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Gary North

Compass Commercial Construction welcomes **Gary North** as vice president of construction. North brings more than 30 years of commercial construction leadership experience to the company, where he will oversee the continued growth of the construction division while strengthening relationships with clients, industry partners, and the Central Oregon development community.

North spent approximately 25 years with R&H Construction, advancing from project manager to vice president and partner. During his first decade with the firm, he was based in Portland and periodically traveled to Central Oregon to oversee projects. He relocated to Bend full time in 2011 and spent the next 16 years leading the company's Central Oregon division, helping grow its annual revenue from approximately \$5 million to \$50 million while overseeing projects ranging from tenant improvements to multifamily, hospitality, and large-scale commercial developments. Throughout his career, North has built a reputation for transparent communication, trusted partnerships, and delivering successful projects that generate long-term client relationships.

One project that exemplifies North's approach to construction began with a simple conversation. After making Bend his full-time home in 2011, he met the owner of Sunriver Brewing while visiting the brewery. That organic introduction developed into a trusted relationship and ultimately led to North's team constructing the company's brewery, converting what had once been a storage unit into a thriving production facility. For North, the project reinforced a lesson that has shaped his career: strong relationships built on trust often create the greatest opportunities.

North is particularly excited about the opportunity to expand Compass Commercial Construction while leveraging the unique collaboration between the company's brokerage, property management, and construction divisions. He believes that bringing these services together under one roof creates meaningful value for clients throughout every stage of the commercial real estate process.

Central Oregon Community College's (COCC) Keith Sherrill, who oversees the Small Business Development Center's (SBDC) small business management program, has been named a 2026 Pat Tillman Scholar. The national honor, which recognizes leadership impact and service to others, awards academic aid to approximately 60 U.S. military service members, veterans or spouses each year. Fewer than 3% of applicants are selected.

Sherrill, a former U.S. Army Ranger and member of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, has been the SBDC small business management program coordinator since 2023. He is currently in his second year of Ph.D. studies at Mississippi State University's community college leadership program.

Among other initiatives at COCC, Sherrill helped launch a program in Central Oregon called Startup Training Resources to Inspire Veteran Entrepreneurship, developed by Syracuse University, one of just eight in the nation. The program helps veterans successfully launch their own business and connect with mentorship.

COCC also announced that the board of directors recently selected member **Jim Porter** to chair the seven-person board for the 2026-27 year. Erin Merz will serve as vice chair of the board.

A former Bend Police chief, Porter represents Zone 6, most of northwest Deschutes County, and will serve as chair through June of 2027. He has served on the COCC board since 2023, holding the position of vice chair for the past year. Porter's college education began at COCC, where he later returned to teach criminal justice for a time. He also serves as board chair for Central Oregon Villages, a nonprofit that develops and operates temporary mini shelter homes. He has lived in Bend since 1991.

Board member **Erin Merz** of Bend represents Zone 5, which encompasses the central and south portions of the city. Merz is the marketing and communications director at Cascades Academy and has been a resident of Bend since 2020.



Keith Sherrill



Jim Porter



Erin Merz



Jessica Higgins



Paul MaMillan

High Desert Chamber Music (HDCM) announces the appointment of **Jessica Higgins** and **Paul MaMillan** to its Board of Directors while recognizing the dedicated service of longtime Treasurer and Board member **Rick Samco**, who concludes his board service after 15 years of leadership.

Samco joined the HDCM Board of Directors in 2011 and has faithfully served as treasurer throughout much of his tenure. Over the past 15 years, he has helped guide the organization's financial stewardship while playing an integral role in its growth and long-term success. During his service, HDCM expanded its acclaimed concert series, launched new educational outreach initiatives, introduced the Celebrity Recital Series, and significantly increased its impact throughout Central Oregon. His thoughtful leadership, sound financial guidance, and steadfast commitment to HDCM's mission have helped position the organization for continued success.

Higgins, founder and managing partner of Invera Wealth Advisors LLC, will assume the role of Board treasurer. Higgins brings extensive experience in financial planning, wealth management, and nonprofit leadership. Prior to founding Invera

Wealth Advisors, she served as senior investment management specialist with Integre Wealth Management of Raymond James and previously worked as program manager for Humane Society International.

MacMillan is the vice president at Washington Trust Bank. Prior to joining Washington Trust Bank, he served as vice president at Bank of the Cascades and First Interstate Bank. MacMillan has also demonstrated a longstanding commitment to community service through his board leadership with Abilitree and Saving Grace.

Isaac Wanasika has joined **Linfield University** as dean of the School of Business. Wanasika joins Linfield after 16 years at the University of Northern Colorado. Most recently, he served as chair of the Department of Management and Hospitality and Event Management. He also served as professor of management. His career combines more than 15 years in higher education with 12 years at Royal Dutch Shell. Combined, those experiences give him a unique perspective on connecting classroom learning with today's business environment.

As dean, Wanasika will lead a School of Business recognized for preparing ethical, innovative leaders. Its personalized education is grounded in the liberal arts. In recent years, the school has earned repeated recognition from Colleges of Distinction for its strong teaching, experiential learning and career preparation. Undergraduate and graduate programs prepare students for careers across fields including accounting, finance, management, marketing, sport management and wine business. Across each program, students develop integrity, global awareness and hands-on experience.

Wanasika succeeds Jennifer Madden, the inaugural dean of Linfield's School of Business, who helped shape the school's identity and expand its academic offerings. Madden served from the school's inception in 2020 until 2025.

Throughout his career, Wanasika has championed innovation in business education. At the University of Northern Colorado, he transformed and expanded academic opportunities in areas including data analytics, hospitality and event management, and the executive MBA program. In addition, Wanasika developed entrepreneurship curricula across campus, a degree-completion pathway for adult learners and embedded microcredentials for career readiness.

Beyond academic program development, Wanasika has raised external funds and built strong partnerships between higher education, business, government and nonprofits. He founded the Weld Startup Ecosystem, a community collaboration in Colorado that strengthens entrepreneurship and regional economic development.

As dean, Wanasika will work closely with faculty, staff, students, alumni and business leaders. Together, they will strengthen experiential learning, cultivate strategic partnerships and expand the school's impact throughout Oregon and beyond. Building on Linfield's tradition of personalized education, he will help prepare graduates to lead organizations, launch ventures and contribute to their communities with integrity and purpose.

Bend Wealth Advisors welcomes **Cindy Hayes**, CFA, as its newest financial advisor. With more than 20 years of experience in corporate finance, strategic planning, valuation, and business advisory services across the U.S., New Zealand, and Japan, Hayes brings extensive expertise to the practice. She spent over a decade at Nike in finance leadership roles supporting strategic investments, financial planning, and global marketplace initiatives. Hayes has a particular passion for helping business owners gain clarity around financial decisions, improve operational efficiency, and achieve long-term goals. Known for her thoughtful, collaborative approach, she helps clients navigate complex financial matters with confidence and direction.

Bend Wealth Advisors also welcomes **Clay Trenz** and **Amanda Brinduse** to the practice following the merger with Acuity Wealth Advisors. Trenz joins as a financial advisor, bringing more than 20 years of experience and a disciplined, evidence-based approach to financial planning and investment strategy. Founder of Acuity Wealth Advisors in 2011, he has helped individuals, families, and businesses throughout Central Oregon pursue long-term financial goals with confidence. Brinduse joins as client relationship manager, leveraging nearly a decade of industry experience to provide exceptional client service, operational support, and personalized care. Together, they strengthen Bend Wealth's commitment to delivering trusted advice and outstanding client experiences.



Cindy Hayes



Clay Trenz



Amanda Brinduse



Wendy Graunitz

The **Family Access Network (FAN)** welcomes new Board of Directors member **Wendy Graunitz** of Bend. Graunitz brings over 30 years of experience in the financial industry, currently working as a mortgage loan officer at OnPoint Community Credit Union. Her financial background and commitment to serving the families of Central Oregon bring immense value to the Board. The FAN Foundation is the 501(c)(3) arm of FAN, founded in 2006 to support the long-term fiscal sustainability of the Family Access Network program.

Graunitz is passionate about investing in her community through volunteerism and financial education, believing that knowledge and access to resources empower people to build stronger financial futures. She regularly supports

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Mid Oregon Receives Fifth Crystal Performance Award

by KYLE FRICK, SVP of Marketing & Community Relations — Mid Oregon Credit Union

Mid Oregon Credit Union received a 2025 Crystal Performance Award from Raddon. Raddon presents these prestigious awards each year to the participants in their Performance Analytics program. The outstanding institutions of 2025 are among the top three percent of institutions analyzed by Raddon, a Fiserv company.

Each recipient credit union was selected based on an analysis of key performance metrics focused on service, member relationships, sales, and financial soundness within their asset class on the Raddon Performance Index. Mid Oregon has received the Crystal Performance Award five times since 2020.

"It is a great honor to be recognized for the fifth year," said Kevin Cole, president and CEO of Mid Oregon. "This level of sustained excellence is a testament to the work our team does every day to build relationships that positively impact our members and the communities in which we operate. We are so honored that Central Oregonians have chosen Mid Oregon Credit Union and entrusted us to help them meet their financial goals."

"We applaud these organizations and their commitment to innovation, operational excellence, driving growth, and creating meaningful impact within their communities," said Bill Handel, general

manager, and chief economist at Raddon. "At Raddon, we are proud to partner with credit unions that set the standard for success in the credit union industry."

Mid Oregon Credit Union is a member-owned, full-service financial cooperative serving Central Oregon since 1957. With more than 53,000 members and over \$917 million in assets, Mid Oregon focuses on building relationships that positively impact people and communities. Beginning in 2026 the field of membership for Mid Oregon expanded to encompass 24 Oregon Counties. The credit union has been recognized as a Top Workplace in Oregon and Southwest Washington for four consecutive years, including 2025, and ranked the #1 credit union in Oregon by *Forbes* in 2023, 2024, and 2025. It also received the *Bend Bulletin's* Best of the Best Community Choice Award in the credit union category for 2023–2025.

Raddon, a Fiserv company, has been providing financial institutions with research-based solutions since 1983. Raddon works exclusively with financial institutions and has a unique understanding of the industry, resulting in the ability to apply practical know-how to the challenges and opportunities financial institutions face. Raddon combines best practices in



(L-R) KYLE FRICK, SR VP MARKETING AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS; JEFF SANDERS, VP INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY; ROBERT DENNIS, SR VP RISK MANAGEMENT; SARAH HIX, SR VP FINANCE; KEVIN COLE, PRESIDENT AND CEO; TINA AMATO, VP BRANCH SERVICES; KARI JOEL, VP HUMAN RESOURCES; MITZI SMITH, VP DIGITAL DELIVERY; DESIREE WALKER, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT/CEO; MATT MITCHELL, CHIEF LENDING OFFICER | PHOTO COURTESY OF MID OREGON CREDIT UNION

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Healing Reins Receives \$25,000 Donation from First Interstate Bank's Believe in Local Campaign

by RYAN ASBURY

Healing Reins recently received a \$25,000 gift from First Interstate Bank and the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation as part of their fifth-annual Believe in Local grant campaign.

Serving children, teens, and adults ages 4 to 94, Healing Reins provides adaptive equine and outdoor-based therapeutic services designed to support emotional, physical, and mental well-being. Each week, more than 250 participants engage in programs ranging from adaptive riding and horsemanship to equine-assisted mental health services and ranch-based occupational therapy. These services support individuals navigating a wide range of challenges, including autism, PTSD, anxiety, depression, developmental disabilities, behavioral challenges, traumatic brain injuries, and emotional trauma. Led by certified instructors, licensed therapists, and supported by more than 200 dedicated volunteers, Healing Reins creates an environment where participants can build confidence, independence, connection, and hope. Their work extends beyond the arena, partnering with families, healthcare providers, and community organizations to ensure each participant receives

individualized support.

"This support helps us ensure that more children, adults, and families can access these life-changing services regardless of their circumstances," said Polly Cohen, executive director of Healing Reins.

Five employees from First Interstate's Bend area, including Lynn Spinoglio, senior commercial relationship manager, nominated Healing Reins for the donation.

"Believe in Local has been a cornerstone of who we are for five years now," Spinoglio said, "and it never gets old to celebrate nonprofit organizations like Healing Reins that are making a real difference in the places we all call home. Bend is better because of the work they do, and First Interstate is proud to invest in that mission."

First Interstate launched the Believe in Local campaign in 2022 to celebrate the Bank's longstanding commitment to the communities it serves. Each year, 40 nonprofit organizations across the Bank's ten-state footprint receive a \$25,000 gift in support of their mission. That results in a total of \$1 million given to nonprofits in the Bank's communities. Healing Reins was selected from a



PHOTO | COURTESY OF HEALING REINS

pool of over 640 nominations thanks to its alignment with the Bank's philanthropic goals.

Through the Believe in Local campaign and other community involvement, First Interstate directs a meaningful portion of our earnings back into the communities we serve. These funds aid in the improvement of workforce development, boost early childhood education, and help mitigate poverty.

healingreins.org
firstinterstate.com/believeinlocal
firstinterstate.com

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youth and community members by sharing practical financial guidance and encouraging financial confidence. Outside of her professional life, Graunitz enjoys spending time outdoors and taking advantage of Oregon's sunshine.

Commission Chair **Dennis Doherty** has retired after more than four years of service to the **Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission** (OLCC), including nearly three years as its Chair. Commissioner **Alicia Hays** has been appointed by Governor Tina Kotek to serve as the Commission's next Chair, ensuring continued leadership as the agency maintains its mission of protecting public health and safety while serving Oregon's alcohol and cannabis industries. This change was effective June 24, 2026.

Doherty joined the Commission in 2022 in one of the most challenging periods in the agency's history. He later became Commission Chair in October 2023, and under his leadership, the Commission helped restore stability following a leadership transition while also taking steps to improve governance and transparency and restore public trust.

During his tenure as chair, the Commission appointed an executive director, oversaw significant progress on the agency's new 350,000-square-foot distilled spirits distribution warehouse in Canby; advanced the implementation of the Cannabis and Alcohol Management Program (CAMP); expanded the Commission from seven to nine members; and continued modernization efforts that positioned the agency for long-term success.

To this new role, Hays brings both her three years of service as an OLCC

Commissioner during a very busy time for the agency and her impressive public service background.

Hays joined the Commission in October 2023 and brings more than three decades of leadership in public health and human services. She retired as director of Lane County Health & Human Services after a distinguished career focused on behavioral health, disability services, public health, juvenile justice, and programs supporting children and families. A longtime advocate for equity and inclusion, Hays also served four terms on the Eugene School Board and was recognized as Oregon School Board Member of the Year in 2020.

As Chair, Hays will lead the Commission as it continues to modernize agency operations, strengthen regulatory oversight and ensure Oregon's alcohol and cannabis industries are regulated in a manner that protects public health and safety while supporting responsible businesses throughout the state.

Doherty's retirement marks the conclusion of a transformational chapter for the Commission. It's part of a new beginning, an era of leadership focused on continuing the agency's progress and commitment to its mission, ensuring all Oregonians can enjoy the benefits of our well-regulated system for generations to come. That's Oregon's way.

The **Bend-LaPine Education Foundation** announces a recent grant award from the Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation. The \$5,000 award will help to fund the Foundation's Classroom Enrichment projects.

The Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians has a longstanding tradition of supporting its communities. In 1997, the Tribe formalized this commitment by creating a grantmaking foundation. The Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation awards grants to nonprofit organizations that serve the public in Coos, Deschutes, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, and Lane counties. Its primary areas of support include basic needs, abuse prevention and intervention, education, health and wellness, and community support.