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**Cobalt Properties Group** has announced that **Jed Bellefeuille** will be joining its Bend office as vice president of Cobalt. An accomplished commercial real estate broker based in Bend, Bellefeuille specializes in facilitating sales and leasing transactions throughout Central Oregon. His client-centered approach focuses on cultivating meaningful relationships and providing comprehensive real estate advice. He will lead a team of proven property management professionals with a broad portfolio of properties in Central Oregon.

Bellefeuille's expertise spans industrial, office, retail, and investment assets, working with buyers, sellers, tenants, and landlords across all asset classes. In his role at Cobalt Properties Group, he will concentrate on expanding the company's portfolio and generating new business opportunities.

As an integral part of his professional work, Bellefeuille is actively engaged in the Central Oregon community. He serves as Chair of the Commercial Committee for the Central Oregon Association of Realtors and participates in organizations like the Bend Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development of Central Oregon (EDCO), and the Downtown Bend Business Association. As a mentor to young professionals, he shares his expertise and emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships with local entities for long-term success in commercial real estate.

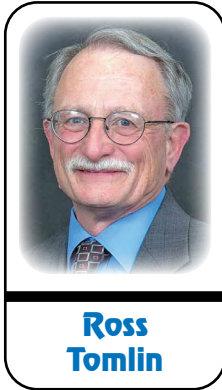
Bellefeuille's commitment to exceptional customer service, personalized attention, and unwavering professionalism continues to distinguish him as a leader and advocate in the Central Oregon real estate market.

**Employment Transition Solutions (ETS)** was announced as a 2024 BASA Awards Winner in the Staffing & HR Agency Firm category, winning two tracks of Best Entrepreneur and Best Startup in their annual Best of America Small Business Awards competition.

The BASA Awards recognize and celebrate outstanding small businesses. This year, small businesses and entrepreneurs from various industries submitted nominations in six key tracks: Best Small Business, Best Startup, Best Entrepreneur, Best in Class, Best in Tech, and Best Campaign.

The winners of the BASA Awards were determined through two stages of judging, followed by a public vote. The judging panel, composed of industry experts and experienced small business owners, carefully evaluated each entry to ensure a fair and transparent process. This comprehensive review guaranteed an unbiased selection with no room for favoritism.

**Ross Tomlin**, a retired community college president who lives in La Pine, was appointed on November 12 to fill a vacancy on the Board of Directors for Bend-La Pine Schools. Board members interviewed three finalists for the appointment and voted 5-0 for Tomlin to fill the Zone 6 at-large seat.



Tomlin will take the new board member oath of office at the beginning of the regular board meeting on December 10. His appointment will run through June 30, 2025. The Zone 6 seat will be on the ballot in the May 20, 2025, election for a two-year term.

Tomlin recently retired as president of Tillamook Bay Community College after 42 years in roles with several community colleges. He recently taught forestry at Central Oregon Community College and helped the La Pine High School forestry program prepare for state competition.

Tomlin was a full-time instructor for over 20 years, then served as a college administrator for almost 23 years. He said much of his community college experience overlapped with K-12 school issues, including the transition of high school students to college.

The board selected the three finalists from seven applicants on October 8. The other finalists were Brandy Berlin, who has a background in teaching in public, private and charter schools, and as a business owner; and Jenn Lynch, who has served on nonprofit boards, works in finance, and previously was a substitute teacher in the district.

The Board of Directors of **Abilitree** announced that **Heather Cain**, **Lisa Rose** and **Rachael Gass** have joined the board.

Cain is a seasoned HR program manager with over 21 years of experience at Google, currently serving as the Head of Googler Voice Programs. Based in Bend, Cain leverages employee insights to drive cultural change within the organization. She has a strong background in change management, cross-functional engagement, policy development, and communication.

**Lisa Rose** is a dedicated principal insights partner in people analytics at Roche, based in Bend. With a strong passion for executive coaching and leveraging people data to drive business decisions, Rose focuses on inspiring and empowering teams through actionable insights.

**Rachael Gass** is an organizational psychologist committed to creating positive and authentic workplace experiences. She emphasizes building relationships and fostering empathetic environments, ensuring that corporate settings are uplifting and gratifying.



**Seed to Table (S2T)** announces that Founder and Farm Director Audrey Tehan will step in as executive director on an interim basis, as Holly Haddad is no longer serving in that role. Tehan will maintain the organization's exemplary work in the community. The Seed to Table board knows that transitions like these are a natural part of a maturing organization and are confident in the organization going forward.

Seed to Table will focus on year-end fundraising and assessing its long-term organizational needs and planning. Decisions regarding a longer-term Executive Director will be made once the organization thoughtfully assesses the best path forward.

The *Source Weekly* announces that **Chris Young** has been hired as the new Managing editor of the weekly news, arts, opinion and entertainment publication, with current Editor **Nicole Vulcan** being promoted to editor in chief. The changes are effective as of November 22.

Young is a graduate of the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication and the founder of *Vortex*, a Portland-area music magazine that ran in print for six years through 2020. He'll be taking on the day-to-day operations of the *Source Weekly*, including managing its print and web production and the many talented writers, photographers and designers who contribute to the publication.

Vulcan, an award-winning print and broadcast journalist who has helmed the *Source Weekly* since July 2016, will oversee the editorial department, continue to manage the *Source Weekly's* opinion columns and support the reporting team's increasing number of investigative projects. Vulcan will also be at work on her debut book of journalistic non-fiction, titled *Self-Medication*, which traces Oregon's drug decriminalization efforts in the 21st Century, and tells a parallel tale of her own family's losses from fentanyl addiction in the age of Measure 110.

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The **Latino Community Association (LCA)** has hired its first immigration attorney, **Patricia Pizarro**, to advise and represent a growing number of asylum-seekers and local residents. As a first generation American with immigrant parents in Chicago, she wanted to help families navigate the complexities of the U.S. immigration system. Pizarro earned her master's in social work from the University of Illinois and her Juris Doctorate and Certificate in International and Comparative Law from DePaul University. She began her career in Chiapas, Mexico, working for a non-governmental human rights agency, and moved to Bend with her family last summer.

**Leslie Cano**, former advocacy coordinator, and Interim Deputy Director **Mary Murphy** have become accredited representatives with OLAP (Office of Legal Access Programs) through the U.S. Department of Justice. As an immigration legal advocate, Cano helps applicants with paperwork and connects them with legal representation through the Equity Corps of Oregon (ECO).

Two other employees, **Marlene Peraza** in Redmond and **Jimena Pineda** in Prineville, also aspire to train as accredited representatives. The Colibri Fellowship of Chicago chose them as two of 14 students in Oregon. During the year-long study, they will work part time in their client service roles.

**Renee Frausto**, a volunteer computer instructor, has joined the legal team as an immigration program assistant. Frausto redesigned the citizenship program of classes and tutoring and now leads ECO workshops in LCA locations in Bend, Redmond, Madras, and Prineville.

**Claudia Ruiz Cervantes** has been promoted to community engagement and communications coordinator. She coordinates clubs for Latino seniors in Madras, Redmond, and Bend and manages LCA's Facebook page.

**Jazmin Murgía** has transitioned from a client services assistant in Redmond to a new role in the Healthy Families program. She has begun training to become a community health worker and will work in Jefferson County.



Patricia Pizarro



Leslie Cano



Mary Murphy



Marlene Peraza



Jimena Pineda



Renee Frausto



Claudia Ruiz Cervantes



Jazmin Murgía



(L-R) BOARD CHAIR MARCUS LEGRAND, SUPERINTENDENT STEVEN COOK, BOARD DIRECTOR CAMERON FISCHER, LEARNING SPECIALIST LAUREN MILLER, BOARD DIRECTOR SHIRLEY OLSON, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT LISA BIRK, AND FROM MIDOREGON CREDIT UNION, KYLE FRICK, DAVID LAU AND TINA AMATO | PHOTO COURTESY OF BEND-LA PINE SCHOOLS

**Bend-La Pine Schools** presented its Educator of the Year award Wednesday to **Lauren Miller**, a learning specialist at Cascade Middle School. She is one of three employees being honored this fall in the district's Excellence in Education recognition program.

Superintendent Steven Cook and other District administrators, along with School Board directors and members of Miller's family, celebrated her during a surprise morning visit to Cascade. Representatives of MidOregon Credit Union presented the school with a \$500 check in honor of the recognition.

Miller's collaborative spirit is evident in her partnerships with teachers across disciplines, as she works to align math, reading, and writing goals to meet each student's unique needs. Her colleagues describe her as kind, hardworking, and relentless in her commitment to helping every student reach their potential.

Miller started in Bend-La Pine Schools as an educational assistant, where she discovered her passion for helping students with diverse learning needs. Encouraged by her mentors, she earned her teaching license and worked at Rosland Elementary School and La Pine Middle School before joining the team at Cascade Middle School.

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# Businesses Serving Community



DD RANCH | PHOTO BY AMANDA PHOTOGRAPHIC

**HIGH DESERT FOOD & FARM ALLIANCE**

USDA NIFA has announced an investment of \$23.7 million for 46 projects as part of its Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program (BFRDP). BFRDP funds projects that provide education, mentoring, and technical

assistance initiatives. Funded projects provide outreach, training and technical assistance to individuals and aspiring farmers to go into farming as farm businesses, as well as improve skills, tools and knowledge of farmers to sustain farming operations for generations to come.

One of those projects will take place in Central Oregon. High Desert Food and Farm Alliance (HDFFA)'s project Enhancing Resilience, Inclusion, Accessibility, Connection, Business Viability, and Food Sovereignty in Central Oregon has been awarded \$522,575.00 over three years to expand its support of our region's farmers and ranchers.

HDFFA's five objectives for this project include:

1. Hire a Small Farms Technical Assistant in 2025.
2. Begin a six-month cohort model that brings Beginning Farmers/Ranchers together to learn and network with each other.
3. Work with Central Oregon agritourism sites to improve their accessibility.
4. Work with other nonprofit and government entities on convenings to address water issues affecting our area's producers.
5. Expand support for Warm Springs Community Action Team in support of Warm Springs' Food Sovereignty Plan.

HDFFA's Agricultural Support Manager, Andrea Smith, attended the 2024 BFRDP and 2501 Program Project Directors Meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina the week of October 21, to collaborate and network with nationwide participants, USDA officials, and other industry partners. Smith further presented a poster from HDFFA's previous BFRDP grant findings.

# First Story to Present Keys to First Time Homeowners in Dedication Ceremony

## Unique Zero-Down, Zero-Interest, 30-Year Mortgage Makes New Home in the First Place Community Affordable for Long-Time Bend Residents

by ERIN FOOTE MORGAN, Communications Coordinator — First Story

**B**end residents Megan and Troy Stith will receive the keys to a brand new First Story home built in partnership with Heart of Oregon Corps' YouthBuild program. A special Home Dedication event took place November 21 in the First Place community, located in Southeast Bend.

The home was built through a powerful partnership between First Story and Heart of Oregon Corps YouthBuild. The two organizations have worked together since 2011, building six homes for under-resourced Northwest families to access homeownership and providing valuable onsite construction skills development for youth pursuing careers in the trades.

"The partnership between Heart of Oregon YouthBuild and First Story is a perfect example of the kinds of collaborations needed to address today's housing shortage and prepare for tomorrow's workforce needs," said Heart of Oregon Corps executive director Laura Handy. "We are proud to partner with First Story to help families access homeownership while simultaneously providing opportunities for our YouthBuild students to develop their workforce skills."

First Story is a 501(c)3 nonprofit supporting affordable homeownership throughout the Northwest. The organization unites diverse partners to build inclusive, strong communities where families making 80 percent or below of area median income are able to afford to own their homes.

Through partnerships with its founder, Hayden Homes, and other industry partners along with the financial support of a robust network of donors, First Story is able to provide new or refurbished homes in thriving communities to first-time homebuyers through a zero-down, zero-interest, 30-year mortgage.

Earlier this year, First Story surprised the Stith family with news that they would become homeowners in Bend's First Place community.

"When we finally got the news, it was such a

huge weight lifted that we didn't know we were carrying," said Megan Stith. "We've put so much time and energy into trying to get a home and save for a home — we're excited because we haven't had time to think about other things, like saving for our daughter to go to college."

In the midst of Oregon's housing crisis, it's a challenge to build homes that allow individuals and families to live where they work. The increased demand for limited housing has caused housing prices to soar in recent decades.

After losing their jobs during the pandemic and watching housing prices skyrocket, the Stith family felt that they might never achieve their dream of owning a home and raising their family in Bend. Owning a First Story home is a resolution of those fears and creates a sense of security on which to build their future.

"This home dedication is extra special because we get to welcome home the Stith family and celebrate the hard work of YouthBuild students," said First Story Executive Director Claire Duncan. "So many families in our community are working tirelessly to reach homeownership, and we are grateful to bring together partners who want to give individuals a hand up to homeownership so they can work toward asset-building, financial stability and economic mobility. Together, we are committed to breaking the cycle of generational poverty through affordable homeownership."

To date, First Story has helped 122 families become homeowners. Of those families:

- 100% earn less than 80% of area median income
- 100% are first-time homebuyers
- 80% are the first in their families ever to own a home
- 30% identify as minorities
- 20% are households with children who have disabilities



STITH FAMILY | PHOTO COURTESY OF FIRST STORY

### About First Story:

First Story is a 501(c)3 nonprofit on a mission to address the affordable housing crisis in the Northwest. First Story uses an integrated approach to affordable housing by giving individuals a hand up to homeownership while encouraging inclusivity.

First Story collaborates with builder Hayden Homes and in-kind partners to construct or fully refurbish homes. The homes are then sold to individuals and families earning 80 percent of area median income or below through First Story's innovative loan program, which provides loans at zero-down, zero-percent interest for 30 years.

The organization also supports community nonprofits through a giving grant program in partnership with Hayden Homes. First Story has granted more than \$2.4 million to more than 1,000 charities providing shelter, food and advocacy services in communities served. The organization is based in Bend, Ore., and serves Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana.

[firststory.org](http://firststory.org)

# The Museum at Warm Springs Announces Awards for the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Warm Springs Tribal Member & Youth Exhibit

by LIZ HILL (Red Lake Ojibwe), Public Relations & Marketing Consultant — The Museum at Warm Springs

**T**he Museum at Warm Springs has announced the awards for the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Warm Springs Tribal Member and Youth Exhibit. This popular annual juried exhibit displays the immense talent and artistic excellence of Warm Springs adult and youth Tribal members. The exhibit will be on view through Saturday, February 8, 2025.

The exhibit is curated by Warm Springs Museum Curator and Exhibition Coordinator Angela Anne Smith (Warm Springs, Yakama, Nez Perce and Diné). This year's judge is Coralee Popp, board member and director of Art Adventure Gallery in Madras, and member of The Museum at Warm Springs Board of Regents. Selected artworks are available for sale with a 20% commission going toward The Museum.

### JUDGE'S CHOICE AWARDS

#### Traditional Category:

**Artist:** Marjorie Kalama Ishkepin

**Title:** Elk Season

**Medium:** Leggings made of glass beads on commercial buckskin with family pattern (Not for sale)

#### Contemporary Category:

**Artist:** BK Courtney

**Title:** Honoring the Brilliance of Wasco Weaving Design

**Medium:** Fiber Art Quilt (88" x 96")

(Not for sale)

#### Honorable Mentions

**Artist:** Sandra Danzuka Na-tum-ti-uct

**Title:** N8V Night Out

**Medium:** Beaded set includes hat, earrings and necklace

(For sale: \$575)

**Artist:** Travis R. Bobb

**Title:** Muppet Pow Wow

**Medium:** Oil, airbrush on gesso board

(Not for sale)

**Artist:** Natalie Kirk

**Title:** Legend – The Hide and Seek Master

**Medium:** Jute twine, cotton yarn, wool yarn, polyester blend yarn, smoked elk hide, glass beads, cut glass size 13 beads. 10.75" (height), 27.50" (circumference)

(For sale: \$4,500)

**Artist:** Natalie Kirk

**Title:** Tsagaglalal's Appearance

**Medium:** Jute twine and cotton lily yarn. 10" (height), 23.25" (circumference)

(For sale: \$2,600)

**Artist:** Natalie Kirk

**Title:** Homage to My Ancestors – Sturgeon and Condors Wapas

**Medium:** Jute twine and cotton lily yarn. 5.5" (height), 13.5" (circumference)

(For sale: \$500)

**Artist:** Natalie Kirk

**Title:** Alašik ~ Turtle

**Medium:** Jute twine, cotton lily yarn, abalone heart. 1.5" (height)

18.5" (circumference), 7.5" (length)

(For sale: \$250)

[museumatwarmsprings.org](http://museumatwarmsprings.org)

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