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Coldwell Banker Bain welcomes **Grady Garrison** to its Bend office.

A trusted Bend business owner and founder of The Roost Barber Co., Garrison brings extensive experience in customer service, business leadership, and relationship building. He is also known for his active support of schools, charities, veterans' organizations, and community events throughout Central Oregon.



Grady Garrison



Nick Zachariasen

Washington Trust Bank announced the addition of **Nick Zachariasen** to its Central Oregon Commercial Team in Bend. He will serve as a vice president and relationship manager.

With over 19 years of banking experience, Zachariasen will be responsible for tailoring financial solutions to meet his commercial clients' banking needs. Zachariasen joins Washington Trust from Idaho First Bank, where he served as a vice president and commercial banker. In this role, he was responsible for working with various departments to provide commercial clients with the correct services for their financial needs.



Lindsey Maguire



Amy McCarthy-Smith

Lindsey Maguire of **SĀJ Architecture** has earned a license to practice architecture in Oregon. Maguire, who is also a licensed architect in North Carolina, has worked on building design and led master planning efforts for universities, K-12 schools and municipalities on both coasts. She joined SĀJ Architecture's Bend office in 2024. Additionally, Maguire and her SĀJ Architecture colleagues **Amy McCarthy-Smith** and **Nathanael Werner** are now Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Technical Assistance Program Certified Assessors. This designation allows architects and engineers to evaluate school facilities, complete long-range plans and help school districts qualify for state grants. Certified assessors must have at least five years of education design experience and complete state-mandated training and testing.



Nathanael Werner



Kelsey Merison

KTVZ-TV announced the promotion of **Kelsey Merison** to evening anchor. Merison began her new role on Monday, August 3.

Since returning to Oregon from Montana, Merison has helped people throughout Central Oregon start their day as co-anchor of KTVZ News at Sunrise. Through this role, Merison has become a familiar and trusted face for viewers each weekday morning.

Alongside the Sunrise team, Merison has covered breaking news, severe weather, and stories that have made a meaningful impact across the high desert.

Now, Merison brings that same commitment and community-focused journalism to KTVZ's evening newscasts, where she will help guide viewers through the day's biggest stories and the issues that matter most to Central Oregon.

Merison's promotion reflects KTVZ's ongoing commitment to developing talent from within while continuing to provide viewers with trusted local news coverage across every daypart.

Merison said she is grateful for the opportunity to continue serving Central Oregon viewers in her new role.

The **Deschutes Public Library** Board decided on Wednesday evening to appoint **Chantal Strobel** as interim library director. Their decision came in advance of Director Todd Dunkelberg's August 28 retirement and after a pause in the district's search for a new permanent director. Strobel has been with Deschutes Public Library for 32 years, most recently serving as assistant director of Community Engagement since 2023.

Malkin says the board will talk in the coming weeks about when to actively resume the search for a permanent director. Dunkelberg says he fully supports the board decision, and will assist Strobel through the transition process.

Strobel says she looks forward to working with library staff and the community as Deschutes Public Library continues to evolve its services and resources.

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New hires, promotions, accolades, awards, retiring?

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Heart of Oregon Crews Hard at Work Protecting & Maintaining Central Oregon Wilderness

by SHELBY SAUER — Heart of Oregon Corps

As wildfire season continues across Central Oregon, Heart of Oregon Corps youth crews are spending their summer outdoors — completing conservation projects, improving recreation areas, and supporting the health and safety of the landscapes our communities depend on.

For young people ages 16–24, these projects are more than a summer job. Through Heart of Oregon's workforce development programs, participants work on meaningful community projects while earning wages, stipends, and scholarships. Along the way, they gain hands-on experience, technical skills, professional development, and a stronger connection to their communities.

"When youth see the direct impact of their work, they begin to see themselves differently," said Laura Handy, Executive Director of Heart of Oregon Corps. "They're building trails and reducing wildfire risk, but they're also building confidence, technical skills, and pathways to careers."

Summer is a critical season for conservation work throughout Central Oregon. With increased recreation and heightened wildfire concerns, Heart of Oregon crews are working on projects across the region that support safer recreation, healthier ecosystems, and more resilient communities.

In Redmond's Dry Canyon, Heart of Oregon crews partner with the City of Redmond to thin vegetation, limb trees, and remove dead plant material to help mitigate wildfire risk and create a strategic firebreak to help protect neighboring communities. Crews at Skull Hollow Campground near Smith Rock State Park are partnering with USFS specialists to remove invasive weeds, repair fences,



COYCC YOUTH REMOVE INVASIVE WEEDS AT SKULL HOLLOW AS PART OF REGIONAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS

rake debris, and tend to mulch. Meanwhile, Heart of Oregon youth in Bend are maintaining beloved Deschutes River Trails by updating water drainage to reduce erosion, improving tread, and removing hazards for safer visitor experiences.

Graduating from and now serving as a Field Team Leader for the HDCC program, Russell Stevens shared: "HDCC allows me to work with an amazing crew and make the environment healthier and safer while having a lot of learning experiences. I enjoy getting to help the environment. I feel like I am doing something productive for society."

Many Heart of Oregon conservation projects focus on mitigating wildfire risks. With the devastating state of active fires in Central Oregon, Heart of Oregon staff and youth recognize and thank the firefighters and first



HEART OF OREGON CORPS YOUTH COMPLETE CONSERVATION PROJECTS ACROSS CENTRAL OREGON | PHOTOS COURTESY OF HEART OF OREGON CORPS

responders working on the front lines. Protecting communities requires a collective effort — from emergency response to proactive prevention and land stewardship.

Together, Heart of Oregon's year-round and summer conservation crews are helping care for Central Oregon's public lands, reduce wildfire risks, and complete projects that support healthier, more resilient communities.

The impact of this work will continue to grow as Heart of Oregon opens its new centralized campus in Redmond this fall. The campus will provide a permanent home for youth workforce development programs and expand opportunities for young people to access hands-on training, career pathways, and supportive services.

Community members are invited to join Heart of Oregon in celebrating this milestone. Corporate sponsorship opportunities and individual tickets for the family-friendly Endless Summer Nights fundraiser on Saturday, September 19, are available now, with proceeds supporting the final phase of the campus campaign. The community is also invited to attend the official campus ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday, September 30, 2026. Guests can **RSVP now** to celebrate the opening of Heart of Oregon's new youth workforce development campus in Redmond.

Youth ages 16-24 interested in Heart of Oregon programs can learn more and fill out the simple online application at heartoforegon.org. For questions or more information, contact Youth Conservation Programs Recruitment and Data Coordinator, Shelby Sauer, email recruitment@heartoforegon.org or call/text 458-600-1856.

heartoforegon.org

Businesses Serving Community



LOCAL NONPROFIT FIRST STORY, ALONGSIDE PARTNERS SUCH AS HAYDEN HOMES, NEIGHBORIMPACT, AND REGIONAL LEADERS, WORKED TOGETHER TO BUILD AND RAISE THE WALLS OF A NEW HOME FOR A BEND FAMILY IN MAY OF 2026 | PHOTO COURTESY OF FIRST STORY

FIRST STORY

Nonprofit First Story will turn over the keys to a new Hayden Home for a local Bend family during a Home Dedication and Key Ceremony at 9:30am sharp on August 19. The celebration brings together industry partners and regional leaders championing solutions to the housing affordability challenges facing Central Oregon. Members of the community and media are invited to attend and learn more.

Partnerships between First Story, NeighborImpact, and industry leaders such as homebuilder Hayden Homes and building materials supplier PARR Lumber make this unique pathway to homeownership possible without government subsidies. United by a commitment to community stewardship, the like-minded

organizations and a generous network of individual donors work together to create new opportunities for families to achieve homeownership.

"Our organizations exist to help build stronger communities," said Sonia Capece, HomeSource director at NeighborImpact. "And it is our hope that this First Story Home Dedication will inspire others to realize what is possible when we collaborate so that they, too, can develop partnerships that benefit our communities long term."

In support of First Story's mission to empower families to build financial stability and break the cycles of generational poverty, First Story families purchase their home with a special zero-down, zero-interest, 30-year mortgage. The low-cost loan helps free up resources for education, enriching activities for children and avoiding debt. Families also complete homebuyer education with partners like NeighborImpact, which provides guidance on understanding home loans, credit scores, the purchase process, and fair housing rights.

As high building costs drive up home prices across the region, homebuilding partner Hayden Homes and others provide in-kind gifts of expertise, labor, and materials. These local collaborations fill needs at all stages of preparing a family for homeownership and enable construction of homes with the same market value and curb appeal as any other home on the block in the Hayden Homes communities where First Story homes are located.

"We are grateful to partners who see the value in contributing in-kind gifts that, together, allow us to build affordable homeownership opportunities for local families," said Claire Duncan, executive director of First Story. "Everyone has their area of expertise, whether that be homeowner education, building materials, or knowledgeable construction crews—it takes everyone working in sync to sustain healthy communities where families can thrive."

To date, First Story has helped 129 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
- 23% identify as minority households
- 25% are families with members with disabilities