farming season that has historically driven the Crook County economy since its founding.

The Father's Group — Juneteenth Jubilee (\$14,000): Juneteenth 2024 is a powerful, culturally rooted, Black-led event welcoming 15,000-20,000 visitors. The event invests in the local economy and celebrates the diaspora of African, Caribbean, and Black American culture, one of the largest celebrations in the U.S.

Gamma Roses — Accessibility Project (\$20,000): Accessibility enhancements to increase the total interior square footage available to utilize

for the petting zoo and visitors with disabilities.

High Desert Museum — Diverse Stories Exhibition Series (\$50,000): The High Desert Museum will produce a series of new, innovative exhibitions and programs focused on diverse stories and cultures, bolstering cultural tourism and helping to make Central Oregon a welcoming and inclusive tourist destination.

Kah-Nee-Ta Resort — Artwork Design Project (\$22,431): Kah-Nee-Ta Resort will enhance the cultural experience of the Resort by partnering with a local artist for authentic artwork designed and painted on the exterior of its 20 new teepees.

Onward Project — AdvenChair AdvenTours (\$44,650): The Onward Project and Wanderlust Tours will provide AdvenChair AdvenTours, a series of guided trips in natural areas of Central Oregon, designed for people with disabilities.

Oregon Equestrian Trails — Cline Buttes Trail Signs (\$28,510): The Cline Buttes Trail Signs project will take place over 50 square miles of BLM land between Bend, Redmond, and Sisters. The trails are a short distance from all three communities. In addition, some of the project's trails are immediately adjacent to Eagle Crest and Thornburgh Resorts.

ScaleHouse — Accessible Bend Design Conference Project (\$28,000): The Bend Design Conference will expand the Design Humanity project in October 2024. The project includes investment in leaders, speakers, and artists from Warm Springs to attend and be included in the artistic program.

So. Wasco Alliance — Simnasho Tribal Market Project (\$42,064): The Simnasho Tribal Market, located in the northern tribal lands of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, will create opportunities for tribal members and travelers to meet each other, and be a welcoming space that is rich in cultural experience for all ages.

To be eligible, winning applications had to be aligned with three program pillars: Stewardship, cultural tourism, and expanding access to outdoor adventure. In all, The Central Oregon Future Fund awarded \$450,000 in grants in what is the program's second year. The grants are entirely funded by revenue generated from the region's transient room tax that is dedicated to tourism programs.

SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE

The Bend Home Depot store was busier than usual on April 20 when hundreds of volunteers gathered to build beds for children who don't have their own.

Home Depot donated their parking lot, plus \$12,000 in donated materials to build the beds. Albertson's provided lunches with water and beverages.

The bed build was in honor of Trinity Reinhardt, a local 20-year-old airman who served in the USAF and died last year. Many military people and veterans turned out to help build 200 beds.

The local chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP) coordinated the build.

BEND-REDMOND HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Bend-Redmond Habitat for Humanity received its largest gift ever from a single donor. The donation of \$521,000, from the estate of Denise Sullivan, comes as Bend-Redmond Habitat is planning to build over 100 sustainable, affordable homes in the next five years.

A truly remarkable woman, Deni Sullivan was an artist at heart, specializing in graphic design and the printed word. She lived and loved it here in Central Oregon for more than 20 years, and sadly passed away after a long fight with Parkinsons and Alzheimer's in 2021. Prior to passing, she left a large portion of her estate to Bend-Redmond Habitat for Humanity.

Since 2020, Bend-Redmond Habitat has focused on sustainability, building efficient homes with solar power and to achieve either partial or full net-zero certification. Working with the executor of her estate, Habitat created the Deni Sullivan Sustainability Fund to ensure these sustainable building practices continue.

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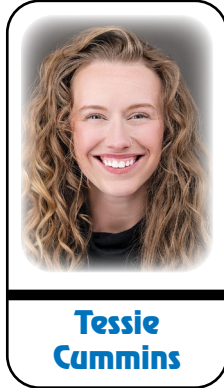
to our growth in this segment. With over 25 years of experience specifically in the commercial landscaping realm in Central Oregon, Nopp will be crucial to our ongoing development. His proactive approach to joining our team underscores his commitment to the local landscaping industry, and we are very fortunate to have him join our fast-growing team.



Total Real Estate Referrals, LLC announces the addition of **Dawn Potts** to its referral-only licensed real estate team. As a Central Oregon native, Potts strives to use her knowledge of the area to help people achieve their real estate dreams.

Dawn Potts

RE/MAX Key Properties welcomes **Tessie Cummins** to its esteemed group of real estate professionals. Cummins is a dedicated member of the Bend community and has a commitment to serving people and fostering genuine connections. Specializing in residential real estate, she approaches her work with a compassionate touch, prioritizing the experience and satisfaction of her clients above all else. Her commitment to fostering positive experiences for her clients is deeply rooted in her desire to help them navigate the home buying and selling process with confidence and ease.



Tessie Cummins



The **High Desert Education Service District (HDES)** board of directors announced that **Sara Johnson** will be the organization's next superintendent. Beginning in July, Johnson will lead the HDES team in the delivery of Central Oregon's early childhood education (0-5 years), special education (0-21 years), mental/behavioral health, substitute teachers, driver education and other specialized programs. Johnson, who served as superintendent for Crook County School District from 2018 to 2023, brings more than 25 years of experience as a K-12 educator, and was named Superintendent of the Year in 2023 by the Oregon Association of School Executives and the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators. HDES's current superintendent, Paul Andrews, is retiring in July after 25 years with HDES.

Sara Johnson

Prior to leading Crook County School District as superintendent, Johnson served as director of assessment, equity and school improvement for Klamath County School District.

Johnson holds an education administration certification from Lewis and Clark College (Portland, Oregon), a bachelor's and master's of teacher education degree from Eastern Oregon University (La Grande, Oregon), a doctoral degree of education — education leadership from George Fox University (Newberg, Oregon) and a doctoral degree in school psychology from George Fox University (Portland, Oregon).

In a significant milestone for the marketing and advertising industry, **zö Agency**, a trailblazing firm based in Bend, has announced its certification as a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC). This prestigious certification underscores the agency's unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as its dedication to empowering changemakers across the United States in an

industry where women-owned agencies are severely underrepresented.

According to a 2019 study by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA), a mere one percent of advertising agencies in the United States are owned by women, despite women making up nearly half of the advertising workforce (ANA, 2019). zö Agency, founded and wholly owned by Sonja Anderson, is breaking barriers and challenging the status quo in an industry that has historically been dominated by men.

zö Agency's diverse team, spanning a wide range of ages, genders, identities, and ethnicities, brings a wealth of perspectives and experiences to every project, ensuring that each client receives tailored, impactful solutions. The agency's client roster boasts an impressive array of organizations tackling some of society's most pressing issues, including homelessness, addiction recovery, unemployment, senior care, rural development, LGBTQ rights, women's rights, and youth of color empowerment. By leveraging its expertise in marketing, advertising, and strategic communications, the agency helps these organizations expand their reach, engage their target audiences, and drive meaningful change.

The WBENC certification is the gold standard for women-owned businesses in the United States, affirming that a company is at least 51 percent owned, controlled, operated, and managed by a woman or women. This certification not only validates zö Agency's commitment to women's entrepreneurship but also opens doors to new partnerships and opportunities with corporations and government entities that prioritize supplier diversity.

In the first part of 2024, the **Latino Community Association (LCA)** hired four new employees to strengthen its teams in Bend and Madras.

New development manager **Lucia Barragán Rodríguez** was born in Mexico City and moved to Bend in 2022 with her husband and daughter. She studied political sociology at the José María Luis Mora Institute and collaborated with organizations that promote social justice and rights: Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute (ILSB) and Controla Tu Gobierno in Mexico City, and the anti-trafficking project at J Bar J in Bend. She has worked as a grant specialist, developed and evaluated social projects, and worked on inclusion programs for homeless individuals and those who have experienced labor trafficking. She views LCA as a platform to change the narrative about Latin American migrant people. She will work to ensure the organization's financial sustainability, so it can offer quality services and programs and optimal working conditions.



Lucia Barragán Rodríguez

Carmina Morgado Alonso

Samuel Vázquez Morales

Jeisis Mejía González

Carmina Morgado Alonso, client services coordinator in Bend, came here from Puebla, Mexico, in 2020 to tutor children during the pandemic. She loved the area and returned in 2022 to make her home in Bend. She studied psychology at the Public University of Puebla and photography in Mexico City. For more than ten years, she worked in arts and culture in Puebla, where she launched a women's community art collective in an abandoned factory. While she misses the art scene and museums in big cities, she likes to hike, explore, and take pictures of beautiful landscapes in Deschutes County. In her new role, she hopes to create photography projects and other cultural activities.

Samuel Vázquez Morales, client services coordinator in Madras, was born in Oaxaca, Mexico, and moved to Oregon with his family in 2007. He excelled in school, joined the National Honor Society, and graduated with honors from Culver High School in 2010. Vázquez Morales' parents did not have the means to send him to college, so he worked in agriculture, fast food, and manufacturing. He embarks on his new role in the shoes of a client: his family came to LCA for dental clinics and to apply for energy assistance and the Oregon Worker Relief

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Fund. He described the job as a way to give back to the community. He lives in Metolius with his wife and daughters.

Jeisis Mejía González, client services assistant in Madras, was born in El Salvador and studied business administration at the Technological University of El Salvador. In 2022, she joined family members in the U.S. and earned her GED from Central Oregon Community College. Currently, she is enrolled in the computer systems program at COCC and studying intensive English online. Since arriving in the U.S., she has worked in hospitality and tourism, where she enjoyed meeting people of different nationalities and sharing life experiences. She believes education is the best investment in oneself. She is proud to use her skills and enthusiasm to engage with Latino community members,

especially older adults.

With the successful launch of **AP Equipment Financing's** fleet and mobility division, the company is strategically expanding its team with the recent addition of **Geliene Ovsak** as VP of strategic alliances and sourcing. Ovsak brings over 30 years of experience in the fleet industry, specializing in strategic sourcing and managing supplier relationships, making her a valuable asset to Alex Coveney's team.

AP's new fleet division is geared towards achieving ambitious expansion in the lease, mobility, and client support product offerings this upcoming year. The team is developing innovative programs aimed at elevating customer value and building loyalty, going beyond conventional financing services such as full maintenance lease programs, national rental programs, and large fleet leasing solutions.

With Ovsak's onboarding, AP is poised for continued expansion into the Fleet and Mobility industry, guaranteeing a successful year of targeted growth and enhanced customer offerings.

Every Child Central Oregon Celebrates Cheers to the Year Event

by **MELISSA WILLIAMS, Executive Director — Every Child Central Oregon**

Every Child Central Oregon (ECCO), the Redmond-based 501(c)3 nonprofit that fights relentlessly for the well-being of Central Oregon children and families impacted by foster care, recently hosted its annual Cheers to the Year event, recognizing outstanding contributions within the region's foster care community.

The recent event took place on a beautiful weekend afternoon, the highlight of which was its presentation of awards to exemplary families providing foster care and foster care caseworkers. Every Child Central Oregon announced the Foster Parent of the Year award to two deserving families, one nominated by the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and one nominated by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS). These families were celebrated for their dedication, compassion, and unwavering support of children in need.

In addition to honoring foster families, ECCO recognized outstanding caseworkers from both ODHS and CTWS with the "Caseworker of the Year" awards. These individuals were commended for their tireless efforts in advocating for the best interests of children in the foster care system and their commitment to building strong, supportive relationships with families. Katie McGown received the Volunteer of the Year award. Furthermore, ECCO also presented its "Partner of the Year Award" to Hayden Homes. As a recipient of this prestigious award, Hayden Homes was acknowledged for this company's meaningful partnership with and dedicated support of Every Child Central Oregon's mission.

Deborah Flagan, Hayden Home's vice president of community engagement, expressed gratitude on behalf of the entire company, stating, "We are honored to

receive Partner of the Year from Every Child Central Oregon. Partnering with local nonprofits in meaningful ways allows us to bring our Give As You Go philosophy to life. We are proud to have worked alongside Every Child Central Oregon for the past several years to bring support to those touched by foster care and to help build a strong community."

Beyond the awards ceremony, ECCO showcased its new 2,000-square-foot warehouse space, giving tours to community members, partners and foster resource parents. The event also featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony, with representatives from the Redmond Chamber of Commerce in attendance, plus food and drinks provided by Bennington Properties.

"The energy that afternoon was just so heartfelt and exciting," says Melissa Williams, ECCO's executive director. "Having the chance to not just honor these community members and partners but do so in our warehouse — the hub of our services and support — helped people to see more of what ECCO is all about and what we do, and understand how we've evolved in four fast years. On behalf of the ECCO team, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all who attended and contributed to the success of the Cheers to the Year event. It's really exciting to see how, together, we're making such a difference in the lives of children and families in Central Oregon, amplifying our mission of mobilizing community to uplift children and families impacted by foster care in Central Oregon."

everychildoregon.org/centraloregon

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First Interstate Bank & Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines Donate \$10,000 to Local Nonprofit Organizations

by HANNAH CASTLE

Two Sisters nonprofits recently received a surprise donation of \$10,000 each from First Interstate Bank and the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation. The gift was made possible by the Member Impact Fund grant program, in which First Interstate received a 3-to-1 funding match from Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) of Des Moines. Seed to Table and Sisters Kiwanis Foundation will both be receiving \$10,000 to support their causes within the greater Sisters area.

"First Interstate Bank has been a wonderful community partner and supporter since Seed to Table's beginning," said Audrey Tehan, founder and farm director of the organization. "Consistent support from our community like this grant is critical to providing fresh veggies and farm-based education throughout the community. This grant will boost our community vitality and community connections; keeping fresh vegetables in our local food pantries and making sure our kids will be able to enjoy hands-on, farm-based education."

Seed to Table aims to increase the health and wellness of the Central Oregon community through providing equitable access to locally grown, farm fresh produce and offering opportunities in farm-based education.

"Grant support is a HUGE part of what makes it possible to operate the Sisters Kiwanis Food Bank," Jeff Taylor and Doug Wills wrote in an email on behalf of the Sisters Kiwanis volunteer staff. "The need has never been greater. We receive a great deal of donated food, but to do a good job we must purchase over half the food we distribute. The thing about actual food donations is we get what we get. Maybe a bunch of something, but not the item we are short of. Grant funds allow us to fill in those gaps and have a good selection. Our food bank and its volunteers sincerely appreciate the fantastic support we get from the community. Thank you!"

Sisters Kiwanis Foundation strives to make a difference in its communities by supporting the children who are to become the future. It supports its communities through participation in service projects of local, national, and international importance.

"This is what community banking is all about—helping the places we call home reach their greatest potential," said Daniel Stoltz, First Interstate Bank's retail manager. "Seed to Table and Sisters Kiwanis Foundation's impact can't be



SISTERS KIWANIS FOOD BANK RECEIVING FHLB GRANT



SEED TO TABLE RECEIVING FHLB GRANT | PHOTOS COURTESY OF FIRST INTERSTATE BANK

understated; they are answering the needs of small businesses with practical, accessible financial solutions that foster economic growth. We are grateful to FHLB Des Moines for partnering with us on this initiative and thrilled to put our values into action for the benefit of our communities."

The Member Impact Fund is a matching grant program from FHLBank Des Moines that was introduced in 2023 with the aim of supporting affordable housing and community development initiatives. As a result of this partnership with FHLB Des Moines, First Interstate can provide nearly \$2.6 million in philanthropic support this year alone to 125 eligible organizations across Montana, North Dakota, and Oregon.

Additionally, First Interstate makes annual donations and grants to local community organizations throughout its 14-state footprint, with contributions funded by setting aside two percent of pre-tax earnings. These funds aid in a host of valuable initiatives, from improving workforce development to boosting early childhood education to mitigating poverty.

More information on First Interstate Bank's philanthropic efforts is available at firstinterstatebank.com/believeinlocal.

fhldm.com • firstinterstate.com

Deschutes Children's Foundation Embraces Diversity with New Nonprofit Partners

by SHANNON RIES, Development Director — Deschutes Children's Foundation

The Deschutes Children's Foundation is proud to announce the addition of three new nonprofit partners, each bringing a unique perspective and commitment to diversity to our campus. These partnerships mark a significant step forward in our ongoing mission to foster inclusivity and support for all members of our community.

One of our new partners is the Father Group, founded by several black fathers deeply concerned about the experiences their children were having in school and the broader community. Originally coming together to share thoughts, concerns and advice, they quickly recognized the need for more tangible action to secure the future of the next generation. The Father Group, led by Black voices, operates as

dedicated individuals who contribute greatly to the community in education, business and social services. Their commitment to collaboration and cross-cultural influences aligns seamlessly with our values at Deschutes Children's Foundation.

Joining them is COAM Central Oregon Autism Movement, whose mission is to lead Central Oregon in supporting and fostering community acceptance for individuals and families with autism. Their dedication to inclusivity and understanding mirrors our own, and we are thrilled to have them as partners in our efforts to create a more welcoming environment for all.

Additionally, Early Head Start will be expanding its programs at our center to include another classroom, providing valuable resources for early childhood

education in Redmond. This expansion will benefit families by offering more accessible opportunities for early childhood development and support.

"We are excited to welcome these new partners to Deschutes Children's Foundation at our Becky Johnson Center Campus," said Cassi MacQueen, executive director at Deschutes Children's Foundation. "Their commitment to diversity, inclusion and community support perfectly aligns with our mission, and we look forward to the positive impact we can achieve together."

These new partnerships represent an important milestone in our ongoing commitment to creating a more inclusive and supportive community for all individuals and families in Redmond and beyond.

deschuteschildrensfoundation.org

Youth Conservation Corps Now Hiring 16- to 18-Year-Olds

by LEANNA WILLIAMS

Long summer days are ahead, and Heart of Oregon Corps' (HOC) Central Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (COYCC) program has summer jobs for young people! This is a great opportunity for youth ages 16- to 18-years-old to gain job skills and learn more about natural resources while improving public lands and reducing the threat of wildfires in our community.

Sixty-five local youth will be selected for this competitive summer program and earn \$15 an hour, working 36 hours a week. Hands-on projects in Central Oregon's beautiful forests and high deserts include building trails, maintaining fences, piling hazardous fuels, restoring campgrounds and improving wildlife habitat on the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and Crooked River National Grassland.

"We are proud to continue our longstanding partnership with Heart of Oregon Corps to provide local jobs for Central Oregon youth," said Shane Jeffries, forest supervisor, Ochoco National Forest and Crooked River National Grassland. "The work they do not only provides job skills and training, but it also makes a significant difference on our public lands."

That's not all! This year we are establishing the program's first LGBTQ and Tribal Youth affinity crews to break historical barriers in conservation. These crews aim to increase accessibility and representation on public lands while fostering transformative community experiences outdoors. Led by mentors who reflect the youths' identities, the crews connect with queer and indigenous mentors from the USFS, BLM and other organizations. Weekly topics, such as Queer History Outdoors

or Tribal Practices on the land, will foster cultural celebration and a sense of belonging, building a supportive network. This approach enables both collective and individual growth and empowerment for queer and indigenous youth.

The program runs from June 24 through August 15. Members will work nine hours a day Monday through Thursday. Youth crews meet daily in Bend, Redmond, Sisters, Prineville, La Pine, Crescent, Madras and Warm Springs. In this program, youth will gain work experience, leadership skills and guided professional development, all while earning money and making friends!

Heart of Oregon Corps operates the Central Oregon Youth Conservation Corps program in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council.

"The COYCC program not only helps the U.S. Forest Service accomplish mission critical work but also stimulates the regional economy by providing jobs and increases community involvement in public land management by engaging local youth," said Christine Meyers, Deschutes National Forest partnership program manager. "This program exemplifies the powerful impact organizations can have when working together."

Applications must be received by May 1 and are available online at heartoforegon.org. For more information, contact Summer Programs Manager at madeline.cunningham@heartoforegon.org or Forest Service YCC Coordinator Nick Swagger at 541-480-0915.

heartoforegon.org

Hayden Homes Provides Gift for Redmond Rotary Club's Early Literacy Program

by KATY WOODERSON, Vice President of Marketing — Hayden Homes

Hayden Homes has proudly gifted \$3,500 for the Rotary Club of Redmond's 2024 Gift of Literacy program. The gift supports Redmond Rotarians to provide every first grade student in the district — as well as St. Thomas Academy and Central Christian School — with their very own hardback book. More than 550 students in total will be served.

Hayden Homes team members and Redmond Rotary Club members visited Sage Elementary School on April 10 for a book handout. Students beamed as they received their special book. High school students from the Interact Club at Redmond Proficiency Academy also attended and performed an interactive book reading to the children. Other students will receive their books over the coming weeks.

"We are proud to support Redmond Rotary, and to help provide the gift of reading to the deserving first graders of the Redmond School District region," said Deb Flagan, Hayden Homes vice president of community engagement and giving.

The Rotary Club of Redmond's Gift of Literacy program is now in its fifth year, with more than 2,750 books distributed to students from Tumalo to Terrebonne since 2020. It is Hayden Homes' third year supporting the program, which is also sponsored by Selco Credit Union.

This year, first grade teachers were given a set of seven books to read to students. Students then chose their favorite and the Rotary Club purchased the books for distribution. Recently, Rotarians gathered together to write each student's name in their own book. The books were then packed into backpack. Students across the district are now receiving their special book and backpack at events like the one at Sage Elementary.

"The Gift of Literacy project aspires to show students how important literacy and lifelong learning is in Redmond," said Janice Burges, president of the Rotary Club of Redmond. "We're creating a culture of

reading and learning that we hope will have an impact on the lives of these students forever."

Research shows that literacy is a gateway skill that must be encouraged and reinforced at a young age in order for children to be successful in their ongoing education. Rotary Club of Redmond aims to continue building this successful program for years to come.

This year's book selection included:

- *My Dog Just Speaks Spanish*, by Andrea Caceras
- *Wepa: English & Spanish*, by J De La Vega
- *Skater Cielo*, by Rachel Katstaller
- *Dark on Light*, by Dianne White
- *Gustav is Missing! A Tale of Friendship and Bravery*, by Andrea Zuill
- *King Kong's Cousin*, by Mark Teague
- *We Don't Lose Our Class Goldfish*, by Ryan T. Higgins

To learn more and donate to the Gift of Literacy program visit redmondoregonrotary.com.

About Hayden Homes:

Established in Redmond in 1989, Hayden Homes has provided over 25,000 new homes to price-conscious, value-driven homebuyers in underserved, secondary markets throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. Hayden Homes continues to be the largest privately-owned new home builder in the Pacific Northwest. Hayden Homes exists to Give As You Go, so together we build a strong community, and lead fulfilled lives.

Hayden Homes has contributed \$6.3 billion to local economies and has created more than 99,000 jobs since the company's inception. Hayden Homes supports philanthropic efforts in the communities in which they build and have contributed more



PHOTO | COURTESY OF HAYDEN HOMES

than \$70 million in charitable donations with the flagship of their giving through the 501(c)(3) nonprofit, First Story.

To date, First Story has provided 117 families throughout the Pacific Northwest with an affordable home and a first step toward financial freedom. The Hayden Homes brand family of companies includes Simplicity by Hayden Homes, Wise Size Homes and Hayden Homes, all providing an unparalleled selection of opportunities for those looking to purchase a new home.

hayden-homes.com • redmondoregonrotary.com



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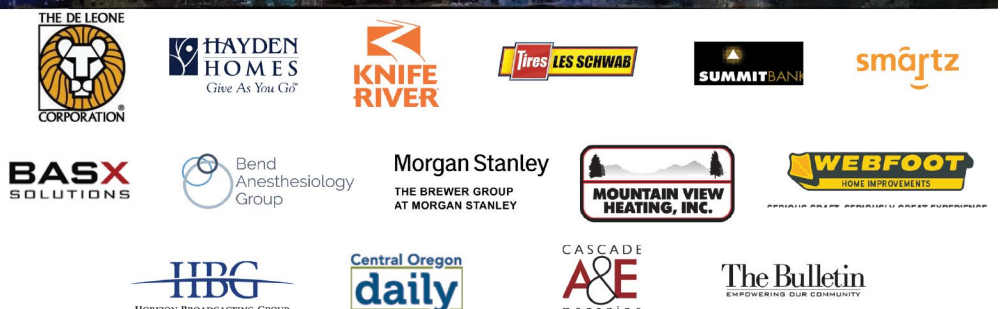
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SDC Fees Hike

Continued from page 12

Council’s priorities around housing production and affordability because less of that cost gets passed on to the consumer,” added Hutson.

The updates would give affordable housing developments a complete exemption from water, sewer, and transportation SDCs. They would also encourage denser, less car-dependent buildings by offering a 30% lower transportation SDC for these types of properties in the core part of the city.

The SDCs necessary to provide adequate funding for growth-related capital improvements vital to maintaining the city’s level of service in transportation, water and sewer also include Bend Metropolitan Parks & Recreation’s service in the city parks. “We realized it’s a pretty cumbersome system, so we’re making an effort to make it easier for folks and reduce some of that complexity and that administrative burden on both sides,” said Hutson.

“The goal of this update is to make System Development Charges more equitable overall,” said City Councilor Barb Campbell. “Our methodology updates aim to advance housing affordability while still providing sufficient revenue to fund needed infrastructure.

“SDCs allow development to pay for growth. New infrastructure is needed to support new housing.”

“There is a different methodology for residential versus commercial fee calculation. There is recognition we are in a housing crisis, so I think the City has tailored residential SDC’s quite well to stimulate further home building,” said Morgan Greenwood, VP of Government Affairs for Central Oregon Builders Association. “But some of the commercial sectors are disparately impacted, and in some cases, medical development would see a 230% increase. The Bend medical community has given a comprehensive coordinated response, and the City is taking a second look to see how costs may be offset or concessions considered.

“We do have some concern for how the project list was decided. It is very extensive and expensive and as a plan to develop over the next 20 years, we don’t think it is realistic.

“One of COBA’s goals is to seek a paring down or partial constraining of the project list. For instance, while bike and pedestrian projects are laudable, most are infill projects and because SDCs are related to growth, it does not make sense that they are eligible to be included.

“I think we are underbuilt in many areas, especially in commercial and medical to support the population, and to make that commercial development even more expensive undermines the goals of creating a thriving community.”

A list of proposed SDC changes is available at: bendoregon.gov/sdc

OBI

Continued from page 3

and workforce, GDP and exports, and more. For each category, the web page provides trend information, where available, as well as additional data from Oregon Competitiveness Book source material and elsewhere. Visitors to the web page can read and download the Oregon Competitiveness Book as well.

What do the Oregon Competitiveness Book and companion site show? They describe a state that has a great deal of work to do if it wishes to remain competitive. Oregon is exceptional in some areas, including quality of life, technology and innovation. But it is exceptionally uncompetitive in others.

State and local taxes are among the nation’s highest for individuals and businesses, for example. And its regulatory environment is ranked among the country’s most stifling.

“States are locked in a fierce competition for talented people and innovative businesses, and the Oregon Competitiveness Book shows that Oregon is not competing nearly as well as it can,” says OBI President and CEO Angela Wilhelms. “By many measures, in fact, Oregon is becoming increasingly less competitive.”

Economic competitiveness matters because businesses provide hundreds of thousands of jobs and generate the tax revenue Oregon’s state and local governments need to sustain critical public services. Unless Oregon becomes more competitive, business investment will continue to flow to more welcoming states, and talented people, innovation and tax

revenue will follow.

The OBI Research and Education Foundation intends to update the Oregon Competitiveness Book and companion website annually.

About Oregon Business & Industry:

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon’s 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon’s private sector businesses help drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

oregonbusinessindustry.com

Minimum Wage

Continued from page 3

inflation aims to ensure the wages of Oregon workers keep pace with the economic realities they face. Wage increases, particularly for those at the bottom of the income spectrum, have far-reaching benefits. They increase community-level economic activity and support local businesses. Moreover, wage increases help to reduce pay inequalities for women and people of color, fostering overall economic growth.

Oregon employers are reminded of their obligation to display minimum wage posters in the workplace. Updated posters reflecting the new minimum wage rates will be available for download free of charge on the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) website

by June 15, 2024.

This increase in earnings for low-wage workers reaffirms our commitment to upholding employment rights and promoting fairness and justice in the workplace, thus fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

More information and a table summarizing Oregon’s minimum wage rates over the past nine years can be found on at oregon.gov/boli/workers/Pages/minimum-wage-schedule.aspx.

Led by Labor Commissioner Christina Stephenson, the Bureau of Labor and Industries protects employment rights, advances employment opportunities, and protects access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination for all Oregonians.

Oregon.Gov/BOLI

WorkSource

Continued from page 3

aimed at helping to increase jobseekers access to local, state, and federal benefits and resources that reduce barriers to finding employment. Carefully selected Benefits Navigators, positioned at the greeter station within WorkSource Oregon offices and outreaching to the rural areas of the counties, will serve as the first point of contact for customers, offering immediate assistance and guidance.

“We are seeking contractors who are committed to providing high-quality, individualized support to jobseekers from diverse backgrounds,” said Heather Ficht, executive director at EC Works. “The Benefits Navigation program plays a crucial role in ensuring

effective engagement and support for individuals in navigating Oregon’s workforce resources.”

Entities interested in applying should review the full RFP at ecworks.org, along with the timeline detailed below.

- **Request for Proposals Released:** April 15
- **Deadline for Written Questions:** May 1, 11:59pm PST
- **Deadline for Submission:** May 15, 11:59pm PST
- **Provisional Award Notification:** June 3
- **Contract Start Date:** July 1

*EC Works reserves the right to extend any of the actual or proposed dates in the timeline.

eastcascadesworks.org
worksourceoregon.org

Watch for Upcoming Editions of **CASCADE BUSINESS NEWS**

2024 EDITORIAL CALENDAR

ISSUE DATE	SPECIAL SECTIONS	INDUSTRY LISTS
May 15 <i>Deadline May 8</i>	Custom Home Builders	Custom Homes, Log Homes, Building Designers, Interior Designers, Fine Furniture
June 5 <i>Deadline May 29</i>	Business of Pets / Madras / Jefferson Co Profile	Grooming, Boarding, Pet Services, Vets
June 19 <i>Deadline Jun 12</i>	PRINEVILLE Profile	Employment Resources, Largest Employers, Office Supplies
July 3 <i>Deadline Jun 26</i>	SUNRIVER Profile/Summer Recreation Special	Travel Agencies, Athletic Clubs, Spas, Tour Companies, Mailing Services, Golf Courses
July 17 <i>Deadline Jul 10</i>		Engineers, Insurance Companies, Health Plan Companies
August 7 <i>Deadline Jul 31</i>		Internet Services, Computer Services, Education Services, Web Design & Digital Marketing
August 21 <i>Deadline Aug 14</i>	Women in Business	Largest Women-Owned Businesses, Moving/Storage, Auto Dealers, Trucking & Transportation, Auto Body Repair
September 4 <i>Deadline Aug 28</i>	Annual Healthcare	Asst’d. Living, Chiropractors, Dentists, Eye, Home Care, Hospitals, Physical Therapy, Physician Groups, Reconstructive Surgery, Audiologists, Emergency Transport, Acupuncture

Central Oregon Business Calendar

Email Your Upcoming Business Events to CBN@CascadeBusNews.com
 Event Details at CascadeBusNews.com/Business-Events

BUSINESS EVENTS

May 1
 1-2pm Bend Chamber Ribbon Cutting at EarthWise Pet. Information at business.bendchamber.org/calendar/Details/ribbon-cutting-for-earthwise-pet-may-1-1100949?sourceTypeld=Hub.

May 2
 11:45am-1pm ConnectW Munch & Mingle at Madaline's, Redmond. Registration required at connectw.org/event/may-2024-munch-mingle-redmond and info@connectw.org.

May 2
 Noon League of Women Voters of Deschutes County Free Public Informational Meeting, Land Use 101, at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Central Oregon, Bend. lwwdeschutes.org.

May 2
 4:30-6:30pm City of Prineville and ODOT Transportation System Plan Potential Projects and Programs Public Open House at Golden Coffee Company, Prineville. Online survey: survey123.arcgis.com/share/56f21600b5b842388396dc35c7e0191c.

May 3-5
 Central Oregon Builders Association Spring Home Garden Show at Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center. Free admission and parking, information at coba.org/events.

May 3
 7:30am-3:30pm Bend Chamber 2024 Bend YP Summit: Emerge at Tower Theatre, Bend. Information and registration at business.bendchamber.org/calendar/Details/2024-bend-yp-summit-emerge-1078140?sourceTypeld=Hub.

May 4
 10am-5pm Bend Women's Expo at Seventh Mountain Resort. Tickets at bendticket.com/events/2024-bend-womens-expo-5-4-2024.

May 6
 5:30pm Deschutes County Historic Landmarks Commission Meeting. Information and agenda at deschutes.org/meetings.

May 7
 3:30pm Deschutes County Public Safety Coordinating Council Meeting. Information and agenda at deschutes.org/meetings.

May 7
 4-6pm Ribbon Cutting at Three Sisters Sleep. Information at business.bendchamber.org/calendar/Details/ribbon-cutting-for-three-sisters-sleep-may-7-1102750?sourceTypeld=Hub.

May 9
 10am-2pm EDCO Made in Bend Tour. Tickets and information at eventbrite.com/e/made-in-bend-tour-2024-tickets-875368900947.

May 9
 5:30am Deschutes County Planning Commission Meeting. Information and agenda at deschutes.org/meetings.

May 11
 1-4pm Central Oregon Fire Prevention Coop Wildfire Preparedness Fair at La Pine Rural Fire Protection District, Station 101, La Pine.

May 14
 8-9:30am Bend Chamber Commerce & Coffee at Mosaic Community Health. Registration and information at business.bendchamber.org/calendar/Details/commerce-coffee-mosaic-community-health-may-14-1098138?sourceTypeld=Hub.

May 14
 10-11am Bend Chamber Membership 101, Maximizing Your Membership, at Bend Chamber Conference Room. Info and registration at bendchamber.org/bend-event/membership-101-maximizing-your-membership-may-14.

May 14
 5:30-7pm COCC Community Building Community — Building Great Teams with Jo Thrussell at COCC Bend Campus. Information at 541-383-7271.

May 14
 5:30-7:30pm SCORE Free, Confidential One-on-One Small Business Counseling at Bend Downtown Library. No appointment necessary. score.org/centraloregon.

May 15
 5:30pm-8pm ConnectW Monthly Dinner Meeting at Open Space Event Studios, Bend. Registration required at connectw.org/event/march-2024-monthly-meeting.

May 16
 11am Deschutes County Coordinated Houseless Response Office Meeting. Information agenda at deschutes.org/meetings.

May 16
 11:30am City Club of Central Oregon May Forum, Foster Care Beyond the Headlines: What Child Welfare Actually Looks Like in Central Oregon, at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Central Oregon, Bend. Information and registration at cityclubco.org/events/Details/may-16-foster-care-beyond-the-headlines-what-child-welfare-actually-looks-like-in-central-oregon-951256?sourceTypeld=Website.

May 16
 3-6pm Bend Chamber Ribbon Cutting and Open House at Express Employment Professionals, 296 SW Columbia St., Ste. B, Bend. Information at business.bendchamber.org/calendar/Details/ribbon-cutting-open-house-for-express-employment-professionals-may-16-1092226?sourceTypeld=Hub.

May 18
 9am-Noon Midstate Electric Annual Meeting at Midstate Headquarters, La Pine.


May 18
 5:30-9pm CASA of Central Oregon Casablanca Dinner and Auction at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Central Oregon. Information at casaofcentraloregon.org/casablanca.html.

May 21
 9am Visit Bend Virtual and In-Person Board of Directors Meeting at Oxford Hotel Lava Room. RSVP or Zoom link request to valerie@visitbend.com.

May 21
 4-6pm Bend Chamber Ribbon Cutting and Celebration at Family Resource Center. Information at business.bendchamber.org/calendar/Details/ribbon-cutting-celebration-for-family-resource-center-may-21-1092489?sourceTypeld=Hub.

WORKSHOPS & TRAINING


(Ongoing)
 COCC Small Business Development Center Virtual Classes. View options and registration at cocc.edu/departments/continuinged.



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CENTRAL OREGON HOME BUILDERS

CASCADE BUSINESS NEWS
 September 3, 2018 • VOLUME 25 • ISSUE 17
 Enhancing & Promoting the Economic Vitality of Central Oregon Since 1994

Nanometrics Announces Expansion of Bend Operations
 Nanometrics Inc. has announced the expansion of its Bend operations, including an additional 12,000 square feet of office space and a new manufacturing facility. The company is a leader in the development of advanced process control systems for the semiconductor industry.

Cascade Publications Inc. Embarks on 25 Years of Cascade Business News
 Cascade Publications Inc. is celebrating its 25th anniversary of publishing Cascade Business News. The publication has grown from a small local newspaper to a regional business news source.

Lumos Medical Center Primary Care Clinic Reopening Eastern & Western Medicine through Holistic Healthcare Celebrates First Anniversary
 Lumos Medical Center's primary care clinic has celebrated its first anniversary. The clinic combines traditional Western medicine with holistic practices to provide comprehensive patient care.

CASCADE BUSINESS NEWS
 May 16, 2018 • VOLUME 25 • ISSUE 10
 Enhancing & Promoting the Economic Vitality of Central Oregon Since 1994

Brooks Buys Former Bend Car Lot as Commitment to Future Central Vision
 Brooks Development has purchased a former car lot in Bend, Oregon, as part of its long-term vision for the city's future. The site is being redeveloped into a mix of residential and commercial uses.

Home Builders Foster Cottage Industries
 The home building industry in Central Oregon is fostering cottage industries, providing local entrepreneurs with opportunities to grow their businesses.

The BendTECH Startup Resource Fair is Back—Bigger & Better
 The BendTECH Startup Resource Fair is returning, offering entrepreneurs a chance to connect with investors, mentors, and service providers.

CASCADE BUSINESS NEWS
 March 7, 2018 • VOLUME 25 • ISSUE 5
 Enhancing & Promoting the Economic Vitality of Central Oregon Since 1994

Facebook Data Centers Contribute Nearly \$6 Billion in GDP
 Facebook's data centers in the region are contributing nearly \$6 billion to the local GDP, highlighting the growing importance of technology in the economy.

Convention Attention on the Rise
 Central Oregon is seeing a rise in convention activity, with several major events planned for the coming year.

Central Oregon Real Estate on Solid Ground
 The Central Oregon real estate market remains on solid ground, with strong demand and steady price appreciation.

CASCADE BUSINESS NEWS
 February 15, 2018 • VOLUME 30 • ISSUE 4
 Enhancing & Promoting the Economic Vitality of Central Oregon Since 1994

Classic Motor Car Company Celebrates 60-Year Milestone
 Classic Motor Car Company is celebrating its 60th anniversary, a testament to its commitment to quality and customer service.

Art in the High Desert Returns
 The Central Oregon Art Show is returning to the high desert, showcasing the work of local and regional artists.

Family Business — America's Backbone
 Family businesses are recognized as the backbone of the American economy, providing jobs and stability.



Don't miss your opportunity to market directly to Central Oregon's business community in our **May 15** edition of Cascade Business News.

Along with providing a comprehensive list of **Custom Homes, Log Homes, Building Designers, Interior Designers and Fine Furniture**, we will feature informative articles on the industry.

Advertisers are encouraged to submit industry-related commentary.

Deadline for space & art is May 8 for this issue.

Contact Jeff Martin at 541-388-5665 to reserve your ad space or email jeff@cascadebusnews.com.

Advertising materials are due **April 8** for this issue.