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Emma Carpenter

Cascade Publications Inc. (CPI) welcomes Emma Carpenter to the team as their content proofreader. Her tasks will include proof reading Cascade Business News, Cascade A&E Magazine and all additional content/publications CPI produces.

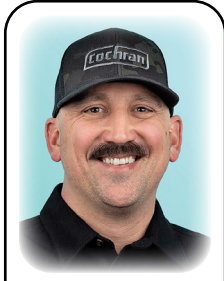
Carpenter is currently a biology major at OSU-Cascades with an emphasis in medical microbiology and chemistry. In addition to her undergraduate studies, Carpenter is an accomplished artist. She's had exhibits throughout Bend including Franklin Crossing (Annex), has won several Scholastic Art awards and is a commissioned artist.

Having grown up in Bend, Carpenter enjoys the winters (especially when it snows), getting "lost in the woods" and learning about everything in the world on a molecular level.

Cochran announced that Shelby Kytola will serve as project manager for Central Oregon. In this new role, he will lead Cochran's new Bend office, and his duties will include business development, project estimation, and project management across the region.

Kytola, an Oregon native with deep experience in the electrical field, previously served as Project Manager at OEG. Before that, he spent a decade as a field electrician running a service van. His extensive, hands-on experience helps him understand customer needs, get ahead of potential challenges, and deliver high quality services.

Cochran was founded in Seattle in 1954 and opened its Portland office in 1989. The company has a long history of contributing to transformative projects across Oregon, including for Crook County, OHSU, TriMet, and the Port of Portland. The new Bend office represents an expansion of the company's comprehensive electrical services across Central Oregon, including day-to-day service, new construction, tenant improvement, preventative maintenance, telecommunications, security, AV, and BMS Controls.



Shelby Kytola

Northview Hotel Group has appointed Kerry Hing as its new managing director. With 40 years in luxury hospitality, including roles at The Ritz-Carlton, Waldorf Astoria, and Amangiri, he's bringing a wealth of experience in operations and finance to the resort.

Hing will oversee all aspects of Brasada Ranch, from hospitality and dining to programming and amenities, with a focus on elevating the guest and residential experience. Given his background in high-end properties and luxury real estate development, he's an exciting addition to the team.



Travis Taylor

Riverhouse Lodge announces the promotion of Travis Taylor from executive chef to director of food & beverage. Taylor's contributions in his three years at Riverhouse Lodge have reshaped the property's culinary experience and set a new standard for excellence.

A seasoned culinary professional with 30 years of experience, Taylor joined Riverhouse Lodge in 2022 as executive chef, bringing with him an extensive background in the culinary world. He quickly made his mark by elevating the offerings at both Currents, the lodge's signature restaurant, and the Conference and Events Center through refreshed daily dining and banquet menus and a series of operational improvements. His commitment to staff development and training is evident,

leading to numerous internal promotions within the culinary team.

Taylor began his career at a young age, completing a three-year apprenticeship under French chef Nicholas Lango by the age of 19. He went on to run a classical French restaurant in southern Oregon before continuing his culinary journey

through top Italian and Japanese restaurants. At just 22, Taylor became the executive chef at Sunriver Resort's Crosswater Grill, where he earned numerous accolades, including winning the prestigious Bite of Bend and Iron Chef Oregon in 2014. During the pandemic, Taylor deepened his focus on sustainable and locally sourced cuisine while working at Rainshadow Organics farm in Deschutes County before joining the Riverhouse Lodge team.

Commute Options welcomes Aoibhe Richardson, Lara McCormick and Carina Forsell to their team.

As the Transportation Options coordinator for Commute Options, Richardson aims to reduce single-occupancy vehicle use in the Central and Eastern Oregon regions by leading outreach and education to employers, employees, and local communities.

With a master of public health from the University of San Francisco, and undergraduate degrees in psychology and sociology from the University of Portland, Richardson brings a strategic, people-centered approach to transportation challenges. Originally from Kilkenny, Ireland, Richardson moved to Bend in 2023 and fell in love with the trails, nature, and active transportation infrastructure. In her free time she loves to run and seek out new restaurants and coffee shops.

McCormick grew up in Southern Oregon where she developed a love of the outdoors from a young age. She worked as a photographer and was a small business owner for over 20 years. For the past eight years she has been working in the outdoor industry in numerous capacities. McCormick holds a BICP certification for mountain bike instruction, a Schwinn Cycling Instructor certification, and is also a Shimano S-Tec certified bicycle mechanic. Her passion for the outdoors, for living a healthy lifestyle, and especially all things bike, has been the driving motivator.

As a Southern Oregon native, McCormick brings her insight of the communities she grew up in to her role as the Rogue Valley Safe Routes to School Coordinator. She believes in the value of inspiring wellness in youth as a way to a healthier community and in turn, promoting a cleaner environment. When she's not riding her bike you can find her backpacking, cross country skiing, cooking up some yummy food, or exploring the west coast by van.

Forsell graduated with her teaching degree in 2019 and has since worked with a variety of youth and young adult nonprofits. As the education assistant, she has the opportunity to support the Safe Routes to Schools program among other projects. Forsell has a passion for serving her community and creating safe and equitable spaces. In her free time, she enjoys golfing, camping, exploring Bend, and being in nature with her wife and her dog Birdie.

In a defining moment for the future of AI-driven business solutions, Neesh.AI CEO and military veteran Justin Coats has secured first place at the STRIVE Program Pitch Competition, hosted by COCC's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in partnership with the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) and the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE).

The STRIVE Program, a rigorous eight-week entrepreneurship accelerator for military-affiliated founders, culminated in a pitch competition where 14 entrepreneurs took the stage to present their business ideas to an audience of investors, industry leaders, and the broader community. Coats' vision for the future of AI — one that prioritizes human empowerment over automation — set



Aoibhe Richardson



Lara McCormick



Carina Forsell

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Neesh.AI apart, earning the company top honors and a \$4,000 prize.

At a time when artificial intelligence is reshaping industries, Neesh.AI is pioneering a people-first approach, ensuring that AI serves as an extension of human creativity rather than a replacement. The company's mission is clear: educate, integrate, and build AI solutions that amplify human potential, making businesses and individuals more efficient and innovative.

The STRIVE Program (Startup Training Resources to Inspire Veteran Entrepreneurship) is a nationally recognized initiative designed to help veterans, active-duty service members, and their families build sustainable businesses. This year, 18 participants began the journey, with 16 graduating and showcasing their refined business strategies.

As the first-place winner, Neesh.AI continues to gain momentum, standing at the intersection of AI innovation and human-centered technology. This victory solidifies the company's role as a trailblazer in the AI space, ensuring that technology enhances — not replaces — the ingenuity of its users.



PHOTO | COURTESY OF BEND ANESTHESIOLOGY GROUP

**Bend Anesthesiology Group** (BAG) announces its inclusion on *Oregon Business'* 2025 100 Best Companies to Work For in Oregon list. The prestigious honor is based entirely on employee feedback about the company's working environment, benefits package, team camaraderie and overall experience.

BAG has been Central Oregon's premier anesthesia provider for more than 30 years, delivering complete, patient-centered care at each of its partner hospitals, surgery centers and care facilities. A staunchly independent practice, meaning the group is owned and managed by the physicians that make it up, the group prioritized improving patient experiences and empowering its team, ensuring both exceptional outcomes and professional fulfillment.

BAG was established in 1991 and has steadily grown in both size and scope since then. Now made up of more than 50 board-certified anesthesiologists and certified registered nurse anesthetists, the team works with the St. Charles Medical Centers in Bend, Redmond, Prineville and Madras, along with the St. Charles Bend Family Birthing Center, the Cascade Surgicenter, Bend Surgery Center, Central Oregon Surgical Institute, Central Oregon Surgery Center and Doctor's Park Surgery Center.



PHOTO | COURTESY OF CROOK COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

The culinary challenge for the student chefs was to prepare a three-course gourmet meal with only two butane burners in under an hour. **Crook County High School** pulled this off with excellence, winning top honors in the culinary competition at the Oregon Hospitality Foundation's Oregon ProStart Championships in Salem on Monday. On the restaurant management side, Salem-Keizer CTEC took first place for their new restaurant concept, earning

them a trip alongside Crook County to Baltimore, Maryland to compete in the National ProStart Invitational this May.

Crook County's menu included an appetizer of Ancho chile-rubbed white shrimp sauteed with sweet roasted corn, caramelized carrots, jalapenos, pistachios, and finished with a kiss of creme fraise placed in an avocado rose. The entrée showcased a pan-seared Sockeye salmon, and their dessert was a decadent Icebox coconut cheesecake with pistachio white chocolate crust.

Salem-Keizer CTEC's restaurant concept presented "an enchanting dining experience that transports guests to a whimsical woodland, where nature, magic, and gastronomy intertwine." The team developed the new concept to focus on farm-to-table cuisine with a nature-themed ambiance. This is the second year in a row CTEC has placed first in this competition. Restaurant management concepts are scored on eleven required components from menu design to marketing.

**Additional awards presented at the event:**

• **Oregon ProStart Student of the Year —**

**Tayah Hagensee, Crook County High School**

- Oregon ProStart Teacher of the Year — Krista Carpino, Dayton High School
- Oregon ProStart Mentor of the Year — Wendy Bennett, CTEC Salem

The teams from Crook County High School and Salem-Keizer CTEC will head to the National ProStart Invitational May 2-4, 2025, in Baltimore, Maryland to compete against the best teams from all other states, close to 400 students total. These Oregon champions also receive a share of prizes and scholarships from national culinary schools to help further their careers in the restaurant and foodservice industry.

Of the 48 Oregon high school programs, currently involving over 7,700 ProStart students, a total of 9 teams from 7 high schools competed in this event. Organizations partnering with the Oregon Hospitality Foundation include presenting sponsor, McDonald Wholesale, champion sponsor, Ecolab, and supporting sponsor, NW Natural.

**Logan Nichol**, a recent graduate of **Heart of Oregon Corps** (HOC) was recognized on March 13 by The Corps Network, the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, as one of six 2025 Corpsmembers of the Year.

The Corps Network presents the Corpsmember of the Year Award on an annual basis to young adults chosen from among the more than 22,000 individuals who serve in member organizations of The Corps Network every year. The

Corpsmembers of the Year are young people who, through their term of service in a Corps, have demonstrated personal growth, outstanding leadership skills, and a sincere commitment to helping their community. All winners of the Corpsmember of the Year Award are nominated by their Corps.

Corps engage young people in important neighborhood improvement, infrastructure development, and conservation projects. Corps help manage our lands and waters, make communities more resilient, implement energy efficient technologies, perform disaster response work, and more. The Corps Network's Corpsmembers of the Year, like Nichol, set an example for young leaders nationwide, demonstrating the impact that a single individual can have.

During his service in Heart of Oregon programs, Nichol's work has benefitted communities across Central Oregon by helping safeguard neighborhoods through fire fuel reduction projects, reducing threats to ecosystems by removing invasive plant species, and protecting vulnerable habitat through installation and repair of fencing networks. He earned certifications in chainsaw operation, herbicide application, mental health first aid, and CPR/First Aid.

Nichol's journey with Heart of Oregon began in 2021, during the pandemic, on a summer Prineville youth conservation crew working on Ochoco National Forest projects. Like many local youth, Logan pursued multiple programs at Heart of Oregon over several years, eager to continue contributing and growing. He completed four terms of AmeriCorps, preparing for natural resources careers through national service. He is continuing his journey today with Heart of Oregon as a staff Crew Leader, now leading and training other youth. He plans to use his four AmeriCorps scholarships to pursue a natural resources degree.

Nichol experienced significant personal and professional growth as he has evolved from a student deeply affected by the pandemic, to program participant, to staff employee. He notes, "We grow the most when we're challenged, supported, and given the space to step up." Nichol faced significant barriers along the way, including navigating the workforce as a person with a disability and the January 2023 tragic loss of his brother to gun violence.

The 2025 Corpsmembers of the Year were honored at The Corps Network's annual national conference that took place in Arlington, Virginia, from March 11-13, 2025. In addition to attending the conference, Nichol, Laura Handy, HOC's executive director, and Patrick Orr, HOC's program director, met with Senators and Representatives to speak about the impactful work of Heart of Oregon Corps.

Heart of Oregon Corps is one of more than 150 member organizations of The Corps Network. As defined by The Corps Network, Corps are local, state or national programs that engage young adults (generally ages 16 – 30) and veterans (up to age 35) in service activities addressing conservation and community needs. Through a term of service that could last from a few months to a year, Corps participants — or "Corpsmembers" — complete meaningful projects while gaining job experience and developing in-demand skills.



SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY WITH LOGAN NICHOL OF HEART OF OREGON CORPS | PHOTO COURTESY OF HEART OF OREGON CORPS