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2022 Columbia County

BUSINESS GUIDE

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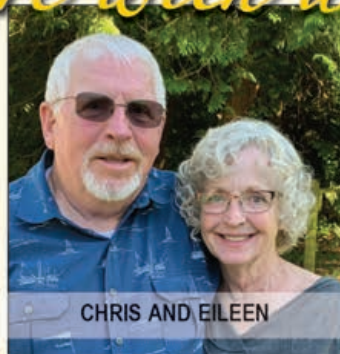
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2022 COLUMBIA COUNTY BUSINESS GUIDE

The 2022 edition of the Columbia County Business Guide reflects the positive spirit of our community as local businesses and residents work together through the challenges of the marketplace.

Through smart practices, the hard-working business operators and their employees have demonstrated faith and have showed their perseverance facing state and local health and safety restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic aftermath of the pandemic, inflation and other hurdles.

The selection of the stories in this Business Guide shows how, despite the challenges, Columbia County is moving forward, and our economy is strong and thriving.

The following stories collected through the last several months show the strength of Columbia County is with its people, our passion for what we do, the enrichment of our neighborhoods and the natural beauty of our region.

Our staff at The Chronicle and The Chief take pride in accelerating our positive partnerships with local businesses through multiple platforms and products to help strengthen their sustainability and propel growth.

We encourage you to visit our websites daily at thechronicleonline.com and thechiefnews.com and follow our Facebook pages for the latest insightful and impactful business and community news. Our web-

sites provide daily news and information to help keep you informed about what's happening throughout Columbia County.

Our E-Editions, included free with each subscription, allows you to reference past business articles or other topics.

We encourage you to support our local businesses and to explore all that Columbia County has to offer.

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Columbia County's collaborative environment

PAUL VOGEL GUEST COLUMN

By all indications, Columbia County is a good place for business

We're in a different place today, economically, then we were last year with its COVID Delta variants and public health restrictions impacting businesses, customers, and employees alike. Concerns still exist; challenges remain. But we are navigating through it with new business opportunities realized and others in development. New investment of capital at any level is key to driving our economy. Individual initiative and partner collaboration is alive and well across Columbia County.

At Columbia Economic Team we're experiencing increased interest by outside, private investors in new plants and relocations. Industrial real estate – which we can better market thanks to a comprehensive Industrial Land Inventory led by the Port of Columbia County – is on the move. For example, the long-dormant Armstrong property in St. Helens was recently purchased by Danson's for near-term manufacturing and addition of its distribution center down the road. With multiple new plant investments underway across the country, we're pleased to have been able to attract one of Danson's to Columbia County.

We're also working with an agricultural business that operates large-scale hydroponic food growing all across the US. Locating in Rainier would provide it with market and logistical advantages; generating 100+ new jobs at full build-out would be advantageous to the community and our regional economy. The competition is stiff, but the collaborative effort to win this investment among the city, fire and drainage districts, the county, utilities, private citizens, local companies, and state agency partners alongside the Columbia Economic Team is a significant achievement in itself that will pay dividends for years.

Local business expansions and startups are happening across all sectors and throughout our county. In St. Helens, Control Solutions recently expanded into a new building, increasing its labor force by nearly 20%. In the hospitality sector, Crooked



Creek Brewery opened its first location, and The Klondike has re-opened a full bar and restaurant on the downtown riverfront, with its hotel's restoration in the future.

The Klondike is also a great example of local collaboration. The new St. Helens Main Streets organization led the charge for an Historic Preservation and Restoration grant that will help the business immensely, ensuring that The Klondike's historic legacy lives on. Columbia Economic Team was privileged to support this grant, among several other local initiatives led by other partners.

Restaurants and retail are emerging in other parts of the county, as well, with Holy Smoker BBQ, Jessie Marie Art Studio, and Red Door Reclaimed in Vernonia, a food cart pod planned for Scappoose, and several professional services companies growing in multiple communities. Growth in professional services is a significant indicator of business health and balance in an area economy.

The Port recently recruited a UAV company to the airport, with much more potential in that sector. And we're all closer than ever to realizing the value of the \$2 billion proposed renewable, non-fossil fuel investment by NEXT Renewables in the Clatskanie area, a remarkable alignment of private energy investment with Oregon's climate change and renewable fuels goals.

Also, in Clatskanie, a Food Hub has appeared, linking to new opportunities for farmers, small producers, and the food system.

These are business investments made, or close to realization, that add depth, dimension, and choices to our economic landscape – for customers, workers, and other new businesses.

This kind of business growth parallels other important economic indicators. New housing construction is on the rise. In St. Helens and Scappoose alone, there are more than 700 new housing units of various types

either under construction or in planning. Clatskanie is processing its first new residential development in quite some time, and Vernonia is comprehensively addressing housing needs in multiple ways.

Columbia Economic Team is proud to be partnered with the County, Columbia Pacific Economic Development District, Columbia Action Team, and other key stakeholders on a countywide Housing Implementation Plan to benefit livability in each of our smaller communities, and the county as whole.

Small business is the core of our economy, and manufacturing is our regional priority – and strength. Every city, plus the County, invested in our first-ever Business Resource and Small Business Development Center, established this year. With its Keep it Local program providing business promotion, marketing, navigation, and even digital training – and the SBDC providing free and more in-depth 1:1 business advising, Columbia Economic Team's own growth in the small business ecosystem provides substantial support to this sector.

Innovation also is key. Columbia Pacific just received an Innovation Hub grant that will foster start-up and entrepreneurial opportunity; St. Helens has been identified for the GRO program; OMIC and Columbia Economic Team are partnered around a Centers of Innovative Excellence Grant and an Advanced & Additive Manufacturing small business incubator that is earmarked for federal start-up funding.

Even in an economy dramatically affected by global events, our local economy is strong if you look at the indicators. The best economic indicator is successful private initiative and investment. Another is public investment, policy, planning and program delivery in livable communities and workforce development. A collaborative environment that attracts, values, and cultivates these investments and initiatives is what keeps our communities, and our economy, strong.

Paul Vogel is the Executive Director of the Columbia Economic Team. He may be reached at 503-805-5139 or at paulvogel@columbiacountyoregon.com.

Small Changes, Big Results

JAK MASSEY GUEST COLUMN

We have all experienced challenges in the past several years – it's safe to say that businesses of all types and sizes faced financial struggles. Surprisingly some businesses thrived, others managed just enough to get by, and some had to close their doors. But they all had to find ways to maintain business operations from day to day, keep safety in mind at all times, and still focus on the bottom line. There was a process, changes had to be made and staying positive was essential.

The Chambers role can flex with the times

The role of the Chamber also adjusted. It just so happened that in the first few months of 2020, an entirely new Board was being established; one by one, these new members began fulfilling the necessary positions on the Board, not knowing the challenges that they would soon be facing. Keeping in mind that the Board of Directors are serving in a volunteer capacity, but with all the responsibilities of running a business. And the purpose of the Chamber of Commerce Board is to support local businesses, advocate for growth and development and form partnerships with other organizations to build a stronger economic community. This is a big job! Now add in that these Board members also work full-time managing their business or in a professional working setting. This new Board quickly bonded and began offering support.

As a membership-based organization, the Board decided to extend an open invitation to all local business owners to attend Chamber networking events that had traditionally been "members only." Advocating economic stability for all local businesses, regardless of membership status and seeing a greater need for all business owners to join forces. During 2020 and most of 2021, the Chamber found ways to support and encourage small businesses by sharing information about grant opportunities, promoting, referring, and utilizing these businesses whenever possible in maintaining solidarity for our local business community. Support efforts also included, offering virtual meetings and events and utilizing social media for promotional opportunities and up-

dates about pandemic protocols.

During this time, the Chamber also experienced challenges – one of those being staff turnover. In times when they had no staff support, the Board stepped in to manage the many day-to-day operations of the Chamber, maintain member connections and financial aspects for business and the building. Some may not be aware of just how much time they dedicated – beyond the basic day-to-day tasks, they gave the Chambers website a new look, created a new and improved logo and with help from other volunteers and local organizations, and managed to promote and host a 100-Year Railway Station Celebration, an event acknowledging existence of the building now known as the Chamber of Commerce. The event was a big undertaking. It was very successful, bringing some much-needed merriment and a chance to involve much of the community.

Getting the right support

In October of 2021, I accepted a part-time

position with the Chamber, as the Member Relationship Manager – a position they had not had in the past but determined the change may be good. Coming from my previous job of 27 years, in which I had worked my way up from receptionist to business partner. I had some experience with business management, corporate development, marketing, motivating staff, and keeping track of finances. This opportunity came at the perfect time; I was ready for change! I was eager to learn more about the Chamber, its members and put my marketing skills to the test. And if there is one thing that I have really tapped into with those 27 years of being a part of growing business, it's that I can see potential as well as red flags.

Small towns have big hearts

I am impressed and encouraged by what the South Columbia County Chamber of

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Commerce has the potential to do and offer our local businesses and the community as well in return. The business owners truly want their neighboring businesses to do well – even if are considered a competitor. This is refreshing! Not only will this promote growth, but it will create longevity within our business community. The non-profit organizations thrive because they get the support needed to serve their purpose, the support they get is because it is a deserving cause.

A little progress each day adds up to big results

In the past 10 months, I have seen progress each day. The South Columbia County Chamber of Commerce now has two different opportunities for networking each month – our Coffee & Commerce (for the

early birds) is scheduled every 2nd Friday of the month from 8 a.m. - 9 a.m. and our Happy Hour (for those who need a little downtime at the end of a workday) takes place every 4th Thursday of each month. Both events highlight a local business and offer our members a chance to promote their business and/or event. We publish our SCC Newsletter twice a month, going out to nearly 800 subscribers made up of citizens, business owners, government personnel and anyone who interested in local events and business tips.

We are expanding our partnerships and building on opportunities to work together with organizations and neighboring Chamber of Commerce boards to share resources and tools to better serve our members. We are adding programs that inspire our members to encourage new memberships. We are responding to the needs of our members more efficiently with personal invites and reminders for events and

taking the time to greet each new member in person, offer welcome kits and a full review of benefits.

In the past three months, the Chamber has gained three new Board Members - each with a unique skill, knowledge and enthusiasm for continuing improvement and exposure on behalf of the Chamber, its members, and our community. They are providing more support for our programs, marketing opportunities and financial stability.

New, comprehensive outreach

Most recently, we are in the process of revitalizing our Ambassador Program – business owners and managers with current membership status can serve on a committee as a Chamber Ambassador. These people are professionals in their field: Their knowledge and experience will allow for some very productive brainstorm sessions – for continued development of member benefits, expanding to our networking events and improving upon our membership processes. They will be an extension of the Chamber and will also be able to answer questions about membership for new and existing members. This program will expand and impact the growth of the Chamber and community interaction. We currently have four committees, each serving a specific facet for a successful Chamber of Commerce: Marketing, networking, events and building use.

In conclusion

When a business makes the decision to join their local Chamber of Commerce, they are making an investment. Speaking for the South Columbia County Chamber of Commerce – my job, my passion, my goal is to ensure that our members get their monies worth and then some. Paying it forward every day, and each new day brings a chance to make another small change for big results.

Jak Massey is the Member Relationship Manager for the South Columbia County Chamber of Commerce, which serves Columbia City, Scappoose, St. Helens and Vernonia. She may be reached at 503-397-0685 or mgr@scchamber.org.

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Inside the new Klondike

JEREMY C. RUARK

JRUARK@COUNTRYMEDIA.NET

The much-awaited opening of the Klondike Tavern in the Riverfront District of St. Helens took place Friday evening, June 24, 2022.

The 8,600-square-foot iconic building along the Riverfront District in St. Helens had been sitting idle since 2018. The building was then listed on the market for \$799,000 by Sadaka Realty LLC.

Portland resident Holcombe Waller purchased the Klondike in late 2021 for \$650,000 and began a massive effort to restore and reopen the structure. The first-floor project included reopening a dining area.

Waller invited The Chronicle in for a sneak peek at what's been done to renovate the building and prepare it for the opening.

"This building has been restored to a far more applicable condition than it was," Klondike Tavern Manager Tyler Ryan said. "There has been an overwhelming amount of construction. It's a very old building with good bones. Our goal is to modernize the place and make it homey again."

Ryan describes the theme of the décor as old-time Victoria.

"That just seems to be the natural feeling of the building," he said. "I don't think we wanted to stray away from that. We have embraced each room and tried to improve on that."

"We are excited for people to step in and see how we've interpreted the old-world charm of this historic space, and how we are extending that to lovely ambiance, delicious food and specialty cocktails," Waller said.

Ryan describes the Klondike Tavern's menu as simple and adjusted to the market rate.

"You'll be looking at a northwest rustic, homestyle comfort, tavern-bar fair food, but we are trying to make sure our quality and standards are impeccable," he said. "We are lucky that we can experiment and find out what people really desire here. The signature food and drinks will likely be defined by what people like, and we can adapt the business to the town culture."



Jeremy C. Ruark / The Chronicle

The new name, Klondike Tavern, graces this new sign on the front of the historic building.

Approximately 15 to 20 employees will support the limited openings, dinner service into the late evenings, Wednesday through Saturday each week, according to Ryan. The tavern will seat approximately 60 people.

"We're going to make sure everything is refined perfectly for that small window and then certainly expand from there," Ryan said. "We first want to see where the business flow is."

What's next?

According to Ryan, performing arts are also being considered for the tavern.

"There are always possibilities to do unique and fun things in a bar and restaurant, so it will be an interesting balancing act for private events," he said. "We are looking forward to taking advantage of those private events and performances. Based on some of the previous experiments we conducted, it is definitely doable to have some musicians in to perform."

Ryan said he is hopeful the city will develop additional street parking in the Riverfront District.

"That certainly will be an issue and a great opportunity for everybody in the commu-

nity to get on the same page as far as what might be done to address that issue because of everyone's hopefully improved success," he said.

More additions at the building are in the works, according to Waller.

"We're hoping to activate the patio area, open a small bakery and coffee outpost on the corner (of the building lot)," he said.

Waller said the hotel is being actively engineered and designed within the historic guidelines of the city, state and federal agencies that help offer various development incentives.

"A recent \$200,000 grant will establish a baseline for approaching this huge project, but it will take investors and significant lending financing to complete," Waller said. "My hope is that this financing comes together by the end of the year, but it may take longer. The construction itself will likely be a year longer. So, we're looking to late 2023 or beyond for that opening announcement."

Waller said his vision of restoring the hotel portion of the Klondike building includes adding seismic modern life and safety standards and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access to two floors as well as adding 19 bathrooms.

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“All the while preserving the historic aspects of the building that keep the renovation in line with historic standards,” he said. “But if the restaurant succeeds, and with that initial state grant going into capital improvements to the building, these would be game changers,” Waller said. “These are essential blocks I’m trying to establish prior to the financing of the hotel.”

The Klondike Tavern will take dinner reservations at hello@theklondiketavern.com or by calling 503-782-8002. See the website at TheKlondikeTavern.com.

Community connection

In a published interview with The Chronicle in the fall of 2021, Waller described the Riverfront District in St. Helens as “a super iconic area.”

“Especially with the (city’s) plans for redevelopment,” he said. “This building should set a certain standard in the expectation of people in the community. This town was made by individuals, like small businesses, and small property owners. The fabric reflects that and gives it its personality and local flavor. I want to bring that right here at this structure and hopefully extended that in the riverfront development direction.

Waller said he wants to be a part of the city’s successful redevelopment.

“There is so much enthusiasm by the local businesses and property owners here,” he said. “It is individuals working together, so I am trying to participate in that whole



Jeremy C. Ruark / The Chronicle

This sitting area welcomes customers entering the building.



Jeremy C. Ruark / The Chronicle

The Klondike Tavern's bar area.

experience, beautifying the downtown as a local.”

Originally from California, Waller is a performing singer and songwriter. He moved to Portland 17 years ago. He also has

background in renovating buildings.


“I really enjoy hosting and I find that performing is kind of like hosting,” he said.

Klondike history

The Klondike originally served as a 1910 boarding house for local workers in the nearby logging mill and boat docks where McCormick Steam Company constructed steam ships, according to Sadaka Realty LLC. The three-story hotel had a colorful history.

“It seems that behind the hotel were bath houses where ‘working girls’ entertained customers,” Sadaka Realty LLC states in the web page entry listing the hotel for sale or lease.


The hotel was closed in 1961. A fine dining restaurant and saloon later opened on the first floor of the Klondike but eventually was closed.



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Popeyes at St. Helens



JEREMY C. RUARK
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The local restaurant industry is heating up with more variety for customers and more competition for the market.

One of the newest specialized fast food restaurants, Popeyes, opened May 10, 2022. The restaurant chain specializes in fried chicken.

Construction at the business site along Columbia River Highway adjacent to the Grocery Outlet began in October 2021. Hiring signs were placed in front of the new restaurant as construction wrapped up prior to the May opening.

Popeyes operator Luke Pisors said he expected to hire several restaurant leaders and up to 50 team members as employees. The positions range from team members who take care of guests, or frying chicken, to salaried management personnel and shift leaders.

Popeyes is located at 495 S Columbia River Highway in St. Helens.

Jeremy C. Ruark / The Chronicle

Continued on page 11

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From page 10

“Pay will be commensurate with experience and market rates, and all positions include free meals as well,” Pisors said.

The restaurant’s daily schedule was set from 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

St. Helens City Planner Jacob Graichen said much of the base infrastructure was in place on the property before Popeyes was constructed.

“So, this project will be simpler than the previous ones on that overall property, Legacy Clinic, the apartment complex, and the Grocery Outlet. The property was formally known as the Violette’s Villa Mobile Home Park,” Graichen said.

According to the Popeyes national website, Alvin C. Copeland Sr. opened Chicken on the Run in the New Orleans suburb of Arabi, in 1972, serving traditional Southern-fried chicken.

After several months of lackluster performance, he reopened the restaurant as Popeyes after Popeye Doyle of The French Connection movie fame, selling spicy, New Orleans-style chicken.

As of 2021 Popeyes has 3,705 restaurants, which are located in more than 46 states and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and 30 countries worldwide, according to Wikipedia.

The Popeyes in St. Helens is owned by Ambrosia QSR. Pisors describes his company as a multi-brand QSR operating company with over 150 locations in the Pacific Northwest, including Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen and Burger King.

The closest Popeyes to St. Helens includes restaurants in the Portland metro area and in Southwest Washington.



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Where did all the restaurant, hotel workers go?



The pandemic recession was not an equal opportunity offender. The largest job losses were concentrated in restaurants, hotels, tourism facilities, personal care services, and education.

Metro Creative Connection

DANON RUNBERG GUEST COLUMN

Oregon businesses are on the verge of fully recovering all jobs lost from the COVID-19 pandemic recession.

As of June 2022, total nonfarm employment levels were only 0.9% below the previous peak. When looking over the recovery by industry we see a fairly large disparity.

For some industries, employment is now far higher than pre-pandemic levels, such as construction; transportation, warehousing, and utilities; real estate, rental, and leasing; and professional and technical services. Meanwhile other industries remain below their previous peak, such as educational services; leisure and hospitality; other services; and local government.

These disparate trends are not surpris-

ing. The pandemic recession was not an equal opportunity offender. The largest job losses were concentrated in restaurants, hotels, tourism facilities, personal care services, and education. Employment in accommodation and food services, the

sector that includes hotels and restaurants, remains roughly 6% below the previous peak. The industry is sitting with 6,200 fewer jobs than before the pandemic, yet there were nearly 10,800 new unique job ads between April and June as these employers try to ramp back up.

Frustratingly slow

Clearly the demand exists to lead the state's accommodation and food services into a full recovery, but that recovery has been frustratingly slow for many employers with 77% of Oregon vacancies identified as difficult to fill this past spring. The most common response when businesses were asked why their vacancies were difficult to fill? A lack of applicants.

If these restaurants and hotels remain far from recovered and yet the demand for workers is high, it begs the question: where did all the restaurant and hotel workers who were working in the industry before the pandemic go?

To answer this question, we tracked the cohort of pre-COVID accommodation and food services workers (employed in the industry in first quarter 2020) through the end of 2021 using wage records and unemployment insurance (UI) claims. If an Oregon business reported payroll earnings for a worker or a worker was on an Oregon UI

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Celebrating 20 years in Columbia County



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By all indications, Columbia County is a good place for business....

The Columbia Economic Team is committed to the retention, expansion and recruitment of businesses that fuel a balanced economy. That's what we work on every day.

Business and economic growth are occurring throughout Columbia County. That's good for business today, and for businesses and communities tomorrow.

We're privileged to be in the picture with diverse mix of important economic and community building developments:

- The arrival of **Danson's Corporation** and the expansion of **Control Solutions**.
- The start-up and imminent expansion of **Crooked Creek Brewery & Tap Room**, and the re-opening of the **Klondike Tavern** and its Historical Restoration grant through **St. Helens Main Streets**.
- **Five companies** currently exploring location of **new operations in multiple communities** across our county, bringing investment, jobs, and economic diversity.
- **Pacific Stainless Products** continues to lead its industry, receiving the CET **Founders Award**, and **Rightline Equipment** is going full-steam while celebrating **50 Years**.

- Creation of our new **Business Resource & Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**, providing free business advising to anyone, anywhere, and connections to capital and business resources. The growth of **Keep it Local**, its expanding digital marketing reach and **Digital Marketing for Success** courses for small businesses.

- **Columbia Pacific's** new **Innovation Hub** grant, **OMIC's Center for Innovative Excellence** grant, and the new **GRO initiative for entrepreneurship** in St. Helens.

- The opening of the **PPC/OMIC Training Center** and development of our **Regional Workforce Collaborative**.

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claim, this worker showed up in our data. Unfortunately, we don't know anything about those workers who dropped out of the labor force (retired, back to school, etc.) or moved outside the state.

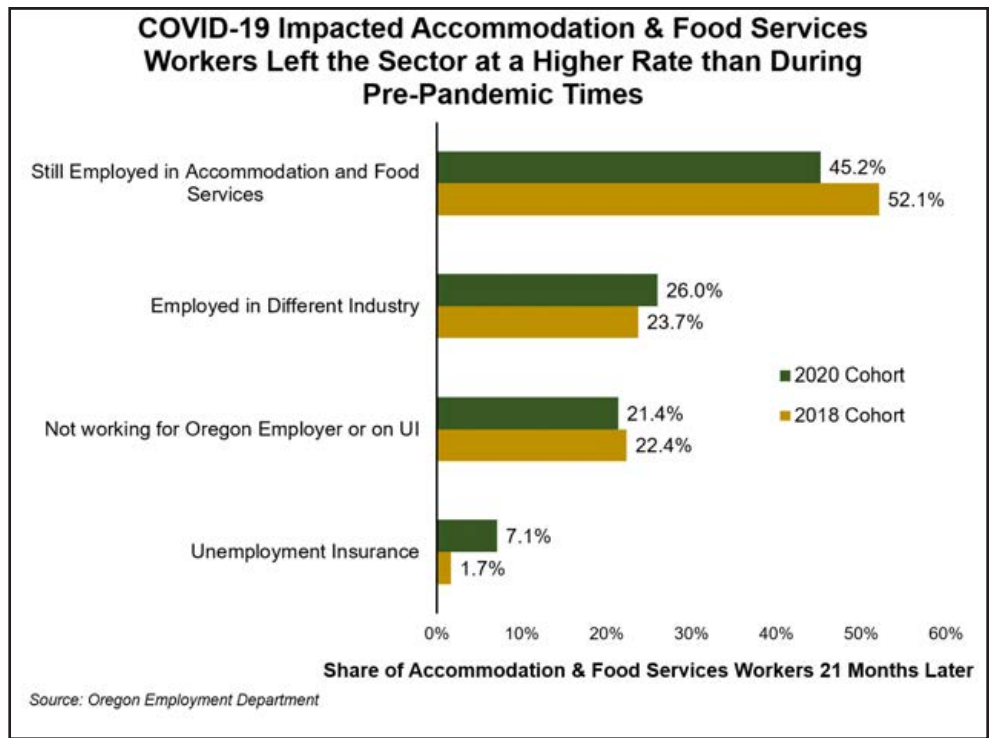
Of the 181,700 workers who had a primary job in accommodation and food services before the pandemic in early 2020, roughly 45% were still employed in the industry by the end of 2021. To put it another way, over half the workers churned out of the industry after nearly two years. Churn or turnover is very common in this industry, as it is highly seasonal, employs large numbers of young workers, and tends to offer lower-paying jobs on average. To get an idea about how normal the turnover was for this COVID-19 impacted cohort of restaurant and hotel workers, we looked back at a cohort of workers from early 2018 and tracked their employment patterns over the same amount of time.

The churn was high for this 2018 cohort of restaurant and hotel workers by the end of 2019, with only 52% of the workforce still primarily employed in a restaurant or hotel. Retention of these workers in the COVID-19 cohort was around 7 percentage points lower than our comparison cohort from 2018.

The first place to look for workers who left the industry is to check if they are still employed in Oregon, but in a different industry. Around 26% of the COVID-19 cohort of restaurant and hotel workers had moved their primary job to a different industry by the end of 2021, a higher share than 24% of the cohort from 2018. There was increased job hopping into different industries during the pandemic.

Where did the workers go?

The industries that received the most restaurant and hotel workers by the end of 2021 were retail trade (6.5% of the original cohort); professional and business services (+3.9%); health care and social assistance (+3.9%); and manufacturing (+2.3%). There are not a lot of patterns to draw from this industry changing. Industry hopping



Courtesy from the Oregon Employment Department

tended to be towards industries less impacted by pandemic closures, higher-paying industries, and less seasonal industries.

Those who left restaurant and hotel jobs to different industries during the pandemic only account for about one-third of the increased churn out of the industry compared with a more normal period of time. The other large difference in churn in this period is movement to an unemployment insurance claim. In the fourth quarter of 2021, 7% of the COVID-19 cohort of restaurant and hotel workers claimed at least one week of unemployment insurance. This was a considerable increase over the 2% of the 2018 restaurant and hotel workforce on UI. The higher share of restaurant and hotel workers on an unemployment insurance claim in fourth quarter 2021 explains roughly two-thirds of the drop-in retention compared with the 2018 cohort.

There are a couple of reasons why a higher share of COVID-19 impacted restaurant and hotel workers were claiming unemployment insurance nearly two years later. This COVID-19 cohort experienced mass layoffs in the spring of 2020. In late 2021, hiring demand waned modestly for restaurants and hotels due to the surging Delta variant. Despite the massive layoff shock at the onset of the pandemic, it is

still surprising to see 7% of the workforce claiming unemployment at a time when labor demand was high for these workers.

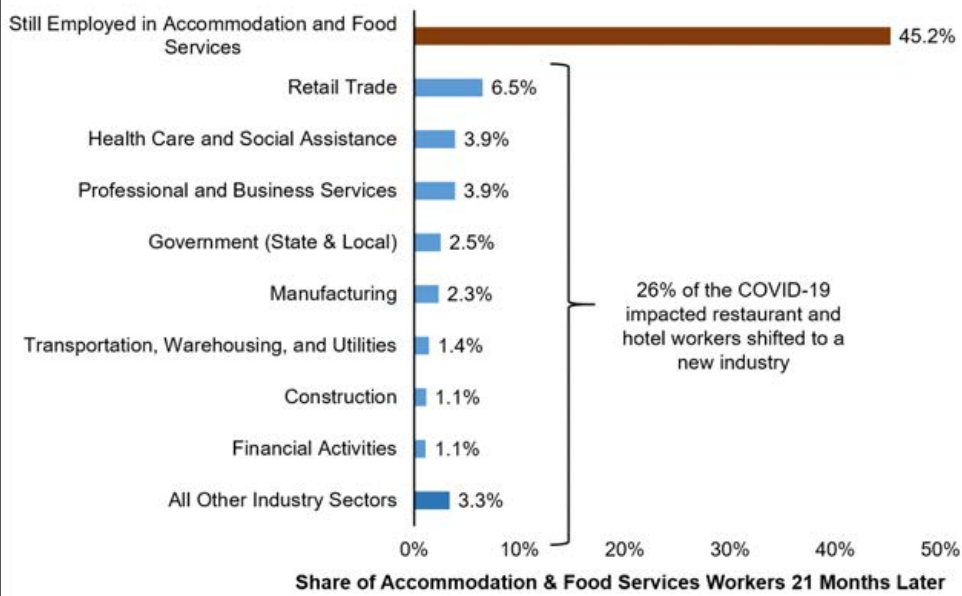
These counts don't tell us the length of UI claims, only that at least one week was claimed in fourth quarter 2021. It is possible that increased business failures, changes in ownership, and other reorganizations could affect the share of the workforce claiming UI in the stretch between jobs after a layoff that occurred much later than the initial COVID-19 mass layoff events. Some of these claimants could have worked for a restaurant or hotel that closed or changed ownership in summer or fall 2021, and their claim would show up here. We don't yet have complete data on business dynamics through 2021, but it has certainly been a tough time to be in the restaurant and hotel business, characterized by labor shortages, unsteady supply chains, and rapidly increasing business costs.

One thing we know for certain

One thing we know for certain: By fourth quarter 2021, the expansion of unemployment insurance through the CARES act

Continued on page 15

Where the COVID-19 Impacted Cohort of Restaurant and Hotel Workers Were Employed by the End of 2021



Source: Oregon Employment Department

Courtesy from the Oregon Employment Department

From page 14

and other federal legislation had expired. Workers who claimed unemployment in fourth quarter 2021 were no longer receiving the more generous weekly UI benefits.

Around 78% of the pre-pandemic accommodation and food services workers have been accounted for by the end of 2021. There were those who remained employed in the industry (45%); those who are now employed in a different industry (26%); and those who had an unemployment insurance claim (7%). The remaining 22% are no longer working a payroll

job or claiming unemployment insurance in Oregon. They may be self-employed, working for a business outside of Oregon, retired, unemployed without UI, in school, or out of the labor force for other reasons.

This may seem like a high share of workers who are unaccounted for, but the share is nearly identical to the 2018 cohort of restaurant and hotel workers who were not impacted by the pandemic. This helps put to rest the theory that there was an increasing share of labor force dropouts among these restaurant and hotel workers during the pandemic.

Why has it been difficult for restaurants and hotels to find workers?

Much of the workforce left the industry. A higher share of workers moved to different industries compared with a more normal period during non-pandemic times. We also saw a higher share of these workers claiming unemployment insurance even after labor demand rebounded. Unemployed workers represent an opportunity for the many businesses trying to hire. Looking for work is a prerequisite for gaining unemployment insurance, which means those folks on UI were active job seekers. In fact, where we are today many of those workers have likely landed back in the workforce. The number of workers on a UI claim in Oregon dropped 31% from the end of 2021 to June 2022.

This was an analysis of the existing workforce employed by a restaurant or hotel just before the pandemic. However, another potential contributing factor of the labor shortage faced by these businesses is the incoming workforce. With a high demand for labor across many industries, it is also possible that many workers entering the workforce (largely young people) who would typically find a job in a restaurant or hotel are finding work in different industries with more consistent hours and less seasonality.

Damon Runberg is a regional economist with the Oregon Employment Department. He may be reached at damon.m.runberg@employ.oregon.gov or at 541-706-0779.

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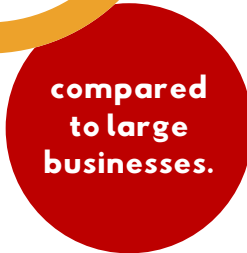


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Since 1974, lifempowered has been providing high quality supports to people who experience Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in Columbia County.

We pride ourselves on focusing on local families, initially starting with those leaving the (now closed) state institution “Fairview” and returning to their home towns. As that was so many years ago, only one person whose family started our agency is still living, but that doesn’t diminish the efforts of those who came before us – and we are eternally grateful.

Service provision has evolved significantly since our inception, from homes that supported 15 or more people, to now supporting 3 people who choose to live together and others who live in their own apartments – all of whom direct their supports with team planning and informed decision making.

Our mission “Supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live the life they choose” guides everything we do. One of our key priorities is to be the premier resource in our community for people with disabilities. A component of that includes revamping of our existing administrative space to include an Empowerment Center. We are excited to announce that this project has been selected by Senators Wyden and Merkley to receive a \$500,000 Federal planning grant. That money will go a long way

toward design and planning for the new site. We will use that funding to ensure we meet all requirements for environmental and architectural specifications, as well as to leverage more grants and contributions from the State, private foundations and our community. We value fiscal integrity and feel it is critical to be responsible stewards of public resources. We would love to hear from community partners and citizens interested in supporting this project – in any capacity.



If you or someone you know is interested in helping with this project, serving on our board, supporting our fundraising efforts or would just like more information, please contact Cindy Stockton, Executive Director at cindys@lifemp.org and don’t forget to check out our website www.lifemp.org to see all we do at lifempowered.

Thank you in advance for your support!

Columbia Pacific Food Bank opens new location



Jeremy C. Ruark / The Chronicle

The new Columbia Pacific Food Bank is located at 14th Street and Columbia Boulevard in St. Helens.

JEREMY C. RUARK

JRUARK@COUNTRYMEDIA.NET

A grand opening and ribbon cutting was held at noon Friday, Aug. 12, 2022 for the Columbia Pacific Food Bank's (CPF) new headquarters on Columbia Boulevard in St. Helens.

The facility has relocated from its former location at 474 Milton Way in St. Helens.

In the following conversation, The Chronicle gains insight about the new facility from CPF Executive Director Alex Tardif.

The Chronicle: What is the significant advantage of this move by the Food Bank for both the community and the staff and volunteers?

Alex Tardif: This move created six times the space. The Food Bank now has the capacity to distribute 2-3 million pounds of

food throughout the county.

The Chronicle: What are specific features that you'd like to point out that this location has to benefit clients?

Tardif: The new location has an instructional kitchen. This allows the space to be used for cooking and canning classes, to teach people how to use the food they receive and how to preserve it for later. Teaching self-sufficiency and sustainability. There is also a repack room, which allows the Food Bank to purchase bulk items, break them down, and repack them into smaller quantities, to distribute throughout the network.

This will be a new opportunity for volunteers and business to volunteer for team building activities at the Food Bank, which will greatly benefit the community. Another new feature is the produce pantry, a room dedicated solely to providing pro-

duce to the community.

The Chronicle: When is the Food Bank opening and what will be the days/hours of operation?

Tardif: The H.E.L.P pantry, which is operated by the Food Bank, is open 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Monday thru Thursday.

The Chronicle: How many staff and volunteers will be at this new location?

Tardif: There are four staff and over 30 volunteers. The Food Bank is looking for more volunteers, if interested please contact our office at 503-397-9708.

The Chronicle: What is the annual operating budget for the Food Bank and how is that funded?

Continued on page 19

Tardif: The operating budget is around \$400,000. Operations are funded through community donations, grants and some state funding.

The Chronicle: Approximately how many clients does the Food Bank serve monthly, is that up or down compared to previous years, and why?

Tardif: Around 400 boxes a month. A box is per family, so a family could have one person in it or 10 people.

In our previous coverage, The Chronicle reported that the new food bank location boasts 12,500-square-foot and features a walk-in freezer, walk-in cooler, residential-style kitchen, storage space, and a multipurpose community room. The building came with a \$350,000 price tag and required another \$1.5 million grant from the City of St. Helens for development.



The Chronicle During the building renovation, a worker sanded large natural wood fixtures that were placed inside the food bank and as a front building design fixture.

The Chronicle also learned from Lower Columbia Engineering Interiors Project Manager Mandi Jenks that the new building will have ample space for staff to hold

cooking classes and provide clients with skill-building opportunities.

Addressing possible concerns about increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic, Tardif said six additional parking spaces have been added, including two handicap spaces on 14th Street in addition to those available on Columbia Boulevard.

Tardif said the former food bank building on Milton Way will be sold to offset the costs of the new building.

Mid-pandemic, CPFEB saw a 65% increase in demand for services, making supporting the food bank a more critical endeavor than in years past, according to CPFEB Director of Development Megan Fawcett, who addressed the most common misconception for people who experience food insecurity.

“A misconception is that clients of the food bank are unemployed, and that is incorrect,” she said, adding, “There are several clients that utilize our services that (are) working, trying to make ends meet.”

The public was invited to the Aug. 12 noon grand opening, the ribbon cutting, and to take a tour of the food bank’s new location.

For more information, contact the CPFEB at 503-397-9708.

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On Tap: Crooked Creek comes to St. Helens

ZOE GOTTLIEB FOR COUNTRY MEDIA, INC.

It's not every day you can say that beer invokes the taste and feel of the Pacific Northwest.

In early 2022, The Chronicle first reported that St. Helens residents and visitors will soon have unfettered access to Crooked Creek Brewery's artisanal beer, an aromatic blend of central Oregon malts and American-grown hops containing the authentic taste of the land it derives from.

"As far as the beers we make, that's not something that's well represented in Columbia County," Crooked Co-founder and Owner Dave Lauridsen said. "The idea is you taste the dirt. The dirt that it's grown in gives it a special flavor, gives it an idea that this is a flavor of the Northwest."

Lauridsen said the taphouse, located at 1935 Columbia Boulevard, will likely be



Courtesy photo by Zoe Gottlieb

Co-founder and Owner Dave Lauridsen shows off one of the brewery's craft beers.

Continued on page 21

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Dave Lauridsen turns on a beer faucet at the taphouse's pouring station.

From page 20

open to the public in "late February or early March" and feature a "rustic" atmosphere, offering beer, cider, and wine selections.

A professional photographer by trade, Lauridsen has worked as a homebrewer for the last eight years and said all the brewing takes place on his property in Warren, a cost-saving measure.

Cutting down on overhead expenses, Lauridsen added, makes it possible for him and his business partner, Joel Braun, to purchase more expensive, locally grown ingredients other businesses import.

Referring to the taphouse as a "pipe dream" come to life, Lauridsen acknowledges the endeavor hasn't been without its

setbacks.

"One of the challenges on our site is we don't have sewer," he said. "So, all of our water is being land-applied as fertilizer."

However, Lauridsen noted, he has access to high-quality water, which is a huge plus in his industry.

"Beer is 95% water," he said. "That's a huge benefit to our brewing."

Lauridsen said the duo specializes in saison, a highly carbonated pale ale, and farmhouse brews, which tend to be "light, refreshing, and dry," and customers who come in for a tasting can expect to experience a wide range of styles.

While he hopes to operate the St. Helens taproom for "a couple years," Lauridsen said his future efforts will be focused on expansion.



Jeremy C. Ruark / The Chronicle
The Crooked Creek Brewery is located at 1935 Columbia Boulevard in St. Helens.

"We're hoping to build a brewery from the ground up one day," he said.

In a March 12 Facebook post, Crooked Creek Brewery Co-founder and Owner Dave Lauridsen shared an update following Crooked Creek's soft opening the previous day.

"Thanks to everyone who came out and supported our opening night yesterday," he stated.

Using American-grown hops and central Oregon malts for his brews, Lauridsen said his beers are distinguished by their authentic Northwest flavors. The Crooked Creek Brewery taphouse in St. Helens was featured in New School Beer + Cider magazine's "Most Anticipated Upcoming New Oregon Breweries & Taphouse of 2022."

Crooked Creek Brewery conducted a grand opening March 17. Check the brewery's website and Facebook for current operating hours.

For more information about Crooked Creek Brewery, see the business's Facebook or call 503-369-7388.

Courtesy photo by Zoe Gottlieb

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\$277,777 for county fairgrounds



Jeremy C. Ruark / The Chronicle

The county fair board could use the grant for a pole barn to conduct the annual youth livestock auction at the summer fair.

JEREMY C. RUARK

JRUARK@COUNTRYMEDIA.NET

The Columbia County Fairgrounds is set to receive \$277,777 for building renovations.

The funding will come from Business Oregon and is expected to be used to build a pole barn or to repair the fairground buildings' roofs.

"The pole barn is a barn supported by poles with a roof," Columbia County Fair representative Hanna Russell said. "Each year we have to rent a tent to conduct the annual youth livestock auction during the summer fair. With the pole barn, we would not have to rent the tent."

Russell said the Columbia County Fair Board is expected to review whether to use the \$277,777 for the pole barn, or to repair aging roofs on all the fairgrounds buildings. That decision could come within the

next few months.

Where the cash comes from

Business Oregon received \$10 million in tax-exempt lottery bond funding during the 2019-2021 legislative session to provide grants for capital improvement projects to county fairground facilities.

Each of Oregon's 36 counties celebrate a county-specific fair which is either hosted at the fairgrounds or at a venue that contracts with the county fair board to host the fair.

The first bond sale supporting the lottery bond funding took place in spring 2022 and provided \$5 million, with the remaining \$5 million to become available with the next bond sale, anticipated in spring of 2023.

Some of the grantees will receive funding in 2022 and the remaining grantees

will be funded after the spring 2023 bond sale.

Following discussions with the Oregon State Fair Association and legislative representatives associated with the appropriation, it was agreed the funds would be distributed evenly to the applicants, yielding \$277,777 for each grantee.

The projects completed with this funding must be used for direct capital improvement project costs. Capital construction includes, but is not limited to:

- Construction, modification, replacement, repair, remodeling, or renovation of a structure or addition to a structure.
- Acquisition of land, or a legal interest in land, in conjunction with the capital construction of a structure.
- Planning and design-related activities may be eligible provided they are directly related to the capital construction activity.

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Small Business Center director selected

STAFF REPORT COUNTRY MEDIA, INC

Scappoose resident Jason Moos has been selected as the new, and first, Columbia County Business Resource & Small Business Development Center (BR/SBDC) Director and business advisor.

The Columbia Economic Team (CET), which spearheaded establishment of the Center, announced Moos as director to lead the Center's development.

"I'm very pleased to have been offered this opportunity," Moos said. "In many respects I feel I've been preparing for this throughout my career," said Moos.

Moos, a military veteran, has accrued extensive experience in business banking, product and team development, marketing, and business and community development, most recently for InRoads Credit Union.

"For the most part, I've been fortunate that my career opportunities found me," Moos said. "I made a conscious decision to move my family to Scappoose several years ago, and the opportunities to help grow small businesses and community have been many, and very fulfilling. I couldn't be more pleased to be asked to lead with such a direct role in our county's small business future."

Moos emerged as the top candidate from a field of 36 applicants from across four states, screened and interviewed by a panel of six evaluators that included local business owners, Columbia Economic Team, and the Oregon Small Business Development Center Network (Oregon SBDC).

"One of the founding pillars of this Center was 'localness' locally driven, locally supported and, if possible, locally staffed and managed," Columbia County Economic Team Executive Director Paul Vogel said. "A local person was not presumed, particularly with the quality of applicants for the position. We're fortunate that Jason was interested, has the skills and experience required, and has absolutely the right commitment and approach to building relationships and a strong business community among his greatest qualities."

Center history

The new Columbia County Business Resource & Small Business Development Center in Columbia County is the first new center formed in Oregon since 2013. It marks the Oregon Small Business Development Center Network's 20th Center offering core business advising services in the state of Oregon and the first of its kind, as a local center unaffiliated with a community college. The BR/SBDC will share offices with Columbia Economic Team, thereby providing collaborative services for businesses of all sizes and types

Combining the Columbia County SBDC in a newly formed Business Resource Center (BRC), will co-locate small business advising and coaching with economic development, business retention, recruitment and expansion, and tourism, according to Vogel. The Center and staff will have access to all programs, protocols, systems, training, and software within the Oregon SBDC to aug-

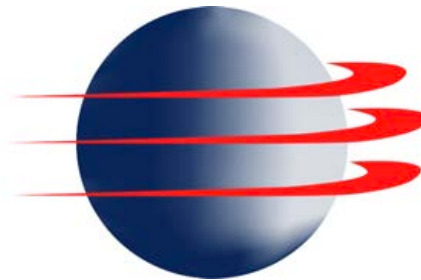
ment its already considerable capacity.

In addition, the new Columbia County SBDC director will collaborate with BRC partners to conduct outreach and client recruitment that will serve every community throughout Columbia County. The advising services provided will be consistent with the other Oregon SBDC offerings, which include—as mandated by the federal SBA—no-cost advising and coaching to any business.

The Columbia County SBDC will be operated under the direction of Columbia Economic Team (CET) Executive Director Paul Vogel and coordinate with Sierra Trass, Director of Keep it Local – a CET program, and will also benefit from a Small Business Advisory Board in addition to OSBDC Network inclusion.

The Center is expected to be permanently housed in the county's John Gumm Building, centrally located in St. Helens and cur-

Continued on page 25



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Jason Moos is the new director for the Columbia County Business Resource & Small Business Development Center.

From page 24

rently under remodel. For the near term, Moos will principally work remotely, as does the rest of the Economic Team, with an emphasis on getting out into every community and meeting with business owners where they work and live, according to Vogel.

The Columbia Economic Team and Oregon SBDC reinforce their appreciation for the many state and local partners and investors that ensured the funding for the Center's four year start-up phase.

These partners include Columbia County Board of Commissioners, Columbia Pacific Economic Development District (Col-Pac), the City of St. Helens, the City of Scappoose, the City of Clatskanie, the City of Vernonia, the City of Columbia City, former Oregon Sen. Betsy Johnson, U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, the Columbia Economic Team, and Tammy Marquez-Oldham, PCC SBDC Director. The City of Rainier REDCO board also recently recommended budgeting a funding share for its next fiscal year.

About the Oregon SBDC

The Oregon Small Business Development Center Network is a preeminent provider of effective and innovative business services to include advising, training, online courses, and resources for businesses in the state of Oregon. With 20 centers conveniently located throughout the state, the Network's core mission is helping to build Oregon's best businesses by assisting small businesses in every aspect of business development and management.

About The Columbia Economic Team

Columbia Economic Team (CET) was founded in 2010 as CCET (Columbia County Economic Team). CET is a private and public membership organization created to serve the entirety of Columbia County, Oregon. The team's mission is to promote the creation, retention, growth and attraction of business and industry throughout the county.

For more information, contact the CET at 503-805-5139.



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Portland Community College

Oregon gets \$83.5 million for small businesses

STAFF REPORT COUNTRY MEDIA, INC

Small businesses in St. Helens and Columbia County and across the state could soon get a federal financial boost.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury has approved Oregon's application for \$83.5 million under the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI).

President Biden's American Rescue Plan reauthorized and expanded SSBCI, which was originally established in 2010 and was highly successful in increasing access to capital for small businesses and entrepreneurs, according to a release from the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

The new SSBCI builds on this successful model by providing nearly \$10 billion to states, the District of Columbia, territories, and Tribal governments to increase access to capital and promote entrepreneurship, especially in traditionally underserved communities as they emerge from the pandemic.

SSBCI funding is expected to catalyze up to \$10 of private investment for every \$1 of SSBCI capital funding, amplifying the effects of this funding and providing small business owners with the resources they need to sustainably grow and thrive, the release states.

State governments submitted plans how they would use the SSBCI allocations to the U.S. Treasury Department.

Reaction

"This is an historic investment in entrepreneurship, small business growth, and innovation through the American Rescue Plan that will help reduce barriers to capital access for traditionally underserved communities including those in rural areas," Secretary of the U.S. Treasury Janet L. Yellen said.

Oregon U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden said Oregon is a leader in innovation, thanks to the entrepreneurs and small businesses generating thousands of jobs in their communities.

"Yet, too often small business owners – especially entrepreneurs of color, women, and those in rural parts of our state face serious obstacles to get the capital they need to grow their businesses, or even get their business-



Metro Creative Connection

es off the ground in the first place," Wyden said. "These historic American Rescue Plan investments will go far in tearing down obstacles to growth and support more entrepreneurs and small businesses in every nook and cranny of our state."

"Small businesses are the lifeblood of our communities," Oregon U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley said. "As our economy continues to recover from the ongoing pandemic and other market disruptors, it's crucial to continue supporting our local community businesses. This important access to capital will help jumpstart new and growing small businesses in Oregon by ensuring business opportunities are accessible and encouraging entrepreneurs old and new to build out their small businesses ultimately, serving their communities and building the shared future we want."

"This significant investment is an exciting opportunity for Oregon's small businesses and the hard-working, entrepreneurial Oregonians who run them," Oregon U.S. Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici said. "Small businesses are an important part of our communities and our economy. With more people starting new small businesses and growing existing businesses, it's important to break down barriers to success, especially in underserved areas and rural communities."

How the money will be used

Oregon will operate five programs, including two venture capital programs to which the state has allocated \$30 million. The venture capital programs are designed to invest in funds in need of additional capital to launch and scale and to make co-investments in companies alongside private investors by matching the lead investor's structure and terms, according to the release.

Across its programs, Oregon's plan aims to counter systemic barriers to economic opportunity by providing access to capital in persistently underserved, low- and moderate-income areas and rural communities. Oregon expects these programs to be self-sustaining, providing vital support to small business in Oregon now and over the long term.

A recent White House report found that more Americans are starting new businesses than ever before. In 2021, Americans applied to start 5.4 million new businesses – 20% more than any other year on record.

The report also found that small businesses are creating more jobs than ever before, with businesses with fewer than 50 workers creating 1.9 million jobs in the first three quarters of 2021 – the highest rate of small business job creation ever recorded in a single year.

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An 'extraordinary opportunity' for Oregon

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A new report finds the semiconductor industry expansion presents Oregon with an 'extraordinary opportunity' to intentionally create jobs and investment the state needs to emerge from the pandemic with a stronger, more deliberately equitable economy.

The report's executive summary, from the Oregon Semiconductor Competitiveness Task Force, states the global semiconductor industry is investing billions to fill a worldwide chip shortage and the U.S. government is taking strong action to secure the nation's semiconductor supply chain.

In July, Congress passed the \$52 billion CHIPS Act to boost domestic semiconductor manufacturing and design.

"This creates a huge opportunity to solidify Oregon's position as a world leader in semiconductor innovation, dramatically expanding our base of semiconductor design and manufacturing," the report's summary states. "The benefits in equitable economic development will be transformational. Billions in capital investment will create tens of thousands of high-paying construction jobs, many of them held by black, indigenous and people of color."

Once the facilities are operational - thousands of additional semiconductor manufacturing and supply chain jobs will be created. Nearly 50% of those positions will require no more than high school or community college training, according to the report.

"The public revenues generated will be in the billions, providing needed financial resources to support critical community priorities such as homelessness, affordable housing, and education," the report states.

The Semiconductor Task Force was convened to develop a strategy to secure this once-in-a-generation opportunity for all Oregonians. The Task Force organized five subcommittees to explore and make recommendations on key factors influencing the industry's growth in Oregon.



Metro Creative Connection

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A green-themed advertisement for John L. Scott Real Estate. At the top, it reads "John L. Scott | REAL ESTATE". Below this is a large green house icon with a QR code to its right that says "SCAN ME". Underneath the house icon, the text asks "WHAT'S YOUR HOME VALUE?" and encourages visitors to "Visit our website or call us directly!". The website address "www.columbiacounty.johnlscott.com" is written in a curved path below the house. At the bottom, two office locations are listed: "Scappoose Office (503) 543-3751" and "St. Helens Office (503) 396-5668". At the very bottom, it states "AGENTS LICENSED IN OREGON" and includes the MLS logo.

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These are the subcommittees' findings and broad recommendations to date:

- **R&D Strength:** Semiconductor research and development is Oregon's competitive advantage. Our strategy to secure chip investment should focus on solidifying a world-class innovation ecosystem around chip research and production.

- **Talent:** Premier access to talent and a robust, private sector-led innovation ecosystem separates Oregon from others. To preserve this advantage, Oregon needs to invest across the talent continuum, from entry-level positions to PhDs.

- **Land:** To attract and retain semiconductor research and development and manufacturers, we need more buildable industrial land proximate to infrastructure, talented workers, and specialized suppliers. Oregon's land use system and infrastructure investment programs need urgent legislative attention and investment to address this need.

- **Incentives:** Other states offer incentive packages that are both larger and more

specifically tailored to the semiconductor industry than Oregon. We need to preserve and strengthen existing tools and consider new ones such as a research tax credit and workforce training incentive programs to spark new investment and generate additional public revenue.

- **Regulation:** When it comes to permits and environmental regulations for new facilities, the semiconductor industry tells us it wants a strong partnership to aggressively pursue greenhouse gas reductions and other planet-friendly measures. They point out that other states offer a more streamlined approach that is more in sync with the speed of the market.

"Oregon has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to advance our vision for equitable economic prosperity, the report's summary concludes. "We need to act quickly to preserve and grow our global leadership in this important industry that anchors Oregon's economy."

The report was released at Portland Community College Aug. 17.

The event at PCC's Willow Creek Center in Washington County featured speeches

by U.S. Senator Ron Wyden, Governor Kate Brown, U.S. Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici, Portland General Electric CEO Maria Pope and PCC President Dr. Adrien Bennings.

Since March, the task force has analyzed the state's semiconductor industry and how it can continue to thrive, grow, and create prosperity and opportunity. It centered on key factors that impact semiconductor manufacturing, Oregon's competitiveness in those areas, and options to position the state to attract industry investment.

"The work of the task force is a jumpstart to a unique opportunity," Bennings said. "Our work provides insight into industry impact, advanced manufacturing needs, and educational and workforce dynamics. Overall, the recommendations are intended to advance collaborative efforts across the state to solidify our position as a global leader in the semiconductor industry and create a sustainable future workforce."

"What is being done today is that we're releasing a battle plan to build an even stronger chip industry that continues generating jobs here in the Silicon Forest and across the state," Sen. Wyden said. "The major center of chip research and development is Washington County. This is the major center of chip research, and the fabs that are being built in America depend on what is going on in Oregon."

According to PCC officials, student Emily Mom is an example of the success of Silicon Forest and how PCC is key to the future of semiconductor training in Oregon.

The part-time PCC Microelectronics Technology Program student is currently working full-time as a manufacturing technician for Intel. Born in Cambodia and immigrated to Oregon in 2008 when she was 12, Mom will be the first in her family to graduate from college.

"Everyone that I have met during my time here at PCC and in the MT program has been so helpful and so supportive, even my classmates," said Mom, who is taking advantage of the tuition assistance program that Intel provides for their employees to continue their education. "We all are eager to learn and when we get to work as a class to troubleshoot an issue, it gives us an opportunity to learn from each other as well."






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Local artist returns to Clatskanie, opens business



Courtesy from Jerome White

LAUREY WHITE GUEST COLUMN

Want to try a new hobby or renew your artistic side?

Local resident searching for new art are in luck, because Clatskanie is now home to Art by Twi, an art gallery and workshop owned and operated by accomplished artist Twila Rhodes, who proudly grew up in Clatskanie, and has her artistic roots at Clatskanie Middle/High School.

The new art gallery and workshop is at 315 E Columbia River Highway, Suite B, directly next door to Bundy's, a restaurant

Her reason for this new endeavor is easily explained.

"I have been an artist as long as I can remember," Twila said. "I love when my gift can bring joy to others."

Her goal is to inspire individuals to come together through art.

For Twila, it was wonderful to return to Oregon, after having lived in Massachusetts and Louisiana. Twila made a name for herself in high school, when she was elected to paint a depiction of a large tiger, the Clatskanie High School mascot, which adorned the front hall in the high school. For years, students stood in front of the large painting and posed with their various awards.

Twila said she was lucky to have a family who encouraged her pursuits.

"My mother used to let me paint on anything," she said. "I painted a large mural in my bedroom. She was so proud of me. I want to encourage children to love art as much as I did. To bring mothers and their children together to create art is so wonderful."

The art classes are varied but all have one thing in common – you will learn many valuable skills, she said.

Parents are welcome to join any class for a nominal fee. Monday ceramics is offered, and Tuesday and Wednesday she teaches art classes, four per month. She starts with the basics, how to use a brush, what each brush can do, different techniques and wrist and hand control. In the class you will also explore color mixing and painting in layers. The skills that are taught include hand/eye coordination, and fine gross motor control.

Twila also emphasizes how beneficial art is as a therapeutic modality.

"Art is a very healthy expression of emotions," she said. "It is also very rewarding to complete a project. In fact, at the end of week four, each student will have created a one-of-a-kind masterpiece!"

Art by Twi is indeed the path to bringing out your inner artist.

"Everyone can create," Twila said. "And there are no mistakes. There is no right or wrong way."

Twila is available for art at events, including face painting, rock painting, window art, custom art or private classes. She presents a fun class for those who want to capture their pet for posterity in pop art, Twila said she can also develop great ideas for Thanksgiving or Christmas projects.

Twila is very enthusiastic about her return to Clatskanie.

"I was so excited to go to Beaver Falls," she exclaims. "It is one of my favorite places on earth, I love everything about Clatskanie. I love the people here. It is so wonderful to see people I grew up around. I am doing what I love, in the place that I love. I feel like I am living a dream."

Resources for Twila Rhodes and Art by Twi

- Facebook or by email at ArtByTwi@yahoo.com
- Cell 857-210-4545
- 315 E Columbia River Highway Suite B
- 503-728-5070

2023 Columbia County

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