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Deschutes County welcomes **Jeff Curtis**, the former chief executive officer of the Alaska State Fair, as the new D1 director of the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center.

Curtis began his new role on February 9, replacing Geoff Hinds, who left in September. He was selected from a highly competitive pool of candidates following a nationwide recruitment.

Curtis brings a wealth of experience, having spent 18 years as CEO of the Portland Rose Festival Foundation and over two years as the CEO of the Alaska State Fair. His expertise includes managing multiple event facilities, corporate sponsorship sales, fair and festival operations and public communication.

Curtis holds a bachelor of arts in sports management from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. He has served on several boards, including as board chair for the International Festival and Events Association, and as a member for the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Mat Su Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors.

As Deschutes County Fair & Expo Director, Curtis will oversee the daily operations and marketing of the 340-acre facility. Each year, Fair & Expo hosts over 400 events including the County Fair and Rodeo, motocross, BMX, trade shows and concerts. The center offers 200,000 square feet of indoor event space, 120,000 square feet of covered livestock and equestrian arenas, 400 horse stalls and a 105-space, full-service RV park. As a leading tourist destination in Central Oregon, it attracts nearly one million visitors annually.

First Interstate has a refreshed Oregon leadership team designed to bring decisions closer to clients, simplify how they work together and respond faster to local needs. The new approach aligns market leaders and empowered bankers across Oregon who know their communities and can act quickly in their best interest.

Chris DuBose, Oregon State president — As the senior leader for Oregon, DuBose champions growth, innovation and community engagement — partnering with local businesses and organizations, fostering high performing teams, and advancing economic development across the state.

Amaya Urzaa, commercial market president, Northwest Oregon & Southwest Washington — Urzaa leads complex commercial efforts with a focus on outcomes that strengthen local economies. Recently, her team delivered an intricate construction financing solution that will create nearly 30 family wage jobs in a nearby rural community. She also serves as a board officer for El Programa Hispano Católico.

Lynae Williams, commercial market president, Southern Oregon and the Willamette Valley — Williams develops strong, collaborative teams and client relationships, measuring success by trust, steady progress and intentional growth. Her community leadership includes volunteer projects with the YMCA and support for youth arts through the Craterian's Teen Musical Theater of Oregon program.

Eliescha Stone, community banking market leader, Bend — Stone partners with branch leaders and bankers to deliver tailored client solutions and consistent execution. Her service includes volunteer work at a local shelter, where she offers mock interviews and financial education classes.

Laura Sutton, community banking market leader, Southern Oregon — Sutton



guides branches to provide trusted financial guidance and personalized solutions, with a focus on client goals and team support. She serves on the board of the Family Nurturing Center.

CJ Steinbach, community banking market leader, Western Oregon — Steinbach creates an environment where clients feel understood and teams thrive, delivering consistent, reliable performance. His community service includes supporting FOOD for Lane County's Dining Room.

Aaron Hoefling, community banking sales manager, Hoefling supports community banking market leaders and branch teams across First Interstate's footprint to deepen relationships and drive growth. He volunteers with ACCESS, serves on boards for the Craterian Theater and the Anna May Family Foundation, and supports United Way in Jackson County.



Family Access Network (FAN) welcomes the newest addition to their Board, **Megan Geiss** of Bend.

Geiss is a long-time community advocate with a deep commitment to supporting children and families in Central Oregon. A Bend resident for the past 20 years, she has previously served on the Board of Directors for the Boys & Girls Club of Bend and has been actively involved in youth-focused community initiatives. In addition to her service work, Geiss has built a successful career in digital marketing and strategy, where she enjoys helping organizations grow and connect with the audiences they serve. She holds a degree in Communication from San Jose State University and is also a proud parent — her son, Cooper, is currently a senior at Mountain View High School. Geiss is honored to

serve on the Family Access Network Foundation Board and support FAN's mission of ensuring every child has access to the resources they need to thrive.

As we look toward an exciting year ahead, **Bethlehem Inn** extends heartfelt gratitude to two remarkable leaders completing their service on our Board of Directors: **Dave Allen** and **Isaac Montoya**, welcomes incoming members **Amanda Loshbaugh** and **Kinsey Martin** to the board.

Allen has brought deep legal insight and steadfast commitment to our organization. Originally from Kansas, Allen pursued law before building a distinguished career that has included service in the Oregon Department of Justice, private practice and as legal counsel for public entities. His thoughtful leadership and passion for justice significantly strengthened our governance and community partnerships during his tenure on the board, and we are deeply grateful for his service and counsel.

Montoya has been a powerful advocate for community health and equity throughout his work and his board service. A certified Community Health Worker with experience supporting individuals facing social determinants of health barriers, Isaac brought a compassionate, person-centered perspective to every discussion and initiative. His contributions helped deepen our connection to the communities we serve, and we sincerely thank him for his dedication and leadership.

We are also delighted to welcome Loshbaugh to the board. Loshbaugh is a respected local attorney with extensive experience in criminal law and a strong commitment to justice and community service. After serving as a Deputy District Attorney in Washington County and gaining broad legal experience, including international work and investor relations for a global biotechnology company. Loshbaugh returns to Central Oregon, bringing both professional expertise and a passion for advocacy.

Joining her is Martin, an executive with the Bend-La Pine School District, where she serves as executive director of policy, advocacy and equity, ensuring district policies and practices reflect shared values of dignity, fairness and inclusion. With a background as a bilingual teacher, administrator and university instructor, Martin's work is rooted in partnership with youth, families, educators and community organizations, centering lived experience and local insight in decision-making and community improvement. In alignment with her values rooted in partnership and service, Martin serves on several local and statewide boards and commissions and is pursuing a Juris Doctor to strengthen her advocacy for responsive and just public systems.

Join us in thanking Allen and Isaac for their extraordinary service and in extending a warm welcome to Loshbaugh and Martin as they begin their leadership journey with Bethlehem Inn. We are inspired by the foundation laid by our outgoing members and energized by the expertise and perspective our new board members bring.



The **Council on Aging of Central Oregon (CoA)** announces the appointment of **Marianne McClure** as its new director of philanthropy. This newly created leadership role reflects the organization's growing focus on community engagement, relationship-building and long-term sustainability.

McClure began her journey at CoA in July 2020 as the organization's first Volunteer Manager. She created a robust volunteer program, grew the team significantly, and implemented effective engagement and recognition strategies, and built one of Central Oregon's most respected volunteer programs with a retention rate above 95%. She later served as director of volunteer services before assuming her new role as director of philanthropy.

McClure's commitment to older adults combines personal experience with professional expertise. After college, she moved closer to her grandparents to serve as one of their caregivers, helping with transportation, daily activities and life planning. She has also put her opera background to good use by

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providing music therapy to senior hospice patients.

Professionally, McClure brings extensive experience in nonprofit leadership, volunteer management and fundraising. At Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East, she led the volunteer program and managed major fundraising events. Her work included supervising staff, facilitating committees and building strong corporate and community partnerships. Additional leadership roles include serving two terms as an AmeriCorps VISTA Member and AmeriCorps program manager, as well as participation on nonprofit boards.

As director of philanthropy, McClure will focus on diversifying funding streams and strengthening partnerships. The role also includes deepening donor relationships and engaging the broader community. She leads the philanthropy team and serves as a key point of connection for community members, partners and supporters interested in CoA's programs and vision.

The Deschutes Land Trust recently announced that six new members have joined its Board of Directors. These new members are excited to serve and use their collective decades of experience to advance our mission. Each brings unique skills, expertise and passions for conserving and caring for land in Central Oregon to the Land Trust. New board members include:

John Bailey has spent a lifetime exploring his home state of Oregon, and all the West, appreciating the vast lands open to public use. Bailey's professional background is in corporate finance, including a long career at Columbia Sportswear where he most recently served as treasurer prior to retirement. He is an active volunteer in the local community and has served on several nonprofit boards, including roles as president and treasurer. Bailey lives in Sisters and enjoys searching for rising trout, mountain biking, skiing and spending time with his wife, two sons and a dog named Stella.

Vicki Finn grew up enjoying summers on her grandmother's farm in Virginia, where her passion for the outdoors and her appreciation for working lands began. Environmental conservation became her calling, and public service the means. She served for 34 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, mainly in the Pacific Northwest, where she collaboratively led teams seeking lasting benefits for fish, wildlife, lands and people. She also coached mid-career employees in leadership — an honor of her career. Her connection to Central Oregon began in the mid 1990's when she and her husband fell in love with the beauty and tranquility of Camp Sherman. Today, she serves as a trail steward for the Land Trust and as a volunteer with the Oregon State University Extension Master Gardener Program. In her free time, Finn enjoys reading, hiking, cycling, swimming, bird-watching and spending time with her husband and two adult daughters.

Kassidy Kern grew up on a sheep ranch in Wyoming that has been in her family for more than 100 years. She began her professional career in video post-production and publicity before moving into collaborative land use planning in the West. She has worked permanently with the Forest Service since 2010 and moved to Bend in 2013 to work as a public affairs specialist for the Deschutes National Forest. She has worked for both the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests in recent years and now lives in Bend and serves as the Deputy District Ranger for the Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District. In her free time, you can find Kern and her family hiking, paddleboarding, snowshoeing, sledding and riding mountain bikes on Central Oregon's amazing and diverse public lands.

Craig Nichols was born on a cattle ranch in eastern Washington. He served six years in the U.S. Marine Corp, and spent the majority of his life working outdoors as a rancher or in the outfitting business from the Yukon and Alaska to New Mexico. Nichols has spent the last 35 years in Oregon managing a variety of ranches. He's worked with the Nature Conservancy in northeastern Oregon and with the BLM and Forest Service on grazing allotments and wildfires. Nichols currently manages the Cross Keys Ranch next to the Land Trust's Priday Ranch. In his spare time, Nichols is an auctioneer and plays music for benefit auctions and fundraising events.

Amy Paul grew up in the Pacific Northwest, spent over a decade on the East Coast working in global public health and development, and moved to Central Oregon to create a life closer to home in 2024. She quickly discovered Deschutes Land Trust Preserves, soaking in the beauty of Central Oregon. Paul participated in the first cohort of the Deschutes Land Trust's Emerging Conservationists of Central Oregon program and continues to deepen her engagement with and support for the organization's work. Professionally, she most recently served as a senior director at a professional services firm working to strengthen the use of digital technology in social impact contexts. In her free time, Paul enjoys hiking, painting and building community in and around Sisters.

Dr. **Chuck Walls** is a board-certified veterinary surgeon with more than three decades of experience in advanced orthopedic and soft-tissue surgery. He practiced in both

private practice and university settings, where he specialized in complex orthopedic procedures. Currently retired from clinical practice, Dr. Walls still enjoys consulting as well as teaching veterinary surgical techniques and skills. He is also co-founder of the McCabe-Walls Family Foundation, which supports initiatives focused on environmental and energy sustainability, animal welfare, educational advancement and equitable community development. He and his family value time spent outdoors and believe strongly in protecting natural spaces for future generations.



PHOTO | COURTESY OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF WARM SPRINGS

The **Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs** were honored for their decades-long efforts in restoring bighorn sheep populations at the Wild Sheep Foundation's annual Sheep Show last month.

The Tribes received the Wild Sheep Foundation's Federal Statesman Award, which recognizes government agencies that have made outstanding contributions to wild sheep restoration. The Tribes are among only 24 award winners honored by the Foundation within the last 40 years.

Hunter Timothy Haught, the successful 2024 bid winner \$230,000 permit from the Tribe and received the 2026 North American Wild Sheep Gold Award for a successful bighorn sheep hunt with a 177 5/8 Boone & Crockett Score. Proceeds from his hunt, along with funds from 2025, permit sales, support habitat restoration, invasive species removal and watershed projects on the Reservation. In addition, the Wild Sheep Foundation auctioned the Tribes' third annual permit for \$250,000 at the 2026 Wild Sheep Show, bringing the total conservation funding from 2024 to 2026 to \$760,000 for supporting wild sheep and other wildlife habitat restoration on tribal lands.

Not only will this contribution of funds be reinvested in sheep management and habitat, but it will also make the tribes eligible to apply for the Wild Sheep Foundation's Grant-In-Aid program, which provides funding for projects that further enhance wildlife restoration efforts.

Throughout its nearly 40-year history, the Wild Sheep Foundation has invested over \$145 million to support the restoration of wild sheep populations across North America. Collaborating with local affiliates, Tribes, government agencies and nonprofit organizations, the Foundation has helped to triple wild sheep populations over the past few decades.

Along with their receipt of the Federal Statesman and the North American Wild Sheep Awards, Warm Springs Tribal Wildlife Biologist Camille Brooks and Warm Springs Wildlife Range and Agriculture Manager Michael Leecy presented on the success of their bighorn restoration efforts thus far. The Tribes also donated a single ram permit to the Wild Sheep Foundation, which will be auctioned at a later date to raise funds for future bighorn restoration efforts.



DEAR MOM CAFE WITH THEIR 2026 SOUPER BOWL TROPHY | PHOTO COURTESY OF HOFFA

High Desert Food & Farm Alliance (HDFFA) hosted its third annual SOUPER Bowl event on February 7. **Dear Mom Cafe** earned the top prize for the second time, this year for their Khao Soi, a Northern Thai curry noodle soup known for its rich, aromatic coconut curry broth. They were selected as the overall winner through a combination of attendees' votes and points awarded by a panel of local culinary experts.

Dear Mom Cafe is a community-driven Thai restaurant in Bend, founded by chef-owner **Jattalee Chalernhinthong**. Inspired by the flavors of her childhood in Thailand, Chef Jattalee shares the warmth of family-style dining, focusing on soulful, comforting Thai food made with intention.

Mt. Bachelor's seafood stew and JIA Asian Street Kitchen's Khao Soi placed second and third, respectively.

The SOUPER Bowl is HDFFA's largest annual fundraiser, welcoming 400 guests over two seatings to sample soups made by Central Oregon restaurants. Each of the 14 participating restaurants are HDFFA partners and committed to sourcing local ingredients when possible. Together, they showcased the diversity and creativity of Central Oregon's agriculture and culinary community while celebrating the vibrant local food scene.

The 2026 SOUPER Bowl featured soups from 14 local restaurants, including 10 Barrel Brewing, Anthony's Restaurant at the Old Mill, A Broken Angel, Central Oregon Soup Company, Dear Mom Cafe, Deschutes Brewery, El Sancho, Jackson's Corner, JIA Asian Street Kitchen, Mountain Burger, Mt. Bachelor, Roots at Heart, Schoolhouse Produce and Wild Rye at Brasada.