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**Dulce Pelayo**

**RootedHomes** welcomes **Dulce Pelayo** as program coordinator. Pelayo has lived in Central Oregon since 1992. Originally from Baja California, Mexico, Pelayo has enjoyed the Bend lifestyle, and has embraced all of the opportunities provided to her within the community. Pelayo obtained a bachelor of science from Oregon State University – Cascades, majoring in human development and family sciences. During her time at OSU-Cascades, Pelayo received the Distinguished Student Award, and also the Diversity Achievement Award from Central Oregon Community College. With a strong commitment to education and mentoring students, Pelayo's accomplishments were recognized by the nonprofit, First Story, and she and her family became the recipients of an affordable home in Bend. Her natural ability to lead has paved her career in the nonprofit world ranging from medicine, education, workforce development, and now, the nonprofit developer — RootedHomes.

As Pelayo is a first time homebuyer, she is passionate about empowering others and dedicated to helping Central Oregonians achieve the dream of homeownership. A milestone she believes lays the foundation for a healthier and more stable future.

With her ability to communicate with a diverse audience, Pelayo is ready to educate our community members about the importance of homeownership, and what it means to be able to establish roots within a community that offers a variety of opportunities. Her personal mission is to help our first time home buyers navigate the process, which can be complex, especially when there is a language barrier. Her English and Spanish skills are what makes her an asset to the RootedHomes team.

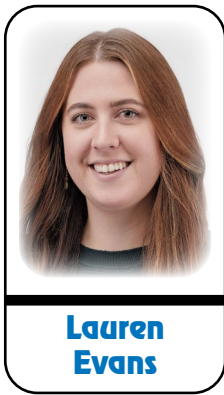
Given she is a dedicated mother of four, Pelayo wants to continue to instill in her children the importance of community engagement. However, when she is not playing super mom, or helping others accomplish their homeownership dreams, she enjoys reading, writing, salsa dancing, hiking, traveling — especially to warm beaches — and also, experimenting in the kitchen.

**LRS Architects** welcomes **Lauren Evans** as a business development specialist in the firm's Bend office.

Evans brings to LRS nearly a decade of marketing and strategic communication for real estate and economic development organizations. She is adept at working with cross-functional teams, managing comprehensive marketing campaigns, and leveraging analytics to drive strategy. She has received Content Marketing and Digital Communications certifications from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and excels at enhancing brand identity and community engagement.

As a crucial member of LRS' business development and marketing team, Evans facilitates new and continued business opportunities, market research, and local and regional strategies that drive growth.

Evans graduated with a bachelor of science in psychology from the University of Idaho. In her spare time, she serves as a board member for Hearts Unknown Education (HÜE), a nonprofit that fosters K-12 students' mental health through artistic endeavors.



**Lauren Evans**

**Harcourts The Garner Group Real Estate** announces its founder, **Sandy Garner**, who retired in 2023, has won Central Oregon Builder Association's (COBA) Lifetime Achievement Award. COBA has been giving out this award for the last 20 years to those achieving great things in the housing industry.

A native and lifelong resident of Central Oregon, Garner got her license in 1979 and retired in 2023. Affiliated with Coldwell Banker at the start of her career, she also founded The Garner Group, which joined the internationally affiliated Harcourts franchise in 2014. Garner was one of Bend's top producing agents for her entire career.



**Sandy Garner**

During her career, Garner's trademark was new neighborhoods and her relationships with builders and developers. Her first endeavor was Tanglewood in 1989, where she worked in partnership with Eric and Marilyn Loftsgard of Loftsgard Homes. Garner's understanding of Bend's trajectory for growth sent her and the builders she worked with down a successful path, working on such developments such as Larkspur, Foxborough, Northpointe, Sagewood, Valley View (Redmond), Outcrop, Braeburn, West Bend Village, Miller Heights and Northwest Crossing. Sandy worked with developers Bill Smith and Mike Tennant of Brooks Resources, and many others.

A testament to Garner's influence are the number of family members who have counted real estate as their career, including her daughters, sons-in-law, stepchildren, niece, grandchildren and brother-in-law.

Celebrating its 60th anniversary, **SCORE** stands as a testament to the enduring power of mentorship and entrepreneurial spirit. Since its founding in 1964, SCORE has grown into the nation's largest network of volunteer business mentors, dedicated to helping small businesses succeed. This milestone not only marks six decades of invaluable service but also highlights the organization's ongoing commitment to empowering entrepreneurs and fostering small business growth across the United States.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), SCORE has provided free mentorship and resources to over 17 million entrepreneurs. These services have been crucial in helping businesses get off the ground and navigate the various challenges of the business lifecycle.

Last year alone, SCORE helped launch over 30,000 new businesses, creating more than 150,000 jobs in the process. Nationally, SCORE clients who received

three or more hours of mentoring reported higher revenues and increased business growth.

For business owners, working with SCORE means tapping into a legacy of success and accessing a wealth of knowledge and resources to help you achieve your goals.

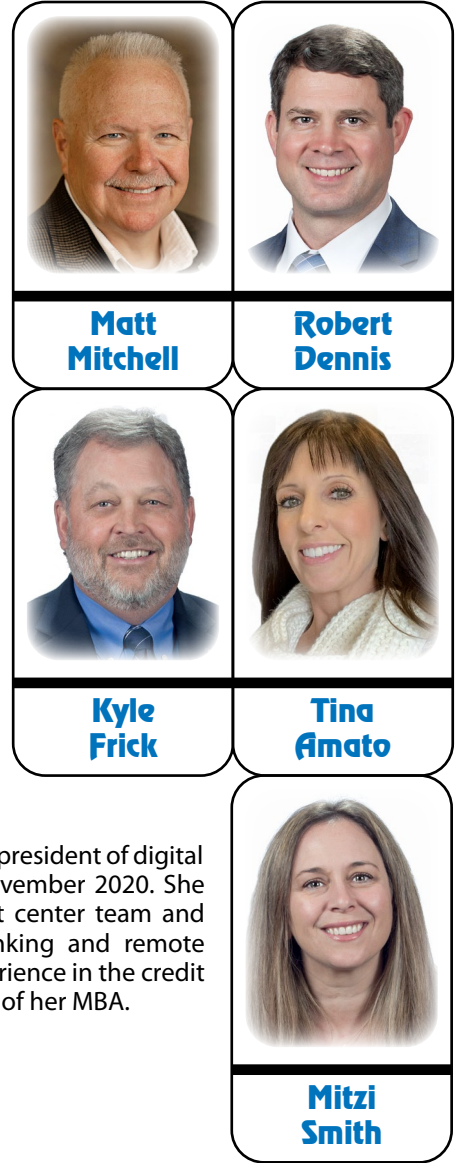
**Mid Oregon Credit Union** announces changes in its executive leadership team. Key changes in leadership include:

**Matt Mitchell** has been elevated to the position of chief lending officer. Since joining Mid Oregon in 2019, Mitchell has played a crucial role in the credit union's loan growth.

**Robert Dennis** and **Kyle Frick** have both been promoted to senior vice president of their respective teams, leading risk management and marketing and community relations.

**Tina Amato**, newly appointed, vice president of branch services, has been with Mid Oregon since 2019 and has served as the branch manager at Olney for the past five years. Her prior experience includes roles at Umpqua Bank and Washington Federal Bank. Amato is also a recent graduate of the Western CUNA Management School.

**Mitzi Smith** has been promoted to vice president of digital delivery. Smith joined Mid Oregon in November 2020. She has spent four years leading the contact center team and recently took charge of the digital banking and remote services teams. With over 20 years of experience in the credit union industry, she is nearing completion of her MBA.



**Matt Mitchell**

**Robert Dennis**

**Kyle Frick**

**Tina Amato**

**Mitzi Smith**

**TDS Telecommunications, LLC** (TDS) has named **Matt McDonald** the new general manager of Central Oregon Daily that operates KOHD-ABC and KBNZ-CBS in Bend. McDonald, a veteran newsmaker and Oregon native, had been the interim general manager since November; his move into the permanent position was effective January 2, 2025.

McDonald started as news director at Central Oregon Daily in July 2019. Under his leadership, the fastest growing news station won numerous awards including two Northwest Regional Emmy Awards and 19 Emmy nominations in the last four years.

Prior to returning to Bend, McDonald was the weekend manager, anchor, and reporter for KSTU-Fox 13 in Salt Lake City. He was also lead anchor at KTVZ-NBC and KOHD-ABC.

In 2008, McDonald was named best new journalist from the Society of Professional Journalists of Oregon. He is a graduate of Oregon State University where he earned a bachelor of science in Engineering.

McDonald enjoys being active in the community and can be seen at the ball fields this spring coaching his son's little league team.



**Natalie Myers**

**Kernutt Stokes** announced the return of **Natalie Myers**, CPA, to lead their audit and assurance services.

Myers began her career at Kernutt Stokes in 1998. She later relocated to Sacramento, California and Spokane, Washington where she continued to work in public accounting. Her most recent position was with Building Material Distributors, Inc., where she served as the internal control director.

Myers brings extensive experience in risk advisory services, employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs) and employee benefit audits to her role at Kernutt Stokes.

Myers holds a bachelor of science degree in accounting from Oregon State University where she graduated cum laude.

**Todd Prior** has joined **First Interstate Bank** as a credit analyst. In this role, Prior is responsible for gathering and evaluating commercial credit-related information and preparing in-depth analysis reports.

Prior has over 20 years of experience in the financial industry, previously serving in mortgage and retail roles at various banks, including First Interstate Bank, U.S. Bank, First Technology Federal Credit Union, Bank of America, and Merrill Lynch. He holds a BA in Economics and an MBA from Marylhurst University.

Prior is a current member of the Leadership Bend class of 2025 through the Bend Chamber of Commerce and a former board member of Oregon Adaptive Sports. He is a father of two, an active trail runner, and loves to travel the world.



**Todd Prior**

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**Jones & Roth** announces the promotion of **Jordan Dawley**, CPA to partner, and **Emily Paulson**, CPA to manager 1, effective January 1.

Dawley is a leader in the firm's tax department, providing business and individual/family clients with strategic tax planning, as well as in the dental and healthcare industry teams, where he serves as a trusted advisor to practice owners who want to maximize their tax planning and financial opportunity.

A native of Bend, Dawley enjoys kayaking, hiking, and getting out to enjoy the beautiful Central Oregon landscape. His passion for seeing his local business community succeed inspires him to actively participate and share his expertise as a speaker at various conferences and professional events.

Paulson works closely with the firm's employee benefit audit, private company and construction niches providing assurance and advisory services.



**Jordan Dawley**

**Emily Paulson**

The Bend Chamber of Commerce's Advocacy Council is tasked with assessing policy issues affecting the business environment. They review and recommend positions on advocacy issues at the local, state, and federal levels, as well as review and approve the annual legislative agenda. Additionally, the council evaluates and advises on advocacy requests from both Bend Chamber members and non-members. Reese shared insight into some of the council's current priorities, including reducing barriers for affordable housing development, expanding buildable land availability in Bend, enhancing funding streams from Deschutes County, and supporting infrastructure investments.

As Bend continues to expand, leaders like Reese are essential in shaping the city's future. His knowledge in construction and passion for housing solutions will contribute significantly to both committees as they work to address these pressing issues. Through his involvement, Reese is helping drive meaningful progress toward a more accessible and economically thriving Bend. At the same time, Reese continues to lead Compass Construction, where he and his team consistently complete projects ahead of schedule.

Eight **Bend Endurance Academy** athletes had a successful weekend at USAC Youth Bouldering Divisionals in Lynwood, Washington. This competition was a two-day championship event that brought together the top athletes from Alaska, Washington, and Oregon. It is the second stop on the road to Youth Nationals, following Youth Regionals which was held at the BEA training facility in January.

**Vance Stanfield** took first place in the Male U19 category, followed by **Nathaniel Perullo** in second. **Soren Hasselblad** placed sixth in the Male U17 category.



**Greg Pereira**

The **Central Oregon Community College (COCC)** board of directors announced the appointment of **Dr. Greg Pereira** as the institution's seventh president. Dr. Pereira, a seasoned higher education leader with extensive experience in academic and student affairs, will begin his term in July 2025. He succeeds Dr. Laurie Chesley, who has served as COCC's president since 2019.

Originally from Oregon, Dr. Pereira comes to COCC from Rio Salado College in Arizona, where he serves as vice president for student affairs, overseeing the student lifecycle for over 40,000 learners across multiple locations. His leadership in strategic enrollment management, workforce development and student success initiatives has resulted in measurable gains in retention and degree

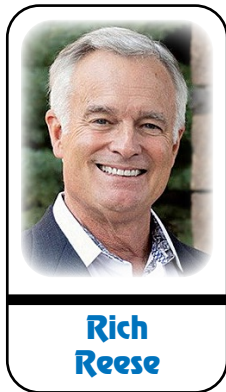
completion. He has played a key role in expanding access to educational opportunities and strengthening partnerships with local employers to align workforce training with industry needs.

Dr. Pereira holds a doctorate in education from Arizona State University, a master of arts in organizational leadership and a bachelor of arts in communication studies from Azusa Pacific University. His career spans executive roles in both academic and student affairs, nonprofit leadership and a commitment to innovative education delivery.

The board of directors unanimously approved Dr. Pereira's appointment following a thorough selection process which included a nationwide recruitment effort along with input from faculty, staff, students and community members, and culminated with a two-day visit which included visits to all four campus locations.

**Compass Commercial Real Estate Services** announced that **Rich Reese**, VP of construction, has been appointed to both the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee with the City of Bend and the Bend Chamber's Advocacy Council. With over 35 years of experience in commercial construction development and management, his expertise and dedication will be invaluable to both organizations as they tackle key issues impacting the community.

The City of Bend's Affordable Housing Advisory Committee plays a critical role in advising the Bend City Council on matters related to affordable housing. The committee evaluates proposals for Community Development funding and other financial resources that support housing initiatives, while also responding to City Council requests on policy considerations. Reese has been involved in the development of affordable housing on a local and national level for three decades.



**Rich Reese**



CLARA SMITH FAMILY | PHOTO COURTESY OF HUMANE SOCIETY OF CENTRAL OREGON

The **Humane Society of Central Oregon (HSCO)** announces **Clara Smith** of Bend as the winner of our 2025 Pup Crawl logo competition.

Chosen from a dozen talented entrants, Smith's design captures the spirit of our beloved Pup Crawl with its bold, fun imagery. The logo submission was inspired by her playful dogs and their treat-loving antics.

As a Western artist and graphic designer, Smith saw this contest as "the perfect collaboration" to support the organization that brought joy into her life.

Smith's passion for animals is reflected in her family of two dogs, three cats (one a fellow HSCO alumni), and two horses.

Her winning design will be prominently featured on Pup Crawl pint glasses, beanies, and in all event promotions.

The 13th annual Pup Crawl is a much-anticipated event that is a highlight of our

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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](mailto:CBN@CascadeBusNews.com) to be seen in the next edition of *Cascade Business News*.

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# AdvenChair's Geoff Babb Named One of Conde' Nast Traveller's Top 25 People Making the World More Accessible

by CAM DAVIS

It's not every day that someone from one of the world's most renowned travel publications puts you on one of their Top 25 lists. So it's easy to understand why Geoff Babb, founder and co-inventor of AdvenChair, a Bend-based all-terrain wheelchair, was somewhat taken aback when he learned that a writer from *Conde'*

*Nast Traveller* spotlighted him last week.

"While we are doing our best to spread the word about AdvenChair, we have never had any contact with *Conde' Nast* before," said Babb. "So I almost thought it was a joke at first."

Babb soon realized that being one of an elite group featured in an article

titled: *Breaking Barriers: 25 people who are making the world more accessible for 2025* was something to take pretty seriously.

As *Conde' Nast* writer and internationally known disability influencer Sophie Morgan put it: "Inclusive travel has come a long way in recent years. It's almost like the travel industry has finally begun to understand more clearly that Disabled travellers are, well, travellers. And who do we have to thank for this progress?"

The unstoppable, stereotype-shattering champions of accessibility who, like me, are dedicated and determined to turn inaccessibility barriers into a concept as outdated as a fold-out road map."

Babb earned his place among these most important trailblazers for the world of accessible and inclusive travel by creating a wheelchair that thinks it's a mountain bike. After surviving a brain stem stroke in 2005, he was committed to continuing his exploration and enjoyment of Central Oregon's endless trails with his family and friends. Over the course of the past ten years, the AdvenChair has evolved into a durable, versatile, human-powered vehicle that can handle virtually every type of terrain, while easily converting into a regular wheelchair for indoor excursions and easy transportation.

Since making it available to the public for purchase and rental in 2021, AdvenChair has enabled people of all ages and disabilities to commune with nature, while connecting with those who accompany them. AdvenChairs have taken folks to places like Machu Picchu in Peru, the Camino de Fatima in Portugal,



PHOTO | COURTESY OF ADVENCHAIR

and the floor of the Grand Canyon (and back) via the steep, treacherous Bright Angel Trail, which Babb accomplished with a team of ten friends (affectionately known as "mules") in 2022.

"I can only imagine that Ms. Morgan, who is a paraplegic, came across AdvenChair on social media and did some research," said Babb. "It's an incredible honor to be included along with two dozen other pioneers and advocates for disabled travel."

Babb credits partnerships with Wanderlust Tours, Visit Central Oregon and the Oregon Tourism Commission for helping AdvenChair establish connections with international travel entities like Untours Foundation and *Conde' Nast*.

"It's been incredibly helpful for us to receive recognition and support from Sarah Payne at Untours," said Babb. "I can only imagine what a paragraph in *Conde' Nast Traveller* could lead to. I'd love to take Ms. Morgan for an AdvenChair ride and thank her personally."

[advenchair.com](http://advenchair.com)

[cntraveller.com/article/beyond-barriers-25-people-making-the-world-more-accessible-for-2025](http://cntraveller.com/article/beyond-barriers-25-people-making-the-world-more-accessible-for-2025)

## Scouting America - Pacific Crest Council Celebrates 115 Years of Youth Leadership, Character Development & Adventure

by JENNIFER STEPHENS

Scouting America is the nation's foremost youth program providing young people with unique opportunities focused on character development, leadership, fun and outdoor exploration. On February 8, the organization will celebrate its 115th birthday, marking a pivotal moment in the organization's journey as it officially adopts its new name, Scouting America. The organization continues to adapt to meet the evolving needs of young people, ensuring that future generations will have the opportunity to benefit from this transformative program.



PHOTO | COURTESY OF SCOUTING AMERICA

America programs since our founding in 1910. Currently, more than one million youth are served by 477,000 dedicated adult volunteers in local councils throughout the country.

"Pacific Crest Council is proud to be part of Scouting's rich heritage in Oregon. Today, we deliver the life-changing programs of Scouting America to more than 2,300 young people, their families, and communities across 13 counties in Oregon. Thanks to the dedication of over 1,400 registered adult volunteers and the generosity of our donors, our programs continue to grow—serving more youth every day," said Dave Jarvis, Pacific Crest Council Scout executive/CEO.

The weeklong birthday celebration will kick off with historic sites from coast-to-coast illuminated in red, white and blue lights in honor of Scouting America — including Niagara Falls, Milwaukee's Hoan Bridge, St. Louis' The Wheel at Union Station, Cleveland's Terminal Tower, Pennsylvania State Capitol, Louisiana State Capitol, Baltimore City Hall and Capella Tower, and I-35W Mississippi River Bridge in Minneapolis. Scouts and non-Scouts alike can join in the celebration by sharing their favorite Scouting moments on Instagram (@boyscoutsofamerica) and TikTok (@scouting.america). Lastly, Scouting America will raise the redesigned organization flag over its headquarters in Irving, Texas on Wednesday, February 12.

Scouting America invites families, individuals and communities nationwide to join its mission. Whether you come from a family with a Scouting tradition or are considering Scouting for the first time, we welcome you to be a part of our next 115 years.

[BeAScout.org](http://BeAScout.org) • [PCCScouting.org](http://PCCScouting.org)

For more than a century, Scouting America's mission has remained the same: to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. Whether it's a camping trip, a pinewood derby car race, or a trail hike, every adventure encourages personal growth by teaching youth how to set goals and achieve them with determination. As we look to the future, Scouting America is dedicated to providing young people with the values, skills and experiences they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

"Scouting America has helped instill timeless values for multiple generations of Americans," said Roger Krone, Scouting America president and CEO. "In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, the values and skills instilled by Scouting are more critical than ever, and the need for strong character, ethical decision-making and effective leadership remains paramount. As we celebrate 115 years of service to our nation, we are reaffirming our commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment where young people can develop these essential qualities, empowering them to reach their full potential, and preparing them to become responsible and engaged citizens.

Scouting America has remained committed to providing youth with a safe environment where they can learn meaningful life skills, create lifelong memories and grow into tomorrow's leaders. In fact, more than 130 million Americans have been through Scouting

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community's social calendar in March, and a vital fundraiser to help vulnerable animals in Central Oregon. Thanks to our sponsors, Bend Pet Express and Bend Studio, 100% of every Pup Crawl beanie and pint sold in a commemorative glass benefits local animals.



PHOTO | COURTESY OF CUB SCOUTS REDMOND PACK 27

A 50+ year tradition for **Cub Scouts, Redmond's Pack 27** held their annual Pinewood Derby on January 25. It is estimated that over 50 million youth have built pinewood derby cars during these 50+ years throughout the world. Awards were presented for participation, fastest time by age group, most creative, and judge's pick (chosen by Redmond PD).