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**Sara
Odendahl**

Bend Chamber announced **Sara Odendahl** as our new CEO effective November 3. Odendahl has served as the interim CEO since June 30, in addition to continuing her duties as the Chamber's Director of Government Affairs and Strategic Initiatives.

A seasoned government affairs professional, Odendahl has led the Chamber's policy and advocacy work since coming on staff in 2023. Odendahl has been an instrumental member of the Chamber's leadership team and co-lead the organization's Workforce Housing Initiative and newly launched Regional Business Alliance.

The Bend Chamber initiated a national search to secure a new CEO in June. To start the process, executive search firms were vetted and The 360 Group was selected as the recruitment partner. The 360 Group is a well-established regional firm that

routinely works with a variety of community-focused associations. This partnership enabled the Chamber to identify candidates who understand Bend's unique place, dynamics and opportunities. Casting the net nationally allowed for a comprehensive search of strong leaders near and far.

The initial process included in-person stakeholder meetings with Chamber staff, as well as the formation of a selection committee comprised of the five Bend Chamber Executive Board members and six at-large members of the Bend business community. Those early discussions clarified the organization's cultural attributes, strengths and growth opportunities, challenges, expectations and preferred traits of the new CEO. The results of that due diligence became the basis of a detailed position profile that was shared nationally.

Applications from Virginia to Washington were received and vetted for those that most closely aligned with the Chamber needs. By September, interviews with a select group of candidates began, and, from those meetings, three finalist candidates were invited for in-person interviews. The three finalists provided presentations based on a prompt and written answers to a battery of values-based questions from The 360 Group and the selection committee.

Ultimately, after thoughtful consideration of the information gained from the interview process, the result was a unanimous decision by the selection committee to appoint Odendahl to the permanent CEO position. Her experience and skillset best aligned with the Leadership Profile that was developed and make her uniquely qualified for this high-profile position within the Bend business community.

Before joining the Bend Chamber, Odendahl served as an independent consultant supporting the Chamber's Advocacy Council and leadership team on local and state policy priorities. She brings more than a decade of experience in political consulting and public policy, including extensive work at the Colorado State Capitol advancing initiatives in business, health care, early childhood education and regional economic development.

Odendahl began her career in strategic communications, leading public awareness and issue campaigns for advertising and marketing agencies. Since relocating to Bend in 2019, she and her husband, Kent, have co-founded Work-Collective, a thriving coworking community with two Bend locations.

Odendahl holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communications from the University of Colorado Boulder and a master's degree in public administration and public policy from the University of Colorado Denver. Known for her collaborative leadership, strategic planning and coalition-building skills, Sara is committed to guiding the Chamber into its 100th year and beyond with a focus on partnership, advocacy and long-term regional prosperity.

The selection committee has the utmost confidence in Odendahl's ability to lead, grow and position the Chamber to serve Bend's businesses and community, while prioritizing thriving businesses of all sizes and livability for all residents.

SCORE Central Oregon announced **Tracey Rodocker** as one of its newest fully certified business mentors. Rodocker's business background includes several years in the manufacturing sector, including specialized work in the underwater and subsea industries. More broadly, Rodocker has over 30 years of small business management experience and knows the challenges business owners face in building strong systems, maintaining compliance and improving efficiency.



**Tracey
Rodocker**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Bend shares a new season of leadership. **Michael Baker** will step in as chief executive officer today, November 3, 2025.

Baker began his career with Boys & Girls Clubs in 1988, working in the housing projects of New York. For the past two decades, he has served as CEO at Clubs in Anaheim, California and Santa Barbara, California. His leadership has been marked by significant growth in membership, annual revenue and donations, organizational impact and community visibility, all achieved with a strong commitment to financial and social responsibility.

For more than 30 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of Bend has been a cornerstone for youth and families in Central Oregon, providing safe spaces, caring mentors and opportunities for growth.

Baker's broad experience will strengthen and guide the Club as it continues to expand its impact in the community, "I am so excited to be the new CEO for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bend. There is a great team in place, and the Board is as dedicated as any board I have ever seen in my career. I can't wait to get started and meet as many of you incredible supporters as possible," Baker commented.

Baker will be in Bend just in time for the organization's annual Flannel & Frost fundraiser on November 15, which will also mark one of his first opportunities to connect with the Club's supporters and community champions. There will be additional opportunities to connect with him in the months ahead, and he looks forward to getting to know the community.



**Katie
Martin Hewitt**

Cascade Financial Strategies is growing! We welcome **Katie Martin Hewitt** and her business and community experience to the team. Martin Hewitt and her family live in Redmond. She is a financial advisor and particularly enjoys working with families, family businesses and women in transition.

Martin Hewitt oversees various internal processes for CFS in addition to meeting with clients. She is looking forward to connecting with professionals and business owners in Bend and Redmond. More information about Martin Hewitt is on the CFS website at : cascadefs.com/katie-martin-hewitt.

Kernutt Stokes announces the addition of nine new associates.

University of Oregon graduates **Jacob Brown**, **Andrew Peaslee**, **Emma Wagner** and **Josh Weinrobe** are joining the firm's Eugene office. Oregon State University graduate **Michael Siddel** and Corban University graduate **Jessica McMillian** will work in the Corvallis office. Oregon State University (bachelor's), Montana State University (master's) and Carrol College (master's) graduate **Molly DelCurto** joins Oregon State University graduates **Austin Osborne** and **Javier Ruiz** in the firm's Bend office.

Bend Park and Recreation District (BPRD) won three awards at the Oregon Recreation and Parks Association annual conference earlier this month.

Innovation Award: The recently completed Miller's Landing renovation project was selected for the 2025 Innovation Award. The project was selected for its improved river access for boaters and river users, with an emphasis on users with mobility needs to have multiple opportunities to enter and exit the Deschutes River. BPRD worked closely with partners including Environmental Science Associates (ESA) and Empowering Access to design, construct and introduce the project that opened in summer 2025.

Aquatic Professional of the Year: Shannon Gilman, BPRD aquatics supervisor, was also honored as the Aquatics Professional of the Year.

For more than three decades, Gilman has mentored generations of lifeguards and swim instructors and developed swimmers of all ages and abilities. In June 1990, she joined BPRD as a swim instructor/lifeguard and went on to serve in many roles over the years.

Lifesaving Award: The award goes to an individual or team for their response during a life-threatening situation or in training and preparation, demonstrating staff involvement and lifesaving innovation. It is awarded by the Aquatics section of ORPA.

A BPRD team of lifeguards and recreation facility staff members were honored for two responses to medical emergencies at Larkspur Community Center. The emergencies occurred within weeks of each other, with staff involvement before arrival of first responders. In both incidents, the patrons survived in part due to immediate attention and aid rendered.

BPRD supervisors provide comprehensive monthly training with a focus on Basic Life support skills and lifeguard rescues, as well as incident debrief procedures and support available to staff when needed.

The **High Desert Museum's** original exhibition *Sensing Sasquatch* has won the 2025 Autry Public History Prize, which recognizes exceptional work that contributes to a broader public reflection on and appreciation of the North American West.

The prize was awarded to the High Desert Museum on October 17, 2025, at the annual Western History Association Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In remarks from the Autry Prize Committee, the exhibition was praised for its "originality of work and the collaboration of the project team." The committee also applauded *Sensing Sasquatch* for its "major contribution to Public History and the field of the North American West."

The Autry Public History Prize is awarded annually. The award consists of a \$1,000 prize, made possible by the Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles. Past winners of the prize range from museums to libraries to state historical centers.

Blending history, art and mixed media, *Sensing Sasquatch* explored the cultural significance of Sasquatch across Indigenous cultures in the High Desert. In pop culture today, Sasquatch, or Bigfoot, often appears on beer cans, stickers and billboards. Yet for some Native people of the Indigenous Plateau, Sasquatch represents a story that is more profound and spiritual. Open from March 2024 through January 2025, *Sensing Sasquatch* challenged visitors' perceptions, encouraging them to reconsider the conventional depictions.

The **Mt. Bachelor Sports Education Foundation (MBSEF)** Board of Directors announces the appointment of **Kevin Perkey** as the organization's new executive director. Perkey joins MBSEF following an extensive search process and brings a deep background in nonprofit leadership, strategic growth and community engagement.

Perkey has built a career leading nonprofit organizations through pivotal moments of growth and change, combining strategic vision with operational excellence. He and his family have lived in Bend since 2021, and his two sons have participated on MBSEF's Freeride Development and Competition Teams as snowboarders.

Perkey is currently transitioning from his previous role and is expected to assume full-time responsibilities as Executive Director by early November.

Leading AI training company **Neesh.AI** has changed their name to **LearnAir**, taps former salesforce executive and creator of the AppExchange **Bobby Napiltonia** as chairman, names **Teresa Coats** as CEO, adds two Fortune 50 companies to client roster and expands internationally with strategic partner.

The new name, LearnAir, was decided to emphasize the ubiquitous availability and demand for AI across today's workforce. Recent research shows that over 378 million people worldwide are actively using AI tools in 2025, up from just 100 million two years ago. In addition, 78% of companies globally now use AI in at least

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one business function, underscoring the urgency for large-scale workforce training and AI literacy.

In addition, the moves at LearnAir include a partnership with training and credentialing firm Verix, who is leading the training push into India. Verix is also adding the future of verification and trust and where businesses make faster, smarter decisions using data they can rely on.

By partnering with Verix, LearnAir will provide localized Credentialed AI training programs tailored to Indian enterprises, ensuring accessibility across industries and regions.

Bend Outdoor Worx (BOW) hosted a sold-out audience at the Volcanic Theatre Pub for its eighth annual BreakOut Pitch Event and BootCamp on October 15.

The one-day doubleheader featured a morning of inspiration and insight at BOW's BootCamp, followed by an evening of high-energy competition at the BreakOut event, where emerging outdoor brands pitched their companies to a live audience for \$20,000 in no-strings-attached cash awards. Additionally, BOW awarded \$275,000 in financing through its BOW Production Financing Fund. The BreakOut Pitch Event highlighted Oregon-based companies, the majority from Bend.

This year's winners:

- BreakIn/Early Stage Winner: **WanderHut** (Bend), A car camping solution that offers an alternative to rooftop tents, vans and traditional setups. wanderhut.co.
- BreakOut/Growth Stage Winner: **StoryBooth Experience** (Bend), A pop-up podcast studio for events, designed to capture voices, stories and memories that last a lifetime. storyboothexperience.com.

The BOW Production Financing Fund Recipients:

- **Broke Supply Co.** (Bend), premium horse riding bags and gear. Brokesupply.com received \$200,000.
- **Spiral Wax** (Bend), All-natural snowboard wax, handmade in Bend. spiralwaxco.com received \$75,000.

NuScale Power Corporation (NYSE: SMR), the industry-leading provider of proprietary and innovative advanced small modular reactor (SMR) nuclear technology, today announced the appointment of **James D. Canafax** as chief legal officer and corporate secretary, effective October 20.

Cuppa Yo is celebrating continued growth with the opening of its newest location in Northside Bend. Doors opened October 17, inviting Northside Bend to swirl, top and chill with Cuppa Yo's signature flavors.

The newest Cuppa Yo location at 20789 NW Henry Ave., Ste. 160, joins the established Westside and Eastside Bend stores in carrying forward the brand's tradition of blending fun, flavor and community. With an ever-changing lineup of frozen yogurt flavors and toppings, the Northside store offers something for everyone year-round, delighting loyal Cuppa Yomies and welcoming new fans alike.

Deschutes County 9-1-1 congratulates two of its team members who recently received top honors from the Oregon chapter of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials and the National Emergency Number Association (APCO-NENA).

9-1-1 Dispatcher **Trinity Diggs** was named Telecommunicator of the Year, an award recognizing a telecommunicator who shows an outstanding commitment to professional growth, teamwork, leadership and making a positive impact on their center. Diggs joined Deschutes 9-1-1 in 2020. According to her nominator, Diggs leads with integrity and accountability as a Communications Training Officer and Acting in Charge supervisor. She mentors co-workers with patience and encouragement, fostering a positive and supportive work environment. Diggs handles every call with empathy and professionalism, especially when assisting callers in crisis or distress.

9-1-1 Operations Manager **Chris Perry** received the Commitment to Excellence Award, recognizing telecommunicators, groups, or agencies for their dedication to 9-1-1 telecommunications through expertise, innovation, ethics, leadership and quality improvements. Since 2005, Perry has worked every position on the dispatch floor, joining the leadership team in 2010. His nominator wrote that he plays a vital role coordinating communication between fire, police and behavioral health partners while overseeing the daily operations of a high-volume dispatch center. Perry leads thoughtfully, balancing firm convictions with an openness to new ideas. He frequently asks, "Tell me more," to invite discussion and gather more information when opportunities for change arise.

The Oregon APCO-NENA provides training, recognition and advocacy for public safety communications professionals across the state. The awards were presented to Diggs and Perry during the group's annual conference in Bend last month.

The **Deschutes County Finance Department** has once again received the prestigious Triple Crown medallion from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). This special recognition is given to government agencies that earn all three top honors from the GFOA.

• **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting:** In July 2025, the County received this award for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. The ACFR details the County's financial position and activities for the fiscal year.

• **Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting:** In October 2025, the County was recognized for its Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. The PAFR is a high-level summary of the ACFR, providing information about county revenues, expenses and debts, as well as an explanation of how property taxes are used.

• **Distinguished Budget Presentation Award:** In December 2023, the County received this top honor for its fiscal year 2024 budget. This award reflects the budget's effectiveness as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide and communication device.



KPOV Fall Fund Drive

October 17 - 25, 2025

Donate at k pov.org
or call 541-322-0863

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Jim Lussier Member's Choice Forum:

A Mental Health Services State of the Union

Are We Meeting the Need in Central Oregon?

November 18, 2025

First Presbyterian Church of

Bend

8:00-9:30 a.m.



CITY CLUB
OF CENTRAL OREGON

Register at cityclubco.org

