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Naomi Serio



Alice Weston

The Environmental Center welcomes **Naomi Serio** and **Alice Weston** to their team.

Serio is their new part-time Rethink Waste Project coordinator. She will be helping implement our reusable dishware program, doing outreach at events, leading the charge on Repair Cafés, and more!

Weston joins then as an intern with their Climate Solutions team, focusing primarily on the success of our Solarize Deschutes campaign. She is a social impact design strategist working to

help nonprofits and public entities create and reimagine their programs, processes, and strategies to be more equitable, accessible, and community-led.



Karen Rush

Bend-La Pine Schools has hired **Karen Rush** as one of the District's two executive directors of Elementary Programs. She will begin on November 4 and work alongside Executive Director Tammy Doty in overseeing the District's 19 elementary schools.

Rush is in her first year as the program director for Medical, Mental Health, and Prevention Initiatives with Oregon Child Abuse Solutions, a nonprofit organization. Before that she served as executive director for the Children's Center in Oregon City, a nonprofit organization, for four years.

Prior to working in nonprofits, Rush worked for the North Clackamas School District for 20 years in a variety of roles, including school psychologist, special education administrator and principal at three elementary schools, associate director of elementary programs, director of early learning, and executive director of elementary programs. She has undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees from the University of Minnesota.

Following a third round of voting, only two products now remain in **OBI's** second annual Coolest Thing Made in Oregon competition. The winner will be either **Leatherman's** multitool or **Epic Aircraft's** E1000 GX. Voting in the contest's final round began October 8 and will conclude at 12pm on Friday, October 18.

Recently, hundreds of attendees packed the outdoor patio at Worthy Brewing for Central Oregon PubTalk, where ten semifinalists competing to pitch at the **Bend Venture Conference** (BVC) delivered three-minute pitches to a lively crowd. The energy was palpable as both the audience and a panel of expert judges voted to determine which five startups would advance to the BVC, happening on October 17-18, 2024, at the Tower Theatre.

Rose City Robotics, the audience favorite, walked away with a \$3,000 award courtesy of Washington Trust Bank, to support the scale of their autonomous robotic disassembly technology for recycling lithium-ion EV batteries.

Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO) is excited to announce the five BVC Early Stage finalists who will pitch at the Tower Theatre on Thursday, October 17. In alphabetical order, the companies are:

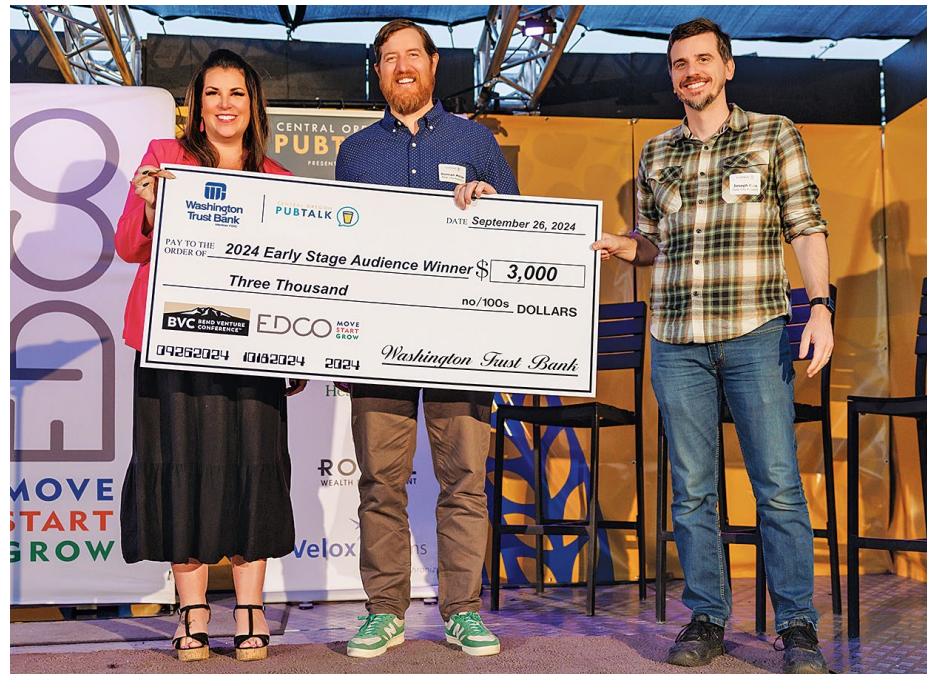
Fordje (Portland, Oregon) — An AI software platform helping construction

developers and cities clarify city codes, enabling faster builds the first time around. **Howl at the Spoon** (Beaverton, Oregon) — Portable, flavor-packed, single-serve artisan sauces for every meal.

The Offer Haus (Eugene, Oregon) — A simplified online platform that allows buyers to purchase a home without a realtor.

Prophetic (Portland, Oregon) — A SaaS platform that finds and analyzes real estate development opportunities in seconds, not hours.

Rose City Robotics (Portland, Oregon) — Autonomous robotic disassembly that enables direct recycling of lithium-ion EV batteries.



ASHLEY MEARS OF WASHINGTON TRUST BANK PRESENTS THE AUDIENCE FAVORITE AWARD TO ROSE CITY ROBOTICS | PHOTO COURTESY OF EDCO

EDCO also announced the five finalist companies advancing in the Growth Stage competition for the 21st annual Bend Venture Conference (BVC), which will take place on October 17-18.

The Growth Stage competition at BVC highlights companies that have demonstrated significant traction and are poised for rapid expansion. Following considerable due diligence, companies in this category have historically been awarded funding ranging from \$100,000 to \$2,500,000 from the BVC LLC and partner VC funds.

The five Growth Stage finalists are:

1. **Beginly Health** (Portland, Oregon) — An AI curated job matching platform for healthcare clinicians and employers.
2. **Green Canopy NODE** (Seattle, Washington) — A company that addresses the complex challenges of affordable housing through configurable, prefabricated kits for residential housing.
3. **Health Elements AI** (Bend, Oregon) — A technology platform that leverages AI to streamline health data abstraction.
4. **ProMedix Inc.** (Portland, Oregon) — A noninvasive medical device that accelerates diagnosis of circulatory dysfunction and sepsis.
5. **Square Baby** (Bend, Oregon) — Dietician-designed, organic baby and toddler meals customized to age, stage and dietary needs including allergen introduction, vegan and animal proteins.

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New hires, promotions, accolades, awards, retiring? Send us your

Who's Who!

Send a high resolution head shot and a short, 100- to 150-word writeup to CBN@CascadeBusNews.com to be seen in the next edition of *Cascade Business News*.

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Compass Commercial Awarded Top Workplaces 2024

by LAUREN EVANS, Communications Specialist — Compass Commercial Real Estate Services

Compass Commercial Real Estate Services has been awarded a Top Workplaces 2024 honor by *The Oregonian* Top Workplaces. This marks the second consecutive year Compass Commercial has received the award. Among other recognitions, Compass Commercial was named the 2024 Best Commercial Real Estate Company in the *Bend Bulletin's* Best of the Best of Bend awards and ranked in the top ten of the *Portland Business Journal's* Book of Lists for Commercial Real Estate Firms.

The *Oregonian* recognized 123 companies in Oregon as Top Workplaces for 2024, divided into three categories: Large Employers (500 or more employees), Midsize Employers (100-499 employees), and Small Employers (35-99 employees). Compass Commercial ranked second in the Small Employers category and was one of only two companies on the list headquartered in Bend, OR.

The Top Workplaces list is based solely on employee feedback gathered

through a third-party survey administered by employee engagement technology partner Energage, LLC. The confidential survey uniquely measures the employee experience and culture drivers that are critical to the success of any organization: including employees feeling respected and supported, enabled to grow, and empowered to execute.

"We're absolutely ecstatic to be named a Top Workplace for the second year in a row, and even more excited to rank number two out of 65 small companies in Oregon!" president and broker Graham Dent stated. "What makes this recognition truly special is that it comes directly from our incredible team. We've built a culture where everyone feels supported, empowered to reach their full potential, and can enjoy a positive and fulfilling work environment every day."

compasscommercial.com
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Mid Oregon Recognized as Top Workplace for 2024

by RACHEL SHULTZ, Marketing Coordinator — Mid Oregon Credit Union

Mid Oregon Credit Union has been awarded a 2024 Top Workplaces honor by *The Oregonian* Top Workplaces. This is the third consecutive year the financial institution has received this award and was named among only four other small and midsize organizations east of the Cascades to be recognized.

The Top Workplaces list is based solely on employee feedback gathered through a third-party survey administered by employee engagement technology partner Energage LLC. The anonymous survey uniquely measures 15 culture drivers that are critical to the success of any organization; including alignment, execution, and connection, just to name a few.

"We are so honored to be a three-time top workplace winner," said Kevin Cole, president and CEO. "Our team

members have worked hard to build a strong culture of service at Mid Oregon that is powered by our commitment to organizational health. We know from experience that employees who are cared for, trusted, and empowered deliver the exceptional experience that our members deserve."

Cole believes Mid Oregon Credit Union's team is the most distinctive competitive advantage in its industry — and it backs this belief with action.

Of the 123 companies named over three size categories in Oregon and Southwest Washington, Mid Oregon was ranked number eight in the category of Midsize Employers, those with 100-500 employees. Out of those 48 companies, Mid Oregon was the top-ranking financial institution. Mid Oregon was also one of only three financial institutions to receive

recognition in any size category.

"Earning a Top Workplaces award is a badge of honor for companies, especially because it comes authentically from their employees," commented Eric Rubino, Energage CEO. He emphasized, "That's something to be proud of. In today's market, leaders must ensure they're allowing employees to have a voice and be heard. That's paramount. Top Workplaces do this, and it pays dividends."

In addition to Mid Oregon Credit Union receiving #8 ranking in the midsize category, three small organizations in Central Oregon were also recognized as a Top Workplace for 2024: Compass Commercial Real Estate (#2), La Pine Community Health Center (#6), and Beaver Coach Sales (#35).

midoregon.com • energage.com • topworkplaces.com

La Pine Community Health Center Named a Top Workplace by *The Oregonian*

by COURTNEY IGNAZZITTO, Marketing & Communications Manager — La Pine Community Health Center

La Pine Community Health Center (LCHC) is proud to announce its recognition as one of the Top Workplaces of 2024 by *The Oregonian*. This prestigious accolade is awarded based on the results of an extensive employee feedback survey, measuring aspects such as work environment, alignment of values, and the effectiveness of management.

LCHC stands out in this regional survey that encompasses numerous businesses across Oregon and southern Washington, highlighting its commitment to creating a supportive and engaging work environment. The recognition underscores LCHC's dedication to not only providing exceptional health care but also fostering a workplace culture that promotes professional growth and personal fulfillment among its staff.

"It is an honor and privilege to be recognized for the third time — two consecutive years — as a Top Workplace," stated Erin Trapp, chief executive officer of LCHC. "Since becoming CEO at La Pine Community Health Center, my focus

has been twofold: improving the employee experience by creating a workplace where staff are eager to work every day and empowering them to be change agents who actively enhance the quality of care we provide to our community. We have an amazing team of dedicated employees who show up every day to make a difference. I feel fortunate for the opportunity to lead the LCHC team."


The Top Workplaces list is determined solely based on employee feedback gathered through a third-party survey administered by Energage, LLC. The anonymous survey uniquely measures 15 culture drivers that are critical to the success of any organization, including alignment, execution, and connection.

This recognition not only celebrates the success of LCHC but also encourages other companies in the region to strive for a workplace culture that respects and values its employees. LCHC remains dedicated to maintaining its status as a top workplace and continuing to serve the La Pine community with excellence.


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The Best in the Northwest — Right in Your Backyard

by KASEY EVERY

Scheduled for October 17-19, the Columbia River Circuit (CRC) Finals Rodeo showcases the Northwest's best cowboys and cowgirls competing in the arena built specifically for this event at the Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center. This rodeo features the top 12 competitors in their respective events, all vying for the coveted title of CRC Champion.

"We're excited to host these amazing cowboys and cowgirls whose part-time participation still results in remarkable skill, athleticism, and sportsmanship," says Jim Powers, CRC Finals Rodeo manager. "Remember, these participants are hard-working, family-focused competitors who have the opportunity to compete alongside world champions but may not be able to travel across the US for every rodeo opportunity, so we're thrilled to celebrate them locally."

In addition to the Championship Showdown scheduled for Saturday, October 19, the CRC Finals Rodeo has planned other exciting opportunities, including:

- **Blue Collar/Family Night, Thursday, October 17:** This event celebrates Redmond's working spirit. Several manufacturers are showing their support by offering tickets to their employees to enjoy the rodeo.
- **Heroes Night, Friday, October 18:** Honors the dedication and sacrifices of First Responders and Wildland Firefighters, who keep us all safe and protect our property and livelihoods.
- **The 2024 VIP Experience:** Adding to the fun, fans ages 21 and over can join a private, no-host bar and hors d'oeuvres reception, plus gain exclusive access to ground-level rodeo action alongside reserved premier seating in the stands.
- **Chute 9's After-Party:** To keep the excitement going, event planners have reserved Chute 9 nightly for live music, dancing, food, and drinks—just adjacent to First Interstate Bank Center.
- **Wicked West Marketplace Extravaganza:** Twenty-five vendors from across the Northwest will provide an excellent shopping experience in the mezzanine each night of the rodeo.

For a complete schedule of events, go to columbiarivercircuit.com/finals.

"We want to welcome as many attendees as possible to come enjoy all the CRC



PHOTO | BY ROSEANNA SALES PHOTOGRAPHY

Finals have to offer," says Pete Thiry, president of Columbia River Circuit. "If any event captures the unique spirit of Redmond, it's rodeo — and we want every single person to have a chance to appreciate the thrill of it."

Event details, tickets, and kids' discount codes are available only at the Columbia River Circuit Finals official website (columbiarivercircuit.com).

About CRC:

The Columbia River Circuit is part of the PRCA, a nonprofit organization that recognizes and supports weekend or part-time rodeo cowboys. Contestants earn points at PRCA-approved rodeos within a determined geographical area (circuits). The Columbia River Circuit, comprising Washington, Oregon, and northern Idaho, allows these participants to follow their dreams and compete more locally. Additional details at columbiarivercircuit.com/about-us.

columbiarivercircuit.com/finals

Meet the 2024 Outdoor Photo Contest Winners

provided by KASEY EVERY

Congratulations to the 2024 photo contest winners and finalists — Wildlands & Forests: Daniel Rappaport (winner), Chris Briggs, Carolyn Ferreira, Scott Smorra and John Aylward (finalists). Waters: Stu Gordon (winner), Daniel Rappaport, GT Larson, Joan Martelli and Neal Smith (finalists). Wildlife: Stewart Willason (winner), Lane Wintermute, Jennifer Krom, Roger Williams and Douglas Beall (finalists), with Chanel Hason (Special Mention). People: Kayla Sulak (winner), Bonnie Olin, Michael Irving, Cheryl Hill, Kayla Sulak and Neal Smith (finalists). Zoomed In: Douglas Beall (winner), Neal Smith, Johnny Robinson, Stewart Willason and Daniel Gomez (finalists).

WILDLIFE

Black Bear in Siuslaw National Forest
by Stewart Willason

Black bears (*Ursus americanus*) can be found across North America and their population in Oregon is estimated to be 25,000 to 30,000. Bears are omnivores, using their keen noses to sniff out berries, insects, and edible plants. While they aren't at risk of extinction, they are threatened by hunting, human conflict, poaching, and loss of their ideal habitat of undisturbed forests. Oregon Wild works to ensure that the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife prioritizes the conservation of all native species, addresses the pervasive poaching problem in the state and uses non-lethal tools to address human/wildlife conflict.

WILDLANDS & FORESTS

Mt. Hood Sunset by Daniel Rappaport

Many of the wildlands, and views like this, surrounding Mount Hood have been protected as Wilderness in several iterations from 1964 to 2009. While this status offers protections from logging and development, today the alpine forests and glaciers on Mount Hood are threatened by a warming climate, changes in precipitation, and invasive pests and diseases. Oregon Wild's efforts to protect forests as a natural climate solution can help arrest this threat — if we act now!

WATERS

Dawn at Sparks Lake by Stu Gordon

Sparks Lake provides easy access to stunning mountain views along the Cascade Lakes Highway west of Bend. Formed by a lava flow that blocked the upper Deschutes River 10,000 years ago, the shallow lake waters and surrounding wetlands are home to river otters, beavers, and many kinds of birds. The headwaters of the Deschutes in this area - some of



BLACK BEAR IN SIUSLAW NATIONAL FOREST BY STEWART WILLASON



DAWN AT SPARKS LAKE BY STU GORDON

which are proposed as Wild & Scenic Rivers in the River Democracy Act — provide critical cold-water refugia and exceptional water quality for downstream drinking water, fish habitat, and recreation.

ZOOMED IN

Sphinx Moth on Milkweed by Douglas Beall

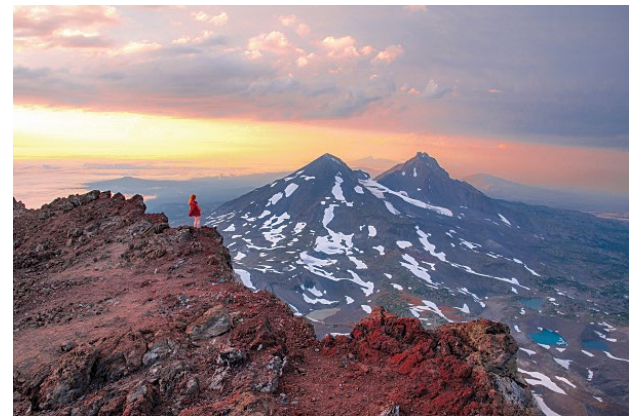
Native pollinators like this white-lined sphinx moth (*Hyles lineata*) play a vital role in the health of native ecosystems — from forests to alpine meadows. Sphinx moths are strong flyers and can hover like hummingbirds to suck nectar from flowers, like this showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*), with their long proboscis. The work Oregon Wild does to protect and restore habitat for native wildlife and vegetation — whether fighting aggressive logging and pesticide use, or advocating for conservation measures that benefit wildlife large and small - helps ensure we can "zoom in" on amazing creatures like these for generations to come.



MT. HOOD SUNSET BY DANIEL RAPPAPORT



SPHINX MOTH ON MILKWEED BY DOUGLAS BEALL



SOUTH SISTER BY KAYLA SULAK

PEOPLE

South Sister by Kayla Sulak

First designated in 1964, and later expanded in 1978 and 1984 thanks to Oregon Wild's advocacy, the Three Sisters Wilderness area protects 286,000 acres of stunning mountain lakes, glaciers and snow fields, lava flows, and ancient forests.

See finalist gallery at photocontest.oregonwild.org.
oregonwild.org