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Dean Huffine

HWA Civil Engineering & Surveying announced that **Dean Huffine** has moved to Bend and joined the company. Huffine is a native of Oklahoma City and a graduate of the University of Oklahoma with experience in civil engineering design and project management, including work on large-scale public infrastructure and land development projects.

Huffine will support a variety of civil engineering projects, helping HWA continue its mission of delivering thoughtful, high-quality solutions tailored to the needs of Central Oregon.



Kristyn Fix

Kristyn Fix, business and community engagement manager at **East Cascades Works** (EC Works), has earned the Certified Workforce Development Professional (CWDP) with Business Services Endorsement credential through the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals.

Fix is one of only nine active CWDPs in Oregon and the only CWDP in the state to hold the Business Services Endorsement. The nationally recognized credential validates expertise in workforce development, while the endorsement recognizes specialized competencies in business engagement, workforce solutions, economic development and talent pipeline development.

At EC Works, Fix builds relationships among businesses, community partners, education and training providers, and workforce organizations to connect resources and develop collaborative solutions that strengthen the regional workforce system and support businesses and communities.



Cameron Stearns

Cameron Stearns, CEO and CFO of **Mountain Rose Herbs** (MRH), has been appointed to the Purpose Pledge Board, joining a coalition of business leaders advancing a more accountable and purpose-driven approach to commerce.

Created by Dr. Bronner's, One Step Closer, and LIFT Economy, Purpose Pledge provides a framework for companies seeking to align business operations with the well-being of people, communities, and the natural systems on which all prosperity depends. The initiative reflects a growing movement to measure success not only through financial performance, but also through positive social and environmental impact.

Stearns' appointment recognizes Mountain Rose Herbs' longstanding commitment to stewardship. For nearly four decades, the company has championed organic agriculture, ethical sourcing, environmental responsibility, and community investment while demonstrating that purpose and profitability can work hand in hand. As an Oregon Benefit Company and a member of Purpose Pledge, Mountain Rose Herbs has formally embedded its commitment to serving people, communities, and the environment alongside financial success.

Stearns, a licensed CPA with a strong financial and operational background, will serve alongside other leaders to help guide the continued evolution of Purpose Pledge and support companies seeking practical ways to integrate purpose into governance, operations, and long-term business strategy.

Stearns' appointment reinforces Mountain Rose Herbs' role within a growing movement of organizations working to redefine business success through transparency, accountability, and long-term stewardship.



Tiffany Huey



James Erickson

COCC welcomes two new advisers, **Tiffany Huey** and **James Erickson**, to the COCC Small Business Development Center (SBDC) team. Both bring fresh expertise, practical experience and a shared commitment to helping Central Oregon businesses start, grow and adapt.

Erickson is an entrepreneur with more than 20 years of experience building and operating businesses. He founded, bootstrapped, and grew StrideBox, a subscription company, from startup to more than $3 million in revenue. He worked with and consulted with hundreds of consumer brands, applying his experience in marketing, sales, operations, customer acquisition and financial management.

Before StrideBox, Erickson owned and operated a marketing agency, helping businesses develop marketing strategies, strengthen customer acquisition and identify growth opportunities.

He is a Marine Corps veteran and holds a Bachelor of Science in business administration from Oregon State University. His practical experience gives him perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Huey brings more than 25 years of experience in marketing, ecommerce, brand strategy and executive leadership across consumer packaged goods, retail and food service. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in international relations and economics from American University and completed executive education at The Wharton School.

As a fourth-generation business owner, Huey has firsthand experience revitalizing and growing a heritage company from strategy and pricing to cash flow, operations, wholesale, ecommerce and customer acquisition. She understands both the big-picture decisions and everyday realities of running a business.

At the SBDC, she helps owners clarify priorities, solve problems creatively, strengthen their financial and marketing foundations and turn ambitious ideas into achievable next steps.



Melissa Lovemark



Jeff Gullickson

Bethlehem Inn recognizes **Melissa Lovemark** for her dedicated service on our Board of Directors and as Board treasurer, while warmly welcoming **Jeff Gullickson** as a new board member and Treasurer.

Lovemark has been a valued member of the Bethlehem Inn family, generously sharing her time, financial expertise, and thoughtful leadership in support of our mission. During her service as treasurer, she helped provide important financial oversight and guidance as Bethlehem Inn continued to navigate the changing needs of our organization and the community we serve.

Beyond her professional expertise, Lovemark brought a genuine commitment to the people behind our mission. We are incredibly grateful for her service, her partnership, and the many ways she has helped strengthen Bethlehem Inn. We wish her all the best and thank her for the lasting impact she has made.

We are also excited to welcome Gullickson to the Bethlehem Inn Board of Directors and into the role of treasurer. He brings valuable experience, a strong connection to our community, and a willingness to put his skills to work in service of others. We look forward to the perspective and leadership he will bring as Bethlehem Inn continues to grow, strengthen our programs, and pursue new opportunities to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness throughout Central Oregon.

Volunteer board leadership is an essential part of a strong nonprofit organization. We are fortunate to have community leaders like Lovemark and Gullickson who are willing to share their experience, time, and talents in support of our work.



Martin Girardi

Martin Girardi, an alumnus of the University of the West of England, Bristol, has been selected as a 2026 Video Systems Engineering Intern in the Science & Engineering Internship Program and will sail aboard Ocean Exploration Trust (OET)'s Exploration Vessel (E/V) *Nautilus* during its 2026 expedition season. Originally from Bend, Girardi was selected as one of 19 interns from hundreds of applicants and will join the team aboard E/V *Nautilus* in September and October to explore the ocean around the Hawaiian Islands. This 20-day expedition will start and end in Honolulu and utilize the ROV, mapping, and telepresence systems of E/V *Nautilus* to survey previously unsurveyed deep seafloor around the Hawaiian Islands, with a focus on unexplored ridges and seamounts in the eastern portion of the Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Sanctuary, and abyssal plain habitats southwest of the Main Hawaiian Islands.

Ocean Exploration Trust, a nonprofit founded by Dr. Robert Ballard, operates with a mission to explore the unknown parts of the ocean, seeking out new discoveries while pushing the boundaries of technological innovation, STEAM education, and outreach. Expeditions center on scientific exploration of the seafloor, collaboration with the broader scientific community, and engagement of audiences of all ages via telepresence technology. The team has traveled around the world, helping understand the deep ocean and sharing discoveries live with the world through NautilusLive.org.

As a Video Systems Engineering Intern, Girardi will learn to operate camera controls for the ship and subsea video systems, and work with lead engineers in the operation and maintenance of all video systems aboard *Nautilus*.

OET's internships train students in the at-sea environment and provide real-world experience to further develop academic interests and professional career paths via participation in the Nautilus Exploration Program. These interns come from community colleges, undergraduate, service academies, and graduate programs in ocean and atmospheric sciences, seafloor mapping, systems engineering, film, and electrical, mechanical, aerospace, and robotics engineering.

People worldwide can engage with Girardi and the explorers onboard via NautilusLive.org, a 24-hour live-streaming web portal that brings expeditions from the field to explorers on shore through telepresence technology and social media. Local schools, summer programs, and community groups are encouraged to schedule free, live one-on-one Q&A sessions with explorers on the ship available daily.

Rimrock Trails Treatment Services welcomes **Dani McCallister** to the team as the assessment and resource center program lead at the Prineville Outpatient Clinic.

McCallister brings 18 years of human services experience in community connections for youth and families, including launching the System of Care of Central Oregon. Born and raised in Prineville, she is passionate about serving and strengthening services in her hometown.

In her new role, McCallister leads the Assessment Resource Center (ARC), which offers same-day behavioral health assessments and connects youth ages 18 and under with mental health and substance use treatment.

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Bend's Public (Rock) Choir Celebrates Ten Years & the Release of Creator Deena Noroian's New Book, *Loud*

by GENENE CHEATHAM — VOICE UP, LLC

Ten years ago, Bend voice coach and professional singer Deena Noroian, formerly Deena Kamm, had a simple idea: give her voice students a place to actually use what they were learning.

That idea became Public (ROCK) Choir — and what began as an opportunity for local singers to get out of the lesson room and sing together has grown into a beloved Central Oregon community event that has brought thousands of voices together over the past decade.

On Monday, September 7, Public (ROCK) Choir kicks off its tenth anniversary season with its regular monthly event from 6-8pm at UPP Liquids in the Box Factory in Bend. Public (ROCK) Choir takes place on the first Monday of every month, September through June, bringing the community together for a new night of music each time.

Admission is $20, and newcomers are welcome. No auditions, no singing experience and no ongoing commitment are required. The event is recommended for ages 18 and older.

Public (ROCK) Choir is not a traditional choir.

Participants are encouraged to "SING YOUR FACE OFF" alongside a live rock band in a fun, non-threatening environment where all skill levels are welcome. Noroian leads the group through an entire evening of well-known rock and pop favorites, giving everyone in the room the chance to sing great songs — LOUD. No hymns, chanting or folk spirituals. Just well-known rock and pop songs you know from the radio and pop culture.

"I created Public (ROCK) Choir because my students needed somewhere to go sing," says Noroian. "Voice lessons are awesome, but ultimately the voice is meant to be used out in the world — by everyone! I wanted people to experience what happens when you put a whole room full of voices together and give everyone permission to really let go and sing."

Over the next decade, PRC became a regular part of Bend's music and community scene, bringing together people of different ages, backgrounds and levels of musical experience around one very simple philosophy: Sing Your Face Off.

The ten-year anniversary also comes as Noroian celebrates another milestone: the release of her new book, *LOUD: The Voice That Cures Everything*.

The book grew in part from what Noroian observed over decades of teaching and leading her choir — including what happened when ordinary people were given permission to use more of the voices they already had.



PHOTO | COURTESY OF VOICE UP LLC

LOUD explores the connection between the human voice, the diaphragm, the body and emotional well-being, and asks a deceptively simple question: What if the human voice isn't just a communication tool — but an overlooked part of our physical and emotional health?

Noroian's work has since expanded well beyond singers. She is the founder of VOICE UP, LLC, where she brings her work with voice, communication and human performance to executives, organizations and other professional voice users. She also continues to operate Sing Bend, her Central Oregon voice studio.

But Public (ROCK) Choir remains the community laboratory where much of it began.

"For ten years, I've watched people walk into PRC saying, 'I can't sing,' and then watched them become part of this enormous sound," Noroian says. "There is something incredibly powerful about that. You don't have to be a professional singer. You don't have to audition. You just have to show up and use the voice you came with."

singbend.com/public-rock-choir

The Future of Food is Local

Edible Central Oregon Connects Readers to the Source

by REBEKAH ALTMAN, Publisher & Editor — Edible Central Oregon

A new publication launched this summer that highlights our region's vibrant food culture with compelling storytelling, luscious imagery, and recipes to savor in every issue.

Available four times per year in print and digital formats, *Edible Central Oregon* shares stories of the people who nourish us and bring Central Oregon flavors to life, featuring a broad range of topics that appeal to foodies and novices, locals and visitors alike.

Edible Central Oregon acts as a community hub to amplify the work of local food growers and producers to an audience of 5,000+ readers, partnering with regional markets, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to share this message. High Desert Food & Farm Alliance (HDFFA) is one such partner.

"HDFFA is excited to partner with *Edible Central Oregon* because we share a commitment to celebrating seasonal, regional food and the people who produce it," says Ann Pistacchi-Peck, HDFFA associate director and market manager for the Bend Farmers Market. "Connecting more people with local farmers, ranchers, and food businesses leads to a stronger local food system, which also boosts our entire economy."

The magazine is free at distribution locations such as markets and boutiques; restaurants, coffee shops, and breweries; and hotels, museums, and visitor centers. Publication is made possible by a diverse and growing group of advertising partners.

If your business would like to reach a passionate, well-informed audience while broadcasting its support for a thriving regional community, *Edible Central Oregon* offers a small number of advertising placements each issue. The deadline to be included in the winter issue is October 8.

ediblecentraloregon.com

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PHOTO | COURTESY OF REBEKAH ALTMAN

Who's Who

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Tyler Mackeson

Dickey Educational Endowment welcomes **Tyler Mackeson**, founder and lead advisor of Mackeson Advisory, to its board of directors.

Mackeson brings two decades of leadership, business and investment experience to the organization. Since 2009, he has served hundreds of families as an investment and financial advisor. He currently leads a team of professionals focused on providing clients with attentive service, stewardship and financial guidance.

An Oregon native, Mackeson's personal mission is to positively impact the lives of others. His passion for addressing substance abuse is rooted in success stories within his extended family, his faith and his belief that lasting change can happen in an instant.



Craig Biss

Most golfers spend a lifetime chasing a single hole-in-one. **Bend Golf Club** member **Craig Biss**, who turns 75 this month, made two on consecutive days. The second came at a moment no one at the club will soon forget.

On Thursday, September 10, Biss aced the club's 180-yard 6th hole. The shot was witnessed by his playing partners Todd Steimer, David Lyon and Bevan Nicolaisen, Bend Golf Club's membership director.

The next morning, Friday, September 11, Biss did it again. His tee shot on the 115-yard 11th hole found the bottom of the cup beneath a commemorative American flag flown in honor of the 25th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. That ace was witnessed by his wife, Peggy Biss; his daughter-in-law, Kelsey Biss; and family friend Kathy Bruckner of South Dakota.

The odds of an amateur golfer making a hole-in-one are commonly estimated at 12,500 to 1. Achieving two on consecutive days is far rarer, and no odds can capture the extraordinary timing of the second: on the 11th hole, on the morning of September 11, beneath a flag flown in remembrance.