

A young boy with blonde hair, wearing a yellow t-shirt with a Minion character on it and khaki pants, is captured mid-air as he jumps from a colorful plastic jungle gym. He has a joyful expression with his mouth open and eyes wide. The jungle gym is made of tan plastic with red and blue accents. The background shows a plain wall and a ceiling with recessed lighting.

RISE OF THE YOUTH

Educators see steady growth in our youngest grades and see a trend that might help everyone

BETHANY BAKER, THE WORLD

Chile Garrison, 4, jumps from a jungle gym during a break from activities at the Lincoln Child Development Center in Coquille on July 7, 2017. The childcare facility is scheduled to move into a new addition at the Lincoln School of Early Learning this November to accommodate demanding wait list numbers, providing parents from all across the county a safe place to leave young children during work hours.



BETHANY BAKER PHOTOS, THE WORLD

Children play during a break from activities at the Lincoln Child Development Center in Coquille on July 7, 2017. Increasing enrollment trends are causing shortages for parents searching for early learning opportunities along the South Coast.

South Coast schools see enrollment numbers go up

Superintendent Bryan Trendell worries increase may not be economic related

JILLIAN WARD
The World

COOS COUNTY — Schools on the South Coast are seeing increased student enrollment, but what does that mean for the economy?

Coos Bay School Superintendent Bryan Trendell isn't so sure that it points to anything good outside of the classroom.

"It's hard to tell why we're seeing an increasing number of kids at the elementary level," Trendell said. "When you look around, it's hard to think that it's because of increased family waged jobs, not by any means. We do have new businesses coming in, but part of the reason we're seeing younger families move in could be because the cost of living here is lower than in other parts of the state."

He pointed out that the area has a lot of low income

housing and while he would like to think it was jobs drawing people in, "it might not necessarily be the case."

"When you look at the schools, where we are seeing the growth, that is where we have the highest percentage of students on free and reduced lunches," he said.

At Madison Elementary, which had 418 students last year, more than 80 percent of the student body is on free and reduced lunch. At Blossom Gulch, which had 581 students last year, close to 75 to 80 percent of its kids were on free and reduced lunch.

"I don't know if that number has increased much over the last few years, but it has over the last 10 to 15 years," Trendell said. "We do have a population of kids living in poverty and a population of kids who are homeless."

Please see ENROLLMENT, Page A6



Tiegan Lipkowitz, left, 4, cuts out an art project at the Lincoln Child Development Center in Coquille on July 7, 2017. The Lincoln Child Development Center, open since April 2017, accepts children from two-and-a-half-years-old to 10-years-old year round.

SWOCC leads rural Oregon colleges in student success

College changes the way it places students and teaches basic math, writing

ELISE HAMNER
For The World

A person would think that when you enroll in a community college, you'd rocket through first-year courses. Blast through a second year, and it's onward to graduation, then a university or into a career.

That's not always reality. Many students arrive at Oregon community colleges unprepared for the rocket ride. They don't "test into" first-year college math and writing courses. It's not bad that students arrive unprepared. Community colleges exist to help local folks get the training they need — no matter where they are with skills.

Unprepared doesn't mean students aren't smart. In the past, students who didn't test well had to enroll in a lengthy series of developmental classes.

"It takes a long time for people to make it through. They get frustrated and they quit," said Ali Mageehon, vice president of instruction at Southwestern Oregon Community College.

SWOCC worked to fix that over the past six years. The college now is a model in the state for streamlining and shortening the time students spend in those classes.

Six years ago, of the students who had to enroll in the lowest developmental math, only 22 percent stayed in college. For those in developmental writing, only 27 percent made it through.

Today, SWOCC has seen a 14 percent increase in the number of students who stay in school to complete their training, graduate or transfer to a university. Overall, three out of four of the college's students complete a degree or certificate, or transfer.

"Our college is ahead of other colleges because of our faculty and their engagement with student success," Mageehon said. "Our writing and math faculty are very good. They get it."



ANNE FARRELL-MATTHEWS

Southwestern Oregon Community College 2017 graduate and tutor Crystal Gray, right, works with a student in the college's tutoring lab. The college's effort to improve the pathway and tutoring support for students in developmental math and writing classes has earned SWOCC statewide recognition for helping students complete their degrees and certificates.

A focus on the fundamentals

The push to improve students' ability to succeed started with the Oregon Community College Association. OCCA brought folks from the state's 17 colleges together to share ideas. More dialog among more people opened more possibilities. The top priority was to move students through developmental classes faster.

A few years ago, a SWOCC student testing into developmental level courses could expect to spend a year taking three classes in math, three classes in reading, and three classes in writing. It added a year or more to their time in college. At a rural college where most students are low-income, that's not an option.

SWOCC's writing and math faculty cut unnecessary curriculum. They focused classes on the fundamentals. They combined the six reading and writing classes into



Please see RURAL, Page A7

Grow yourself on the South Coast

Put the keyboard down and come out and enjoy what the Bay Area has to offer

CATHERINE WALWORTH
For The World

William S. Burroughs said, "When you stop growing you start dying."

Tethered to keyboards and screens, we do more work in the same time slot, then take work home with us. Human interaction has faded to texts and tweets.

Life is about more.

Life is about meeting new people, learning new skills, enriching our lives and the growth that comes with that.

Southwestern Oregon Community College is a good place to start.

"Enrichment might mean auditing a Spanish or autobiography class. Tons of people take classes and audit: You're not working toward a degree, you're learning something new, making new friends," said Karen Helland-Moine of the Extended Learning office at SWOCC.

"You might start off with a yoga class and come back for tai chi," agreed Brenda Rogers, assistant to SWOCC's Dean of Extended Learning.

People don't sign up at SWOCC just to get a degree. They go to the recreation center, art classes such as pottery, stained glass and life drawing. They meet people they would never have encountered otherwise — students and faculty, and enrich their lives.

"They want to get out and meet people," said Rogers. "They might be retired, or a stay-at-home mom or dad who wants to get out in the evening. The college is a good way to meet people, and we see them term after term."

Ann Collins found friends and flexibility at SWOCC's yoga and tai chi classes.

"The worst thing you can do as you age is to sit," Collins said. "That's a great way to grow old painfully."

Wise words from someone who, at age 71, took classes that helped with balance, stress reduction and mental clarity.

Want to enjoy something new you won't take a test on? Try the Civil War class at SWOCC. Donna Penny is a fan.

"I have three master's degrees. I found family history in the Civil War. No required reading, no test. We even tried some of the foods the Civil War soldiers ate, like hardtack," she said.



LOU SENNICK, THE WORLD

Grandma Sarah Recken took 3-year-old Zoe Recken-Kaiser to make her own mask at Coos Art Museum. The museum hosted the free event "Mask Making: Creating with what you've got."

She's learned about the daily lives of the "common soldiers" of our Civil War, from the way medicine was practiced in the 1800's to the ammunition they used. Penny says she's found the class so much fun she's brought co-workers with her.

Old cooking methods and recipes perk along at Oregon State University's Extension Office in Myrtle Point.

"Mothers learn to can, put up their garden produce and know what's in their kid's food," said Samantha Clayburn at the Extension office.

The Extension office offers Master Gardener classes, which will teach you how to grow what you eat, as well as Master Food Preservers classes.

What's old is new again in knitting and crochet as well. They're also good ways to meet people, learn a skill and relax.

"Knitting is new this year," at Coos County Extension office, said Clayburn. People began asking about the old art and the possibility of getting together with others to share knowledge and patterns.

What was a once or twice weekly gathering has grown to about 16 people every couple of weeks who share time and what they know.

Kerry Joyce joined Coos Bay Knitters.

Please see BAY AREA, Page A5

Numbers growing in youth sports at younger age groups

JOHN GUNTHER
The World

A population spike in the younger elementary school ages has created a good problem for two baseball leagues in the Bay Area.

As the number of kids in the North Bend Independent Baseball League and the Coos Bay Coast League has grown, the leagues have had to add more teams.

The problem? Finding enough practice time for teams on the limited number of fields in the area.

"The challenge is always ball fields and practice time," said Scott Moffitt, the president of the North Bend Independent Baseball League.

Moffitt's league saw a jump of 30 players this year to 225. The league has 19 teams in four age groups.

The Coos Bay Coast League had 200 baseball players this year and also added softball, with five teams in that sport, said Tony Crane, the league's president.

Between the two sports, the league had 22 teams. Just like in North Bend, that means a challenge.

"The teams that aren't playing games, we don't have room to practice," Crane said. "Games and practice times are equally important. At the younger age, practice time is more important."

The two baseball leagues are not unique in their increase in participation.

Bandon Dunes Golf Resort and Bandon Crossings Golf Course started a new youth program this year, the PGA Junior Golf League.

The two golf facilities advertised the new league during their junior clinics.

"We were hoping to get a minimum of 16 (players) so we could have two teams," said Scott Millhouser, who runs the junior golf program at the resort. "But we got 40. It's exceeded our expectations."

The golfers have come from Bandon, of course, but also Coquille, Coos Bay and North Bend.

"It's so exciting to have a good turnout and support from the community and families," Millhouser said.

The age range for the league is 7 to 13 years old.

"The majority is 7 to 10," Millhouser said. "There is a bright future there."

Bandon Dunes offers a variety of free education programs for young golfers and Millhouser said the numbers are steady, and particularly strong in the kindergarten to third grade age range.

Another place seeing a big increase in that age range for sports is the Boys & Girls Club of Southwestern Oregon.

"There is an influx of the younger kids," said Karen Bauder, the sports director at the club.

Not only are there more kids, but they want to start earlier, too, Bauder said.

In soccer, she is seeing kindergarten students who want to play when traditionally the start age has been first grade. In volleyball and basketball, now second graders are starting to play when the program traditionally has started in third grade.

"I'm pretty accepting," Bauder said of the concept of starting students in sports earlier. "If their parents are comfortable with it, we will go with it."

That trend doesn't hold true in the upper age groups, where there are more activities to attract the attention of students.

"When our kids get to fourth grade and older, we don't have as many. Our program has been impacted by other sports programs popping up in the area."

Sports is only one part of the Boys & Girls Club, which also provides after school activities for students at all grade levels in the Bay Area in its youth center.

That program has grown over the years from about 150 students a day to 350 or more, most in the younger ages, said Angie Reiber, the program director.

As those numbers have grown, so have the programs the Boys & Girls Club offers.

"This is not just hang out recreation," she said. "It's more quality, not quantity."

Now the club offers a sewing program, an arts program and music programs, in addition to the learning center.

"Our mentoring program has grown," Reiber said. "That has



AMANDA LOMAN PHOTOS, THE WORLD

The North Bend Tigers took on the Coos Bay Tigers last year.



The Giants took on the Tigers in the last game of the season last year at Boynton field.

Ripken League.

"It's really great to get all the teams playing against each other," Moffitt said.

And starting next year, the region will form All-Star teams that feature the top players in each city.

"We'll take the best of the best and fill an all-county team so we have a chance to go to the state tournament and see if we can push that team to regionals," he said.

"We have been trying to get all the teams under the same umbrella for the past 20 years. That was the biggest breakthrough getting that done."

Teams can advance in four age groups — 9-and-under, 10-and-under, 11-and-under and 12-and-under. Moffitt said the South Coast group probably would field two all-star teams next year.

But with the growing numbers at the younger levels, the area could try to field teams in all four age groups in the future.

Asked if he was excited about that, Moffitt gave just a one-word answer.

"Absolutely."

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Highland sees more kindergartners

Cheaper housing may play a part in Reedsport's attractiveness for families with school-aged kids

SHELBY CASE
The Umpqua Post

REEDSPORT — Teachers and other school employees have witnessed a roller coaster effect in enrollment in recent years.

At Highland Elementary, another 25 kindergartners for the fall of 2017 means adding another classroom according to Principal Beckie Lupton.

Lupton, who just completed her third year as principal, reflected on overall numbers and especially what might account for them.

Others are weighing in on the increased enrollment, including veteran retired educator David Young. One is parents want to have a small school feel. Young also serves on the school board.

Lupton examined an attendance chart.

"I mean, it's been consistent," she said. "The sixth grade has always been our smallest group."

One newer trend however is that Highland is opening its doors more to music, physical education and offerings at Highland Pool to homeschooled students. This last academic year, one child participated in the above classes. That's grown to five homeschooled students.

"The second grade numbers have remained consistent at 59, 62 and 64 for 2017," she said. "The same was true 2015 at 58, with the high at 62."

As of June 2, she said the school had 53 kindergartners, 42 first-graders, 51 third-graders, 49 fourth-graders, 48-fifth-graders and 36 sixth-graders.

"So if we look at the

numbers here for kindergartners we have 53 kindergartners but for the last couple of years we've had 60 so there's actually been a drop," she noted.

Secretary Lisa Smart examines each day's attendance figures, keeping Lupton apprised. Smart asked a former Highland secretary how she kept track of enrollment numbers who gave her tips based on the number of kindergarten packets that were turned in.

"Our prediction for kinders according to the number of packets turned in (25) will double to 50 for the 2017-18 class," Smart said.

"It's just a roll of the dice. Sometimes it's the right guess and sometimes it's not," she said.

Each month, school board members, principals and others receive a grade-by-grade look at how the district fares in enrollment.

Here are the numbers for kindergarten through 12th grade as of June 9, 2016:

- kindergarten, 43;
- first grade, 63;
- second grade, 60;
- third grade, 42;
- fourth grade, 47;
- fifth grade, 40;
- sixth grade, 56;
- seventh grade, 61;
- eighth grade, 48;
- ninth grade, 64;
- 10th grade, 47;
- 11th grade, 48;
- 12th grade, 50.

In all, that comes to 669 for the end of the 2015-2016 academic year.

"We've been averaging slightly over 680 total K-12 students in Reedsport this year," said Superintendent Dan Forbess.

Reedsport Community Charter School Principal Vince Swagerty referred to his school's report card, which each school provides



BETHANY BAKER PHOTOS, THE UMPQUA POST

Justice Tenbush, a student in Katie Corcoran's kindergarten class at Highland Elementary, paints his paper teddy bear during class recently.



Katie Corcoran, one of several kindergarten teachers at Highland Elementary, high fives a student who did well on an assessment exercise in class.

to the Oregon Department of Education as a snapshot of how the building is doing. In this case, RCCS has a high student mobility rate. The mobility rate is a bit more than 28 percent and when you look at a community that has a high rate of mobility, "coming

in and going out, coming in and going out, it decreases the stability in the community and it decreases in the school."

"We'll have a student that'll be here a month," he said.

Or perhaps, for example a student lives temporarily

with an aunt instead of his parents and this can also impact enrollment. This may not even have anything to do with the school at all but may be because of family issues. Then "after a short period of time, they move back to be with Mom and Dad."

"It could be that for another family that they found suitable employment," the principal said or that they found affordable housing.

Swagerty said that bottom line "it's not consistent from one family to the next."

He also pointed to larger economic influences, saying that when International Paper closed its doors, one could point to the impact on enrollment to that particular event. Over time since then he said that's changed and "we are fortunate to have stable to increased en-

rollment." However he still emphasized that some students move out of the area.

Looking at Aug. 31, 2015, figures, Swagerty said the school totaled 285 and ended the school year at 318. This year by comparison, RCCS went from 319 students on Aug. 29 to a high of 360 Sept. 14, and then fluctuated between 354, 355 and 350 during the October, November and December time frames. Student enrollment had tapered back to 321 by June 9, 2017.

The past, the present and the future

Lupton said some people retire or move to the area.

Smart agreed, using a recent example of a southern family.

Please see **KINDERGARTEN**, Page A5

Internship program benefits students and businesses

Coos Bay School's program is getting a boost

JILLIAN WARD
The World

COOS BAY — The Coos Bay School District and local businesses are working together.

The School to Work Program has been around since the early 1980s, but participation plummeted nearly 10 years ago. In an effort to revitalize the internship experience, Superintendent Bryan Trendell, with the help of Harding Principal Dale Inskeep and Marshfield Assistant Principal Elias Ashton, the program is making a comeback.

"This program has a

strong history with getting our kids their core academics in the morning and then sending them into the workforce in the afternoon, where, by the time graduation comes around they have job experience and sometimes job offers," Trendell said. "We are doing the same thing on a smaller extent now and want to make it grow."

The goal is twofold. The first is to provide students in the district with useful skills for when they graduate, making it so they are ready to step into the workforce without requiring employers to spend weeks or months training them. The second is also to help them earn electives to help them graduate.

Trendell, Inskeep, and

Ashton are looking at how to boost the program to not only help students, but also local businesses. So far, the program has sent students to internships at Bay Area Hospital, office supply stores, car dealerships, Taco Bell, and veterinary clinics.

The School to Work Program has also sent students to job shadow teachers at Blossom Gulch Elementary, Millicoma Middle School, and Madison Elementary. Each student was assigned a teacher, where they helped by doing small work in the classrooms like making copies.

"The teacher assigned to them was their mentor," Ashton said.

Please see **INTERNSHIPS**, Page A5



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Bay Area

From A2

"It's fun, relaxing, and makes a beautiful end product, which I usually give away. I'll be thinking about that person while I knit," Joyce said. "Hand made things have more beauty and meaning because I know how they were made. I know the person who made them."

"I've asked around and found others who said they'd like to learn to knit," Joyce said.

Meditatively working with your hands, while away the time in conversation, you could also join the knot tying class at Coos History Museum. Their basket-weaving class is sold out, but you might be able to get on a waiting list for that one.

In the meantime, check out a fermentation class and learn to make kombucha or sourdough.

"Kombucha is a fermented tea," that has a tart, almost vinegary taste, said Deborah Semrau, collections manager at the History Museum. "It's actually good," she said.

For getting back to the basics, sourdough starters can't be beat. You might find that baking is your



AMANDA LOMAN, THE WORLD

Brothers Cade Costales, right, and Levi, of North Bend, use microscopes to look at feathers from different birds of prey during the Oregon's Museum of Science and Industry's presentation, "Hunters of the Night Sky," hosted by the Coos Bay Public Library at Coos Bay Fire Station #1.

link to mindfulness.

Or perhaps combine art and food at Coos Art Museum's Art Cart in the Park.

"I see a large demand for children's (art) classes. The community seems to gobble that up. There is a need for art in children's lives," said Josie Keating, education director at CAM.

Three days a week free lunches

are provided to children ages 18 and under. After lunch, Semrau and volunteers set up a free art program.

"Parents are helping, assisting the children," Keating said. Good thing, too, since the first day 19 children came, the second day 71 appeared.

Back at CAM, grown-up art camp consists of mothers of young



BETHANY BAKER, THE WORLD

Gina Allison, a master gardener trainee, speaks about the symbolic meanings behind different herbs during a class on growing kitchen herbs at the Coos Bay Library on July 7, 2017.

children who want to get out of the house, Keating said. "Some are artists looking for ways to work with their peers, but there's also something for non-artists, such as felting, painting with acrylics, geared to all skill levels."

Some say art is found outdoors, and here, art is all around us. Take a walk around our South Slough. Take a paddle trip or an

herbal class.

"People want to do something different from their day jobs," said Deborah Rudd at the South Slough. "They want to interact with nature, get away from stress."

Most of Rudd's email list consists of local families who are looking for things for the kids to do. Then there's those who are new to our area, the semi-retired and those who are sliding into "nature things."

Herbal classes are offered at South Slough. A local herbalist shows how to make remedies with live plants, as well as cooking tips with wild edibles and seeds.

"Being green is a trend now," she said. "Ten years ago the herb class would have been people we used to call 'hippies.' Now it's your average housewife who wants to know more natural and organic solutions."

Some who visit are avid birders who have studied migration seasons. Others like to hike the trails. All are coming to our South Slough for the outdoor experience, people who are heading for a whole weekend of outdoor things to do, Rudd said.

That's about as far away from a screen and a keyboard as you can get.

Kindergarten

From A4

"We just had a family moving here from Texas that used to vacation here," she said, adding that the family moved to the area "and have young kids enrolled here now as well as the high school."

David Young, 73, who was born in Coos Bay but who graduated from Reedsport High School in 1962 and who later taught junior high and senior high English and social studies, shared his thoughts on the past, the present and the future.

Aging buildings will eventually need more money for maintenance but about a year ago the Reedsport School Board and Superintendent Dan Forbess established a maintenance reserve fund for all needs, including roofing.

Young, who's now served on the Reedsport School Board five years, was a fifth-grader when workers were building Highland.

Laughing a bit, he says "and I remember crawling all around the structure (including up in the roof). Oh yes I did!"

He was 6 when laborers built the high school at its current location.

Looking back five years ago when he started on the board, Young said "at first there was a decrease in enrollment." He attributed this to a lack of jobs.

"Then about my second year on the board the (number of) kindergartners started to increase," Young said. "We weren't really prepared for it."

Families from Coos Bay and other communities were taking their children to Reedsport instead.

In these past three years, he's observed more kindergartners and attributes that to "cheaper living conditions in the Reedsport area."

"Rent was cheaper. To

buy was cheaper. It's still cheaper to buy a house in Reedsport than say in Eugene and other areas."

This seems to hold true since housing prices are generally higher in Coos Bay and North Bend, thus meaning that some families look north to Reedsport.

Young touched on other reasons for the increased enrollment he's seen these last three years.

He said the board's decision to hire Forbess was excellent.

"I think he's a very outstanding superintendent," the board member said. "He's the first man I've ever seen getting a standing ovation at our first staff meeting."

Young thinks with Forbess's quality of work, that's helped attract more families.

Still others move to the South Coast for the outdoors.

"Why do people come to a small area and are drawn to it?" Young said.

Families who have students attending larger schools may want their children in a smaller environment.

Young thinks children like this individual attention.

"They're not just a person," he said. "In a small school you feel you have an identity."

Principal Swagerty agreed. He's heard from a "number of families" who appreciate a smaller school.

"I would say that's very consistent. Yeah," he said.

A key reason he's heard that families move to the Reedsport-Winchester Bay area is because they already have relatives in the area. The second is affordable housing. For Swagerty and his wife, they currently rent. Home prices when they first moved to Reedsport were less than North Bend or Florence.

At this point Swagerty feels comfortable that he

won't have to hire another new teacher.

"If we were to get to a position where we get above 350 to 370 (students), I would anticipate we would need additional teaching staff," Principal Swagerty said. Plus RCCS staff would need to look at exactly where that teacher or teachers would be most needed for academic support.

When Young graduated from Reedsport High School in the early 1960s, the International Paper Mill employed hundreds of workers. The mill operations shut down in 1998, leading to community frustrations. This year more hope among city leaders and some in the community that companies will move to the Gardiner property, now called the Reedsport Commerce Park.

Young's skeptical.

"That's how I feel about it. It's all wishful thinking," he said.

However if the companies do move to the park and in turn with new younger families, that will be excellent news for Reedsport schools, he said.

Swagerty's more optimistic.

"I really look forward to the potential that the site will produce family employment," Swagerty said. "I think that's my biggest hope — that people will be able to build or buy a home."

In turn Swagerty hopes other merchants who move to Old Town will follow the model shown by Defeat River Brewery, investing cash into a building while still sprucing up downtown and "to really spur growth."

Younger families with children would then mean more money for the school district.

The Umpqua Post Editor Shelby Case can be reached at 541-269-1222, ext. 296 or shelby.case@theworldlink.com.

Internships

From A4

Last year, 35 students were involved in the program. Ashton is working to hammer out details which would allow students involved in the program next year to earn half a semester credit every 60 hours. That is typical for one period of school if a student were taking basic PE classes.

"Some of these students have their internships for one period and others for three periods," Ashton said. "It just depends on the number of hours they work."

One of the challenges that the program has faced over the past 10 years is networking. Ashton explained that 10 years ago it was run by someone with deep ties to the community. Once they left, the program began to disinte-

grate as those connections disappeared. He is working this summer to make those connections again, first by visiting Bay Area Chamber of Commerce in August to see if any other local businesses would be interested in being part of the program.

"We're all about outreach right now," he said. "At this point, it really comes down to making connections with the local businesses."

Once a student expresses interest in doing an internship with a company, Ashton will first visit the employer to talk about their expectations of the student as well as the school's expectations. The school will check in once a month and at the end of the semester the employer will be asked to fill out a form on which the student will be graded.

"We require the kids to

have a resume at the end, which is a graduation requirement anyway," he said. "Right now a lot of upcoming seniors are interested, as most seniors are, because they have time to do internships and need the work experience. Seniors are aware that they need jobs, and this is a great way to get them. Once an employer sees the kind of worker they are, has already trained them, often they will want to hire them. It is a great opportunity for both businesses and students."

If a business wants to be part of the program, email Ashton at eliasa@coos-bay.k12.or.us or call him at 541-267-1417.

Reporter Jillian Ward can be reached at 541-269-1222, ext. 235, or by email at jillian.ward@theworldlink.com. Follow her on Twitter: @JE_Wardwriter.



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Automatic sales was a well established business as we at Vend West strive to continue the tradition of supplying nationally known brand products and excellent service to our customers from Florence to Gold Beach on the Southern Oregon Coast.

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- Rotary
- Soroptomist
- Optomist club
- High schools: Stuslaw, Reedsport, North Bend, Marshfield, Bandon, Coquille, and Myrtle Point
- Southwestern Oregon Community College
- Coos Historical & Maritime Museum
- Egyptian Theatre • Little Theatre on the Bay
- Coos Bay Schools Community Foundation
- Prefontaine Memorial Run
- Boys & Girls Club of Southwestern Oregon
- Women's Crisis Center
- Charleston Merchants Association

Sincerely,
Lou Leberti



Enrollment

From A2

Though none of the school districts can pin down what has caused growth in their elementary enrollment numbers, they have all reported an increase.

For the Coos Bay School District, it reported 4,424 students in 1994. It lost nearly half its student population by 2012, the height of the economic recession, plummeting to 2,716 students.

In 2017, they reported 3,300 and expect the numbers to continue climbing back to normal.

However, it was the North Bend and Coquille school districts that have seen the largest increases. North Bend Schools reported 2,024 students in 2006. By last year, it reported 2,331 students.

The Coquille School District reported 932 students in 2006, but 1,046 in 2017.

"We really aren't sure why our numbers have taken off the way they have," said Coquille Superintendent Tim Sweeney. "We are very humbled and appreciative that folks have decided to come to the Coquille School District and we continue to strive to make them happy they have chosen us. But I don't think there is a single answer as to why this is happening."

Recently, the Coquille School District added the Lincoln School of Early Learning to its district office. The main reason the district pushed to create the childhood development center was to accommodate demanding wait list numbers, providing parents from all across the county a safe place to leave young children during work hours.

"It all started when our pre-K hit capacity four years ago," Sweeney said in a previous interview. "We created a waiting list and the next year tried new configurations to accommodate the list to get as many kids into the program as we could, but it was not academically successful for the students."

Though squeezing kids in met the needs of the parents, the district aimed to increase education value as well, which meant the waiting list was reinstated.

"Last year we hired a new teacher and a morning educational assistant so we could have 30 kids in the program," Sweeney said. "We still had 14 on the waiting list after we did that."

Sweeney was picking up his morning coffee last spring and the man at the drive through window asked for a favor.

"He had just moved to Coquille and had a 4-year-old who he wanted to get into our early learning program, but he had been told it was full," Sweeney said.

Sweeney asked Sharon Nelson, Lincoln School of Early Learning's principal, but the answer was no, there was no room.

"I was walking back to my office when she came back and said,



BETHANY BAKER PHOTOS, THE WORLD

Holli Henthorn, center, the coordinator at the Lincoln Child Development Center, works with children on an art project in Coquille on July 7, 2017. "We are the pioneers of this...There's no place like this. We are the first in the district to have an open childcare facility," commented Henthorn.



The Lincoln School of Early Learning is gaining an addition to house the Lincoln Child Development Center, open to children from two-and-a-half-years-old to 10-years-old year round in Coquille. With a covered outdoor playground and tricycle racetrack, the new facility will give parents along the South Coast more access to quality early learning programs.



Children play on a jungle gym at the Lincoln Child Development Center in Coquille on July 7, 2017. Increasing enrollment trends are causing shortages of early learning opportunities for parents along the South Coast.

"Wait a minute," Sweeney said. "If I could give her an afternoon educational assistant, everyone on the waiting list could be fit into the program."

To do that cost the district \$2,800, which Sweeney approved. Within hours after delivering the news to parents with children on the list, the district was flooded with more requests to get in.

"The waiting list went from 14 to 19," Sweeney said. "What we found is we have no more space here at Lincoln and yet a growing need to serve our youngest folks in town."

So Sweeney, Nelson and the school board approved to build a new childhood learning center onto the district office and to expand the program. The program was extended on April 3, with four extra teachers hired to fill

the need.

As previously reported by The World, the center will be open year-round, aside from major holidays. This expansion also points to a continued growth in school registration numbers at Coquille. Sweeney reported the district had 951 students last year, with 1,046 this year, with another 52 in pre-K and an additional 10 children in the new early childhood learning program.

"We've heard from a lot of parents who work at the hospital or the courthouse who live in Coos Bay but have a hard time finding quality child care," Nelson said in a previous interview. "I think as the program continues to grow and word gets out there, many parents will want their children here, where there's something safe from putting them in a larger

facility such as a school setting."

It isn't just the school districts that have seen this growth in its youngest student population, but so have other daycares and after school programs. For example, the Salvation Army's after school program saw attendance numbers go from 10 to 50 this year.

The program's location is next to the Woodland Apartments, which is Section 8 housing. Initially the children that attended the after school program were from those apartments. After Dennis and Tawyna Stumpf, the program coordinators, introduced music, cheerleading, focused on sports and added artwork, word of mouth drew in crowds of kids aged 5 to 12.

"The bulk of our enrollment is from the apartments, though these kids come from all over the county," Dennis Stumpf said. "Not only do we do background

checks on our volunteers, to ensure these kids are safely looked after, but they are fed, have help with their homework, have fun activities and games, not to mention that it is free."

In forecasting for the future, the Coos Bay School District expects its senior year to bottom out next year with a small senior class but then climb for the next several years as the younger kids move up through the grades.

"If our elementary enrollment continues to grow or at least level off at the current growth line, we will see overall district enrollment increase after next year," Trendell said. "It is encouraging for the schools."

Reporter Jillian Ward can be reached at 541-269-1222, ext. 235, or by email at jillian.ward@the-worldlink.com. Follow her on Twitter: @JE_Wardwriter.

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Making the dean's list

Grad overcomes biggest challenge facing community college students

ELISE HAMNER
Special to The World

COOS BAY — Motivation. Support. Talk with Emmanuel “Manny” Taban-Taeoalii and he’ll tell you those are the most important factors that helped him graduate from college with an associate’s of arts transfer degree.

“It was tough. I came from Utah. I didn’t know anybody. Taking advantage of the resources and the tutoring center really helped me graduate,” he said.

On June 8, Taban-Taeoalii not only shook the Southwestern Oregon Community College president’s hand and grabbed a diploma, he was a featured speaker at graduation. He was student body president of his class,

all of this after starting two years ago at ground zero in math and writing.

“I was terrible at writing. I started out at Writing 90. Math was the same. I started lower,” he said.

That’s hard on a person emotionally. It’s hard to know where to go for help and what to ask for. In Oregon, nearly 75 percent of recent high school graduates take at least one developmental math, reading or writing course upon enrolling in a community college. Students who start in these classes at most colleges often quit, or they spend more than two years getting a “two-year” degree.

“I just worked my way up,” he said. “One time a tutor spent two hours with me on the phone.”

SWOCC’s revamped and streamlined developmental math, reading and writing classes helped tremendously, as did a focused emphasis on providing students like Taban-Taeoalii with intensive support and tutors.

“I pushed it to the end and I had to take statistics. Dr. K(ypriotakis) is an amazing teacher. Dr. K was in the tutoring center and that helped, too,” he said.

All the while, he worked, played on the college’s basketball team and participated in the Junior Chamber of Commerce program on campus, traveling to Portland and interacting with business professionals. This put more stress on studying, and meant more time in the tutoring lab.

Taban-Taeoalii said that because of the tutoring center and small classes, he able to pass Writing 121 with



ANNE FARRELL-MATTHEWS

Southwestern Oregon Community College student body president Emmanuel “Manny” Taban-Taeoalii spoke at graduation on June 9, 2017. Taban-Taeoalii was able to stay on track to earn an associates degree in two years thanks to a program for those who need help in math and writing.

a “B,” then Writing 122 and 123 with “A”s.

“I made the dean’s list for the first time ever,” he said. Come fall, Taban-Taeoalii

will start at the University of Utah, pursuing a four-year degree and majoring in political science. He said he’ll miss SWOCC because of all

of the experiences and opportunities.

“If I could have, I would have stayed here all four years.”

Rural

From A2

one single four-credit class. Classes are small. Students are paired with tutors. In math, the college uses a self-paced ALEKS software program. Students work at their own pace with a teacher there supporting them. Tutors are always available if they stall.

“Here is one of our best statistics. Just over a year ago, only 46 percent of our students passed Math 20, our lowest level math class. Now with ALEKS, 74 percent pass,” said Rod Keller, SWOCC’s dean of developmental education.

The other change that has cut the quit-rate is Oregon’s community colleges no longer require students who aren’t pursuing science and engineering degrees to take the math required for those professions. Instead, they learn everyday life math — math required

to survive in society. That includes the basics of personal finance, and practical probability, statistics, and problem-solving.

Busting the testing myth

On the front end, SWOCC is more strategic in placing students in classes, too. The goal is eliminating barriers.

College placement testing hasn’t proven to be accurate, and there’s less emphasis on that choosing where to place students. A lot of people don’t test well. It doesn’t mean they don’t have the brains and skills to succeed in college entry-level classes.

“We look at the person,” Mageehon said. “If a student comes from high school with calculus, we place the student where the student belongs rather than testing.”

Advisors consider the whole student, which is a

Measuring success

Oregon’s colleges measure their success by “completions.” Colleges want to achieve a goal of seeing all of their students finish degrees and certificates, which means their students are trained to work or able to transfer to a university. For SWOCC, 2017 was a stellar year. The graduating class includes 446 graduates from 25 states and 2 countries, with:

- 207 Associates of Arts Oregon Transfer degrees,
- 7 Associates of Science Oregon Transfer degrees,
- 157 Associates of Applied Science degrees,
- 125 Associates of General Studies degrees,
- 140 Associates of Science degrees, and
- 145 students earned Certificates of Completion.

better predictor. They look at a person’s grades, interests and motivation. Highly motivated people excel, when they get the support they need.

“It’s the whole idea of we are here to serve the people where they are. We aren’t setting up arbitrary entry points,” said OCCA’s Elizabeth Cox Brand, whose work with colleges focuses

on improving student success.

The state of Oregon has a goal of every Oregonian earning a high school diploma, and that 40 percent will have an associate degree or professional certificate, and 40 percent will have a bachelor’s degree or better.

Cox Brand says there’s no way Oregon will get there

without community colleges, which serve 90 percent of the state geographically. The way SWOCC is helping those students who show up with the most need in math, reading and writing eliminates barriers.

Training people for local jobs

Bottom line, community colleges adapt and offer programs employers need. When rural students get that training, they get jobs and take home more money, which improves communities’ economies.

More than half of SWOCC’s students are the first in their families to go to college. That becomes a barrier in the sense that these students want job training, but they don’t know how to be a college student. They may not have grown up with parents or siblings who teach them how to study. They may not

understand a syllabus.

“Small classes, faculty that teach for the attention and assistance, and 1-on-1 coaching that students need that helps them get through — you don’t get that at a university,” Cox Brand said.

That support makes a significant difference, especially for students who may have been told all their lives that they’re not smart, she added. It also helps people break ongoing generations of poverty and combats inequality.

Statistically, a parent’s level of education impacts a child’s likelihood of getting an education. If parents go to college and get job training that translates into living-wage jobs, their children are more likely to get the support they need at home around education. They are more likely to aspire to and train for fulfilling jobs that support families and make communities healthier.



Bay Clinic, LLP

Physicians and Surgeons

The Bay Clinic has been providing services to families on the southern Oregon coast for over 59 years. We take pride in both the quality of care we offer and the services we provide to our patients. The Bay Clinic was started in 1957 by several internists. Within a couple of years we became a multi-specialty clinic. Initially Bay Clinic was located next to Blossom Gulch school on S. 10th Street in Coos Bay. The current building was built in 1975 directly across the street from Bay Area Hospital. We have added on the building three times through the years to accommodate additional providers for the area’s growing medical needs.

Bay Clinic has been working diligently to recruit additional primary care physicians. We are committed to bringing providers to serve our community.

Our Internal Medicine department includes five Internists, one Family Practice and one Adult Nurse Practitioners. We currently have three Pediatricians and a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, a General Surgeon, a Nephrologist and an Allergist. Our Obstetrics and Gynecology department includes a physician and two Certified Nurse Midwives. Bay Clinic has been working diligently to recruit additional primary care physicians. We are committed to bringing providers to serve our community.

In 2014, the Pediatric After Hours Clinic expanded to the Bay Clinic’s Express Clinic. We care for adult patients as well as pediatric patients. The Express Clinic is open Monday through Thursday 5:30pm to 8:00pm and Saturday from 8:30 to noon. We were the very first in the area to respond to and fill the need for extended and weekend medical services.

We have a full service, on site laboratory and digital x-ray department. Our Cardiac Testing department in Internal Medicine is staffed by caring nurses. They perform a large variety of services including spirometry and breathing treatments, EKG, IV therapies, immunizations and injections.



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SOUTH COAST STRONG

SATURDAY, JULY 22, 2017 | A SPECIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD | theworldlink.com | SECTION B



SHOWING OFF FOR COMPANY

The South Coast is trying to add to its collection of resources to tempt more visitors



BETHANY BAKER, THE WORLD

Rob Gensorek, the owner of Basin Tackle in Charleston, leads a group of participants onto the mud flats for a free class on clamming in Charleston on June 24, 2017.



GENEVA MILLER PHOTOS

Jenine Manning, co-owner of Dragonfly Farm, tends to a group of new plants. Dragonfly Farms, north of Langlois, is one of the stops on the 2017 Wild Rivers Coast Farm Trail.

Agritourism a growing niche

Farm Trail gives one more reason to stop in

GENEVA MILLER
For The World

Who says a grocery run is boring? Shoppers on the Wild Rivers Coast Farm Trail get a destination experience while they stock up on fresh, local grub.

The 2017 Farm Trail is open for business, with nine stops from Bandon to Port Orford. Farm stands such as Valley Flora, u-pick, specialty food sellers and a plant nursery include long-time

businesses, such as the Jensen's century blueberry farm, as well as recent start-ups. Farmers markets in Bandon and Port Orford bookend the trail, with a

wide variety of seasonal produce, meat and fish, plus baked and preserved goods. The trail fills a niche for locals and visitors hungry for homegrown products and unique experiences on the Southern Oregon Coast.

First-hand experiences on local farms are memorable, said Cathy Boden, Eat Fresh and Local action team leader. Farm trail explorers can visit one destination at a time or tour several in one day. Either way, the trail gets shoppers up close and personal with farmers and food producers.

"Farmers share who they are, what they're doing and what they're proud of," said Boden.

The official farm trail season is June through September, but many businesses are open year round. Find the farm trail list at bandon.com/farm-trail.



Produce at the Old Town Marketplace farmers market in Bandon.



Old Town Marketplace farmers market in Bandon.



John Towne, left, co-manager of the Old Town Marketplace, sells local produce.



Valley Flora farm stand in Langlois.

Farm to Table

"The farm trail gives people one more reason to stop in. It doesn't just reach the tourists but people from the area, too," said Jenine Manning, co-owner of Dragonfly Farm and Nursery.

Visitors to Dragonfly find an eye-catching retail nursery nes-

tled in a wooded setting just off U.S. Highway 101 north of Langlois. Manning and the Dragonfly staff cultivate many of the nursery's ornamental and edible plants on site. And, she rounds out her retail selection with additional products grown in the region.

Manning got a jump on the 2017 gardening and tourism season in

May. She staged her retail space, sold herb and vegetable starts at a mini farmers market hosted by Southern Coos Hospital. And, she organized an Earth Day weekend celebration with other local farmers and craftspeople. Manning said the Earth Day event drew close to 500 people, on Saturday alone, who shopped Dragonfly products

as well as her guest vendors' wares. Manning was just establishing the Dragonfly business when she attended a Rural Tourism Studio series for communities in South Coos and North Curry counties. She found inspiration in discussion of successful Oregon agritourism

Please see **AGRITOURISM**, Page B7

Oregon travel industry creates jobs, boosts economy

AMY MOSS STRONG
The World

The Oregon travel industry continued to exhibit strong growth in 2016, with travel-related spending generating record revenues for the state.

"We've had seven consecutive years of very solid growth," said Travel Oregon Chief Executive Officer Todd Davidson.

Independent findings by Dean Runyan Associates indicate that travel-related spending throughout the state increased by nearly \$500 million last year, reaching a record \$11.3 billion, while the number of Oregonians directly employed in the industry rose to more than 109,000.

"This is a job-generating industry," Davidson said.

Davidson said the travel industry is finding ways to connect people with their Oregon experience and make them feel a little more "Oregonian."

"They have such a good experience here that they want to con-

tinue to seek out Oregon products where they are," he said. "They'll join clubs or order Oregon wine at dinner, for example."

Some 50-60 percent of visitors have purchased Oregon products since returning home from a trip here, primarily craft and agricultural products.

"We are changing people's behavior," Davidson said.

But what's happening on Oregon's South Coast?

Plenty, Davidson said.

Agritourism and ecotourism are expanding movements that continue to draw visitors to the South Coast.

Birds flock here year-round to catch a glimpse of some 500 types of migratory birds which pass through the area.

Photographers have an endless supply of scenic possibilities.

The Oregon Coast is lined with bluffs and promontories ideal for spotting the nearly 20,000 gray



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO FROM TRAVEL OREGON

Please see **TOURISM**, Page B3 The Coos History Museum on the Coos Bay waterfront draws both visitors and residents.

Tourism

From B2

whales that migrate south to Mexico in December and then return, along with their newborn calves, north to Alaska from mid-March through June.

You'll see ardent cyclists gliding along just about every paved road in the state, including the Wild Rivers Coast Scenic Bikeway, which affords views of the South Coast's charming fishing hamlets and dramatic beaches. Hikers find trails off the beaten path.

The Wild Rivers Coast Farm Trail offers a fresh farm-to-table experience and introduces visitors to new culinary discoveries. Cuisine experiences rival those offered in large metropolitan areas.

Craft beer breweries, distilleries and wineries, as well as a new creamery are making a splash throughout the South Coast and offering a distinct sense of place.

Fishing, crabbing and clamming are all passionate pursuits.

Surfing, sailboarding, kite boarding and scuba diving bring the adventurous.

Beach combing from Florence to Brookings, walking the labyrinths at low tide in Bandon and horseback riding also draw visitors.

Cultural experiences include art galleries, live theater and music, museums, lighthouses and historic sites.

Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, which offers four distinct courses, one of which has been named the second best public course in the nation by Golf Digest, continues to beckon golf enthusiasts worldwide.

It's easy to see why people come. But what makes them stay, how much do they spend and how does that impact residents?

Davidson said the Dean Runyon report answers many of those questions from a statistical standpoint.

Coos County direct travel impacts in 2016 included \$265.3 million in spending, \$76.6 million in earnings, employed 3,280 people (includes all full- and part-time employment of payroll employees and proprietors) and earned \$9 million in tax revenue.

The re-spending of travel-generated revenues by businesses and employees generates additional impacts.

"Everything we do at Travel



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO FROM TRAVEL OREGON

Coos Bay Mayor Joe Benetti speaks during a Rural Tourism Studio training in January. The Tourism Studio teaches people in the industry about sustainable tourism development.

Oregon is aimed at improving the lives of all Oregonians through travel and tourism," said Davidson. "This report, indicating the strong economic impact and jobs numbers the industry brings to the state, shows us that we are on track to achieve our mission of inspiring travel that drives economic development, enhancing communities — both large and small — in every corner of the state."

Many Coos County business owners rely on tourism to keep them afloat. Savvy entrepreneurs seek to understand their customers at a deeper level. Capturing those visitors and keeping them connected with social media and email is key. Businesses can talk to those people every day and keep them in the loop via Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and other social media.

"I'd take Facebook followers over a visitor guide any day," Davidson said.

Davidson shared a story about a man named John Bauer, who came to visit Oregon from out of state with his family to vacation and fish, visiting Crater Lake and taking in plays at the Shakespeare Festival in Ashland before returning home.

"Why do we live here when we love it there?" Bauer soon asked himself.

It didn't take long for Bauer to follow his passion and move his family and high-end fly reel business to Oregon.

"You may find you have businesses here who are asking visitors what was their introduction to Coos County (and why they love it here)," Davidson said.

The Rural Tourism Studio recently helped train a group in sustainable tourism development.

Tourism Studio is a professional development program designed to bolster the tourism economy in rural regions of the state. Travel Oregon, in partnership with a local steering committee, hosted a series of workshops this year, January through April, in the Southern Oregon Coast region. Communities included Reedsport, Winchester Bay, North Bend, Coos Bay, Charleston, Bandon, Coquille and Myrtle Point.

Bandon participants in the 2017 series included representatives from local businesses as well as the nonprofit and public sector, according to Bandon Chamber Executive Director Julie Miller.

Bandon Chamber members hosted Tourism Studio participants for culinary and agritourism networking and workshop events. Speakeasy 33 hosted a networking group event. And, businesses on the Wild Rivers Coast Farm Trail toured the trail's farms and markets. The Farm Trail, which started in 2015, emerged from the 2013-14 Southern Coos and North Curry Rural Tourism Studio.

"The travel and tourism industry continues to be a bright spot for Oregon's economy," said Governor Kate Brown. "Not only are travel-related spending, employment and earnings vital components to the state's healthy economy, but also, traveling and connecting with the outdoors are good for Oregonians' health and well-being."

The findings reported by Dean Runyan Associates confirm the economic significance of the travel industry in Oregon. To read

Dean Runyon report

The report, which provides detailed estimates of statewide, regional and county travel impact, includes the following findings:

- Visitors to Oregon generated \$11.3 billion in revenue for the state in 2016. This represents a 4.3 percent increase in spending in real dollars compared to the previous year and marked the seventh consecutive year of growth.
- Last year Oregon destinations hosted 28.4 million overnight visitors, with hotel room revenue throughout the state increasing by 8 percent.
- Domestic visitor air arrivals to Oregon grew 10.5 percent over the previous year.
- The travel industry added more than 4,000 new jobs in 2016, a 3.5 percent increase over the prior year, bringing total statewide travel industry jobs to 109,500.
- Secondary impacts from the re-spending of travel-generated revenues by businesses and employees were equivalent to 56,900 jobs in 2016, with earnings of \$2.6 billion.
- The travel industry's gross domestic product was \$4.7 billion in 2016.
- The travel industry is one of the top three export-oriented industries in rural Oregon counties.

the full report, including specific regional and county breakouts, go to Industry.TravelOregon.com/EconomicImpact.

About Travel Oregon

The Oregon Tourism Commission, dba Travel Oregon, works to enhance visitors' experiences by providing information, resources and trip planning tools that inspire travel and consistently convey the exceptional quality of Oregon. The commission aims to improve Oregonians' quality of life by strengthening economic impacts of the state's \$11.3 billion tourism industry that employs 109,500 Oregonians. Visit TravelOregon.com to learn more.

Travel Oregon contributed to this report.

Cutting a trail to Ecotourism

Biking, kayaking, hiking all bring in visitors who care about nature

SAPHARA HARRELL
The World

On any given day along the Southern Oregon Coast, drivers can see cyclists riding along U.S. Highway 101 as cars whiz by.

But mountain bikes? Not so much.

That's about to change this fall after the completion of a Coos County mountain bike trail.

The trail — planned for the West Beaver Hill Road and Whisky Run Road area — will be non-motorized.

Initially there will be 11 miles, with more to come.

Ed Kessler's company Ptar-migan Ptrails has been contracted to build the trail.

The \$250,000 construction project is mostly being funded through a grant from the State Parks Recreational Trails Program.

Kessler said the goal is to have a year-round trail system, despite skeptics who think it rains too much for that.

"It can be done it's just you have to do it right. And it's not putting a trail straight up or straight down a hill or routing along an old road. It's building new trail to a sustainable standard that is the industry standard," Kessler said.

He said the trail will drain water effectively and follow the natural contours of the land.

His wife, Erin Kessler said if the trail is built well, it will keep people who would otherwise stay indoors riding in the winter.

"Especially the inclement weather kind of deters, because our current trails that we have at Blacklock or Cape Blanco,

Please see ECOTOURISM, Page B6

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Bandon Dunes assessment providing benefits

SAPHARA HARRELL
The World

The Bandon Dunes Golf Resort's self-imposed lodging assessment is already providing benefits to the county.

Part of the 6-percent assessment is going toward the Coos County Sheriff's Office, which it's using to increase salaries and hire more deputies.

The other portion is going to a Coos County tourism group comprised of a consortium of professionals from the area's tourism industry.

The group is still trying to come to a consensus on its vision.

Julie Miller, the vice president of the county tourism group, said it's so fresh it's hard to know what direction it plans to move in.

"You're asking questions that we just don't have answers to yet, because this is so new," Miller said of the three month old group.

However, she said all the board members have the same goal in the end — to bring more people to the area.

"What I'm looking for from this is that partnership collaboration and strategy that will enhance our product and give us the ability to make ourselves a desirable place," Miller said, "When people come to the South Coast they fall in love."

Jim Seeley, executive director of the nonprofit Wild Rivers Coast Alliance, said outdoor recreation accounts for a high percentage of the visitors to the South Coast.

"We know for sure there's a lot more outdoor recreation opportunities than is well known by the rest of the world," Seeley, who's also a part of the tourism group, said.

He said the group is trying to send the message to the world that the South Coast is a bucket list destination.

Doing that has its own challenges.

Seeley said when people look up the area on the Internet there's a lot of information about food and lodging, but very little on why you'd actually want to come here.

"It was a real eye opener that we weren't telling the story," Seeley said.

That's something that this tourism group as well as other



AMANDA LOMAN, THE WORLD

The Bandon Dunes course at Bandon Dunes Golf Resort. The course continually ranks in the top 20 public courses in the U.S.

interested parties in the area aim to change.

Miller said part of the battle isn't just getting people to the coast.

"It's not just getting people here, it's getting people and having the right things in place, the right infrastructure," she said.

Her statement mirrors something emphasized in Travel Oregon's rural tourism studio — the need for improved infrastructure.

Seeley said infrastructure is more aligned to asset development.

"In other words, outdoor recreation assets that need to be developed," Seeley said, "We're not talking about building hotels. What we're talking about is improving the outdoor recreation assets."

The Coos County Forest moun-

tain bike trail has been cited by many as a step forward in developing recreation assets on the South Coast.

While the need for infrastructure was a topic highlighted in the rural tourism studio, it has yet to be seen what the county tourism group will focus on.

Miller said it's more important for the group to do things right rather than quickly.

"The strategy of this board is to be thoughtful and strategic of decisions we make, so were not reinventing the wheel with what's already going on in the area," Miller said.

She said after years of being financially strapped, the area is finally getting to a place where things are opening up.

"We've got the wind behind our back now and it's up to us to

do something amazing with it," Miller said.

Optimism runs high, because multiple groups are all working on improving tourism to the area.

"What we've seen over the last three years is a number of different city officials, county officials, organizations, tourism groups, who have come together around common visions for the economic vitality of the region," Marie Simmonds with the Wild Rivers Coast Alliance said, "We see that as the way forward, people coming around as a collective vision."

Miller, who also serves as the executive director for the Bandon Chamber of Commerce, sees strength in that collective vision.

"We've been so focused on what each of our communities has individually," Miller said, "For a long time we overlooked that you're

stronger together than individually."

That mentality is something that aligns with Wild Rivers Coast Alliance's objective.

"Our overriding objective at WRCA is to help grow the size of the pie and help these different communities to reach out to get their fair share of that pie," Seeley said.

Miller, who's been in the tourism industry for 18 years, is more optimistic than ever.

"We're perfect to be in this publication because we're maybe the strongest we've ever been in this industry," Miller said, "When this process ends I think we'll be the strongest in the state."

Reach Saphara Harrell at (541) 269-1222 ext. 239 or by email at saphara.harrell@theworldlink.com

North Bend to Denver United flights a success, but in jeopardy

SPENCER COLE
The World

SOUTH COAST — The popular twice-weekly nonstop flights between North Bend and Denver over the summer months out of Southwest Oregon Regional Airport (OTH) are in the third and final year of their initial trial period with United Airlines, but the flights' future is currently up in the air.

"We don't really know yet if it will continue in 2018," said James Turner, director of projects at Bandon Dunes. "We are hopeful it will."

The flights are made possible due to a contract with United and Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, as well as a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"We received a \$550,000 grant from USDOT to subsidize the Denver route over three years," said Jennifer Groth, the airport public information officer. "Bandon Dunes Golf Resort signed a contract with United Airlines to guarantee the route for that time period (with up to \$1 million."

According to Groth, the grant covered \$214,763 for the first year the flights were offered, while Bandon Dunes paid \$64,441.

In year two, the grant covered \$306,561 and Bandon Dunes paid \$91,984.

There is \$28,676 left to spend from the USDOT grant for 2017, the third consecutive year United has offered the seasonal flights.

"For local residents, it's an easier, more convenient way to fly east for summer vacations," Groth said. "That can be the challenge of living on the West Coast: it takes a day to get anywhere on the East Coast so this could make that an easier trip. And it obviously helps with the golfers that want to come to our area to utilize Bandon Dunes."

Currently, the airport offers flights to Denver through connections via San Francisco and Portland.

Michael Chupka, director of communications for Bandon Dunes, said the new direct flights help facilitate tourism for Oregon's South Coast.

"It's a win-win for all parties. We've been seeing momentum as far as number of seats that have been sold over the past two years," he said. "It's a great option — not only for Bandon Dunes and the golfers coming in here — but the community in general."

"We're a little isolated here. It's part of the charm and part of the struggle. At the same time, there's always a need to help improve air service into the South Coast and having access

"We're a little isolated here. It's part of the charm and part of the struggle. At the same time, there's always a need to help improve air service into the South Coast and having access now to Denver is great for our golfers."

Michael Chupka,
director of communications
for Bandon Dunes

now to Denver is great for our golfers."

According to Groth, the resort's support helps eliminate several challenges that could hamstring flight options for the airport.

"We certainly appreciate their help in maintaining the economic viability of this route," she said.

Turner noted that the area was lucky to be able to have any flights with one of the "big three" — United, American and Southwest — airlines.

"The fact we've been able to get that and keep it for three years is a nice thing to have and we'd like to keep it going but there's a lot of moving parts: it has to be approved by United, the airport and our owner if we are going to continue," Turner said, adding resort officials would discuss the matter internally in the fall.

"Ultimately, it's up to United if they want to continue that route," he added.

The airline did not return requests seeking comment by the time this article was published.

Groth said that small regional airports occasionally need to subsidize routes, often through some combination of federal, state and local funding and business partnerships.

"If the Denver flight continues to grow in demand, the airport will need less funding to ensure the route continues to be available to our customers," she said. "It is difficult to predict whether the growth will reach a point where a subsidy is no longer necessary."

And growth, while far from staggering, is steady.

During the first year of the Denver flight, 2,375 passengers utilized the new service.

In 2016, the second year, 2,683 passengers used the flight.

Figures for this year are not yet available, Groth said.



The main runway at the Southwestern Oregon Regional Airport in North Bend.

BENJAMIN BRAYFIELD

The airport's executive director, Theresa Cook reiterated the importance of the route and OTH's commitment to continue the service.

"Our partnership with Bandon Dunes Golf Resort and the \$550,000 grant the airport obtained through USDOT to bring the seasonal Denver flight to our region provides important commercial air service for people who live here and for those who would like to visit," she said. "Commercial flights are essential to the transportation infrastructure that is the foundation of our local economy; the Coos County Airport District will continue working with Bandon Dunes and will re-apply for federal funding to maintain and grow our service."

Reporter Spencer Cole can be reached at 541-269-1222, ext. 249, or by email at Spencer.Cole@theworldlink.com Follow him on Twitter: @spencercole.



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Tourism expert hired for Oregon's South Coast

KYM POKORNY
OSU Extension Service

BANDON — In October 2016, Oregon Sea Grant and the Oregon State University Extension Service hired an outdoor recreation expert from Texas to boost tourism along Oregon's South Coast.

Now based in Bandon, Miles Phillips comes to OSU from Texas A&M University Extension, where he brought together elements of the agriculture, forestry, natural resources and adventure industries to create a cohesive and sustainable tourism program. He worked to broaden traditional tourism to encompass such diverse activities as hunting, visiting pumpkin patches, landscape painting and kayaking. He'll use a similar approach in Oregon.

His top priority is to use OSU Extension's research — an outreach-based approach to combine the many arms of the tourism industry into one alliance to bring visitors to the southern Oregon coast, improve the economy and promote conservation of its natural resources.

"This is a great example of how Extension plays a role in the changing economy and changing demographics across the state," said Phillips, who has been the chair of the National Extension Tourism Design Team for four years. "Outdoor recreation is a big part of the mix."

Phillips will initially concentrate on the South Coast from Reedsport to Brookings — an area especially hard hit by economic challenges — but may expand his reach with time. OSU Extension collaborated closely with Travel Oregon and local community partners to identify the region's destination development needs as the new position took shape. Wild Rivers Coast Alliance, the philanthropic arm of the world-class Bandon Dunes Golf Resort in Bandon, lent its support as well.

"It was clear that there was an opportunity to address business development issues on the South Coast and a focus on coastal



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Miles Phillips joins OSU Sea Grant Extension in a new position created to boost tourism on the Oregon Coast.

tourism was a natural fit," David Hanson, Sea Grant's outreach and engagement leader. "Miles' experience in Texas was exactly the type of programming that we are hoping to replicate."

Phillips, whose position was funded by the Oregon State Legislature, said his immediate goal is to pinpoint the needs of individual communities and to identify and connect resources offered by Extension and other organizations to meet those needs. Strategies include a website, seminars, publications and community meetings.

"There is a lot of information out there," he said. "It's a matter of getting it into people's hands and helping them figure out how to use the resources to be successful."

"There is a lot of information out there. It's a matter of getting it into people's hands and helping them figure out how to use the resources to be successful."

Miles Phillips

Phillips will also be working to bring community college and OSU students on board as interns, a step he sees as a vital part of Extension's mission to increase destination development and improve educational opportunities. One intern recently graduated and two new interns have been hired for the summer. He will collaborate with the OSU's College of Business's new program in hospitality management as well as the outdoor recreation leadership and tourism program in OSU's College

of Forestry.

"As Oregon's land grant university, OSU has a long history of serving the state's rural and urban communities," said Scott Reed, vice provost for University Outreach and Engagement. "Our new South Coast Extension tourism and business development position is a prime example of our commitment to expand and mobilize the resources of the university to have a sustainable, positive impact on the economic vitality of the region and beyond."

Jim Seeley, executive director of Wild Rivers Coast Alliance, said Phillips' appointment comes at a crucial time when four tourism initiatives are underway in the area. They include a tourism work group that's funded by WRCA and Coos County, and an upcoming rural tourism studio training program on the South Coast offered by Travel Oregon.

"Miles, who has a long and distinguished career in the education area of nature-based tourism, will be part of these and other ongoing efforts to help strategize the best approach to accomplishing our objectives," Seeley said. "That's what makes him so significant. We've got these four trains heading into the station and now OSU enters the station and that's the biggest train of all."

Ecotourism

From B3

they all flood. And people get frustrated and they put their bikes away and then they don't do anything all winter. So if there's an opportunity to still get out and recreate because the trail's built well... it's going to really explode," she said.

The couple said people are driving to places all over the state to ride mountain bikes.

"There's families in Bandon, Port Orford, Gold Beach. I mean they drive to Corvallis, they drive to Bend, they drive to California to go ride. And we want people to do that here and when they're done maybe stay at our campground or some of our hotels, spend some dollars in our community," Ed Kessler said.

The pair is new to the area. They bought a home in Port Orford after moving from Alaska.

Erin Kessler said in Alaska they saw a cycling community develop and hope to see the same happen on the South Coast, albeit in a way that fits with the coastal

lifestyle.

"The whole South Coast is trying to develop and expand our recreation tourism infrastructure in a way that fits our culture and our coast here," Ed Kessler said.

He said the bike trail is going into an area that doesn't have any sort of recreational development and can still fit in with logging.

"It creates a better stewardship of the forest. Getting people into the forest, using the forest in-between logging operations," he said. Erin agreed.

"Yeah, sure it might get logged again. That's fine we'll just build more trails because there are going to be more riders and more people that have found stoke on this," she said.

For Ed Kessler, it's not so much a lack of excitement, but a lack of funds holding projects like this back.

"There are a lot of people who want to see things happen, they just don't have the capital," Ed Kessler said. "We're working really hard as a group to make this a place where people come ride and where people want to live here because the riding is good. And it's going

to take a long time, but it's happening."

A bike trail isn't the only type of trail that's in the works for the South Coast.

Five years ago, Dave Lacey caved to what he called "three years of consistent peer pressure." As a result, South Coast Tours was formed.

Since then Lacey said he's seen his kayak tour business grow exponentially — from 15 tours the first year to 430 last year.

He said the company provides a unique experience that no one else is doing in the area.

"I think it's just a niche that no one else is filling and it's a growing sport for sure, you just see more kayaks on people's cars everywhere," Lacey said.

In the summertime, the guide said he gets visitors from all over the world.

"It started out as people would show up here and they would find out about me from business cards or do an online search. But now it's become people are booking their tours in January and then they figure out where they're going to stay after that," Lacey said.



BETHANY BAKER PHOTOS, THE WORLD

Josh Collins, an employee for IMBA Trail Solutions, operates an excavator to clear part of an 11-mile trail through the forest surrounding West Beaver Hill Road and Whisky Run Road on July 14, 2017. Collins, an avid mountain biker himself, thinks about how the trail will feel as he navigates around trees and grades along the charted route.

Lacey's company does tours all over the South Coast, from Brookings to the South Slough. Most recently, tours have been expanded out to the Coquille River with help from Bandon resident Brian Kraynik.

The expansion is part of a plan to create a designated water trail on the Coquille River.

Kraynik said he was initially looking to make it a state designated trail, but backed away in favor of more local control.

The potential 41-mile trail would go from the mouth of the river in Bandon to Hoffman Myrtle Grove State Park. The long term goal is to have interpretive signs and camping along the river.

Right now, Kraynik said the lack of restroom facilities on the river holds some people back from using it at all.

"Everything I do is about creating more marine infrastructure, because I see a glaring need for it," Kraynik said.

He said he wants to create commerce in an area where there currently is none.

"It's so rich in history and ecology and you look around and there's a lot of blight," Kraynik said, "And I think we can do better."

However, he, like many others, said infrastructure is the biggest obstacle.

"With ecotourism it all comes back, it really, it takes infrastructure," Kraynik said. Getting South Coast resi-



Josh Collins, an employee for IMBA Trail Solutions, stops along a completed portion of an 11-mile trail through the forest surrounding West Beaver Hill Road and Whisky Run Road on July 14, 2017. Ptarmigan Trails, owned by Ed Kessler, contracted with the company to do the physical labor of clearing the trail, an eight week project that should be completed by the end of summer.

dents on board with tourism is another challenge.

"It's going to be a very slow shift. It's more of a grassroots generational shift when people see the benefits," Kraynik said, "It's tricky because we have a segment of the population who doesn't want any growth."

Lacey said he first moved to the area a year after the Northwest Forest Plan was implemented.

Since then, he's seen a change in the demographics, from working families to more retirees.

"When I first moved here I was very guarded of it, because I felt like I found this awesome place. I wasn't in the tourism industry and I was like 'I don't want more people coming here' because I was afraid it was

going to get ruined."

Now things have changed for him.

He's a member of the Oregon Coast Visitors Association and sees the benefit of tourism to the area, something he said other residents might not understand.

"Now that I'm in the industry I'm promoting tourism and that means more people are going to come here, right? But what I'm hoping to promote is the right kind of people that come here, people that want to take care of the resources," Lacey said. "Yeah, we're bringing more people here, but we're bringing the right kind of people, I hope."

Reach Saphara Harrell at (541) 269-1222 ext. 239 or by email at saphara.harrell@theworldlink.com



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Agritourism

From B2

hubs and trails, such as the Hood River Fruit Loop. She knew it would take a few years for the farm trail to develop into a regional attraction, but she's pleased with the progress. And, she appreciates the marketing boost from farm trail promotions.

"It's great exposure for us," said Manning.

Agritourism niche

Agritourism is a growing niche that bridges culinary, heritage and outdoor experiences. Interest in Southern Oregon Coast agritourism is consistent with visitor trends reported by the state's destination marketing agency Travel Oregon.

The Rural Tourism Studio is a professional development program presented by Travel Oregon to strengthen tourism in rural regions throughout Oregon. Local steering committees work with Travel Oregon staff to organize workshops and networking sessions. Participants identify tourism opportunities and recruit action teams for ongoing product development. The Wild Rivers Coast Farm Trail had its genesis in the 2013-14 studio series. Boden, who is the Foodshed Program Coordinator with the Curry Watersheds Partnership, signed on as an action team leader. The Eat Fresh and Local team started work on the farm trail concept and launched the first trail season in 2015.

A baseline assessment commissioned for the 2017 Southern Oregon Coast Rural Tourism Studio presented a cross-section of tourism and travel information. Forty-two percent of survey takers said they are more likely to return to destinations where they can buy local food products, according to a 2010 market study by Travel Oregon for its Oregon Bounty program. The 2017 studio steering committee noted that the region is home to hundreds of farms and has a reputation as a "delicious place to visit."

"Tourism is about economic development, not just being a great host," said Boden.

A visitor-friendly infrastructure includes multiple elements, from ODOT-approved destination road signs, to staff recruitment. Boden envisions each stop on the farm trail as an opening to other businesses on the trail. Visitors who



GENEVA MILLER PHOTOS

Zoe Bradbury of Valley Flora Farm works a field on the tractor. In the distance, a class field trip teaches children about organic farming.

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SNAP/Oregon Trail Cards accepted
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SNAP/Oregon Trail Cards accepted
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tour the trail should collect a series of memorable experiences that entice them to return to the region and stay longer.

Guests who stay in commercial lodging make a significant impact

on the local economy, according to the 2015 Travel Impacts report by Dean Runyan Associates for Travel Oregon. The report showed Coos County visitors staying one day less than the average tourist stay

state-wide. Not surprisingly, outdoor, beach and waterfront attractions are the most popular visitor activities on the coast.

Travel data indicates potential for agriculture businesses to cap-

ture more visitor commerce, however. Visitor interest in culinary, cultural and heritage activities on the Oregon Coast increased from 2011 to 2015, according to Longwoods International reports.

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The word “potlatch” denotes a tradition of gift giving, long practiced by Indian Tribes along the Pacific Northwest Coast. As a potlatch Tribe, the Coquille Indians believe in sharing with our neighbors.

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Through the spirit of potlatch, we help our communities to grow and prosper.



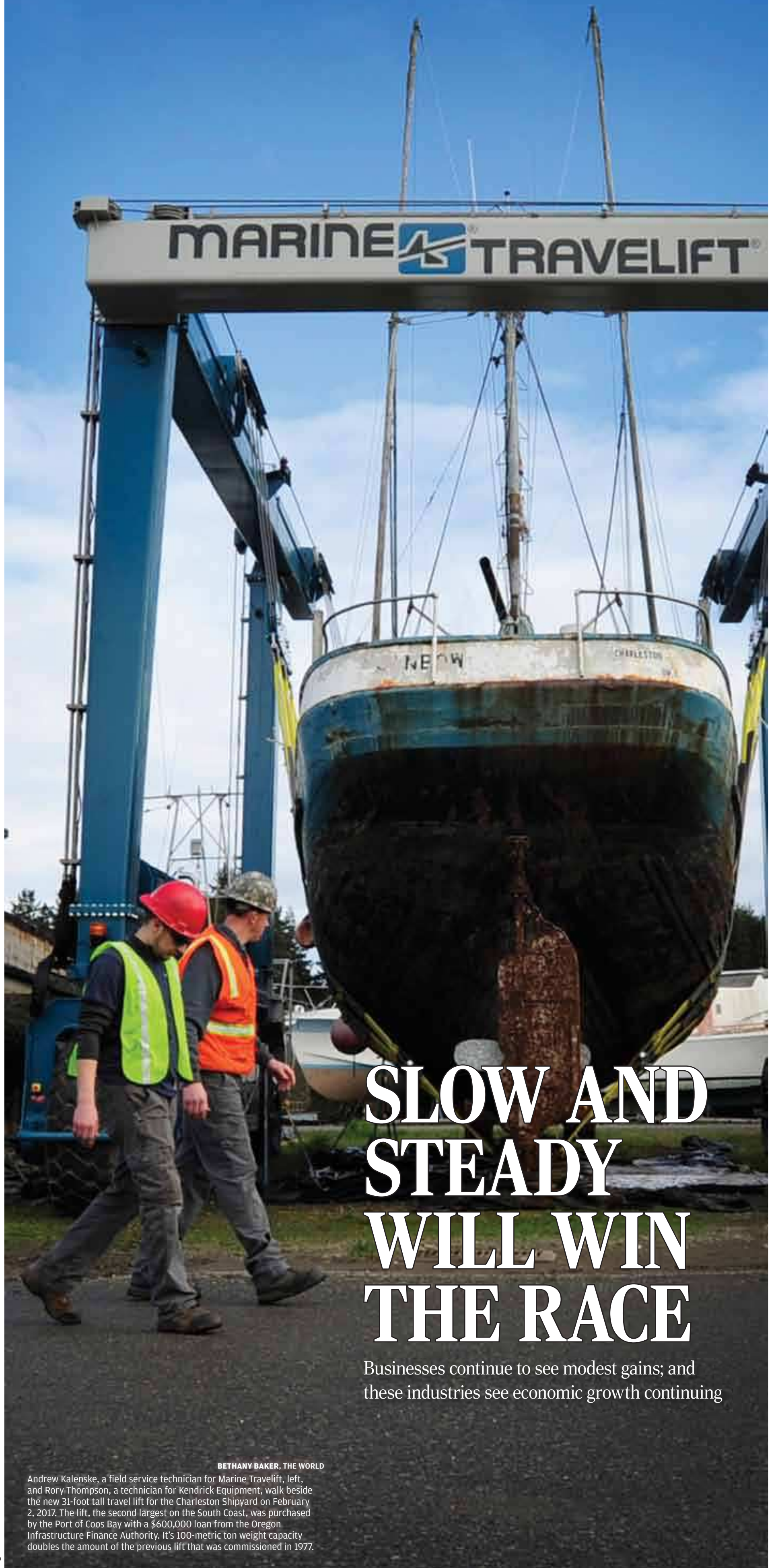
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SOUTH COAST STRONG

SATURDAY, JULY 22, 2017 | A SPECIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD | theworldlink.com | SECTION C



SLOW AND STEADY WILL WIN THE RACE

Businesses continue to see modest gains; and these industries see economic growth continuing

BETHANY BAKER, THE WORLD

Andrew Kalenske, a field service technician for Marine Travelift, left, and Rory Thompson, a technician for Kendrick Equipment, walk beside the new 31-foot tall travel lift for the Charleston Shipyard on February 2, 2017. The lift, the second largest on the South Coast, was purchased by the Port of Coos Bay with a \$600,000 loan from the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority. It's 100-metric ton weight capacity doubles the amount of the previous lift that was commissioned in 1977.



SPENCER COLE, THE WORLD

Downtown Coos Bay as seen from Telegraph Hill. The area and North Bend's have both seen new businesses added to their respective districts but both are only seeing moderate signs of growth with businesses shuffling between both downtown areas becoming a common occurrence.

Downtown areas see new businesses but mostly shuffling

Plenty of activity going on along the Highway 101 hubs

SPENCER COLE
The World

SOUTH COAST — Earlier this spring, The World reported on Coos Bay's downtown area showing signs of economic recovery by tracking new businesses and speaking with local experts.

The reporting revealed a relatively upbeat attitude from business community leaders regarding

the vitality of the area.

"This is the most activity around here I've seen in 15 years," said Coos Bay Councilor Stephanie Kramer, who chairs the city's Urban Renewal Agency (URA).

Indeed, on the surface, Oregon's largest coastal city by population appears to be on the road to recovery as the downtown area alone will add a total of six new businesses, with others filling gaps in and around it as the year progresses.

According to Tom Dixon, Coos Bay's planning administrator, unlike the past two years, which saw

several businesses shuffle in and out of various buildings downtown, the new ones moving in should be there to stay for the long haul.

"One of the indicators I'm seeing is that the people that are coming in now are spending money for upgrades which usually means they are in it for longer investment time," he said. "I think that points to more



stable tenancy for those spaces."

And that stability is important for future growth and better business prospects, Dixon argued. "You always want to have options for new businesses but you also want to have a level of continuity and certainty that businesses are going to stay in the downtown area."

Dixon said he was fairly confident the new businesses would stick around, as most of the companies setting up shop downtown are locally owned and operated.

Shaun Gibbs, economic development specialist for the South

Coast Development Council (SCDC), said the new businesses should be a boon for the local economy but that market observers should temper their expectations about the influx of new businesses.

He said a lot of the new businesses that open in downtown Coos Bay — as well as neighboring North Bend — tend to bounce back and forth from city to city.

"Recently, there's just been kind of a lot of shuffling," he said, noting that local vegan restaurant

Please see **DOWNTOWN**, Page C4

Low inventory means real estate prices are rising

SPENCER COLE
The World

SOUTH COAST — The real estate market for Coos County and its coastal cities has been more or less static for quite some time.

"We have a very limited inventory right now," Brooke Yussim, principal broker with Oregon Bay Properties said.

According to Yussim, the latest market action in Coos County for May had Coos Bay with just 4.5 months worth of inventory.

"Two years ago we had seven months of inventory, and even before that we had 10 to 12 months a couple years ago," she said. "So we just don't have inventory, our prices are up on average, and inventory is low and that's one of the reason's prices are up when you have less homes for the buyers to choose from — the competition is that much more fierce."

When real estate agents refer to inventory they are measuring how long it would take to sell all the residential real estate inventory currently on the market.

In 2008, Coos Bay had 25 months — or more than two years — worth of inventory.

In 2010, that number dropped to a little more than 10 months.

"That was the bottom of the market," Yussim explained. "People weren't selling, more were foreclosing and inventory dropped by more than half."

By the end of 2016, the greater Coos Bay area had just 5.7 months of inventory.

"That's how you know you are losing inventory and that's why prices are so high," Yussim said. "It's simple economics."

In the past year, the average sales price of a home in Coos County rose more than 8 percent, according to data from RMLS.com, the

Pacific Northwest's regional multiple listing service and searchable database for real estate.

In Coos Bay, the average price rose approximately 12 percent.

When compared to past years, the waters become muddied.

In 2006, the average home price was \$211,000, with 805 closed residential sales and 1,671 new listings.

Ten years later, the price had fallen during the Great Recession and rebounded to \$194,000, with 813 closed sales and 1,305 listings.

To date in 2017, the average price of a home has ticked back up to more than \$207,000, a more than 13 percent increase since last year.

"We're back up to the prices where the bubble was," Yussim explained, adding that the local population was still hurting from the economic downturn. "You don't recover all that fast but the population in general seems to be growing. It is substantial and more people are moving to the area."

Annette Shelton-Tideman, Coos, Curry and Douglas counties' regional economist for the Oregon Employment Department said Coos County has only seen a population increase of roughly 200 individuals over the past year. But even a relative uptick in population coupled with a limited amount of inventory increases market prices.

"What we have listed is selling because there is such a limited amount," Yussim said.

Shana Jo Armstrong principal broker and founder of Red Door Realty said the inventory was the lowest the area had seen since 2007.

"I have buyers that we literally cannot find them houses," she added. "If you go to RMLS.com and read the statistics you don't really see more houses than they were last year but what you'll see

is low inventory."

Armstrong said the lower inventory is a result of supply and demand.

According to Shelton-Tideman, the dearth in new homes is a product of a declining construction work force and a market that, even today, is still feeling effects from the recession of the 1980s and the Great Recession 10 years ago.

"Two-thirds of our housing inventory was built before 1980," she said. "But the question is, if we had the (building) permits, if we were building, would we even have the workforce to do this? I think that the construction industry is truly foundational to the economic well-being to the county as a whole and its residents," she said. "The construction industry — as with many others — got hammered during the recession, so recovery is extremely slow."

After construction jobs in the county peaked in 2006 at around 1,100, available positions plummeted precipitously, with the industry losing as much as 36 percent of its workforce, according to the US Census Bureau's Residential Construction Branch. Since then, the number of jobs have hovered at roughly 800.

Shelton-Tideman attributed the falloff to the national housing crisis and a decline in building permits issued since 2005.

She said that even though the construction industry has returned to around 75 percent of peak employment levels, the numbers need to keep climbing. "The industry is one of the counties' most important sources of higher-paying, low-skill jobs and is responsible for a substantial spillover effect in the broader economy."

Another advantage of a healthy

Please see **REAL ESTATE**, Page C4

Coos County, an Economic Update

ANNETTE SHELTON-TIDERMAN,
Regional Economist, Oregon
Employment Department

As the wet months of winter and early spring are now behind us and last year's economic data have been checked and rechecked, now is a good time to take a look at Coos County's economy.

Usually, we analyze business activities on the basis of business type and ownership — is the business owned by private individuals or is the activity one that government oversees? For example, we typically look at private schools and health care providers separately from public providers.

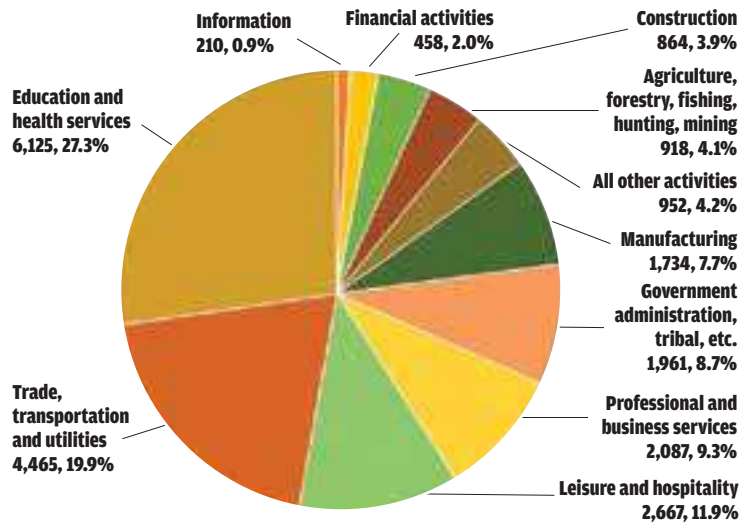
However, since the services and workforce needs are the same, we could view these private and public entities as a combined category. In other words,

all education and health-related work is grouped together regardless of whether services are provided by the county's healthcare districts and public schools or by individuals running their own businesses.

Industry sectors from a 30,000-foot perspective

Grouping similar businesses allows us to analyze the county's economic sectors by function. This is particularly useful when our educators and labor market planners want to see which business areas have the greatest number of workers — and where there might be future job opportunities or training needs. The graph below shows this 30,000-foot view of Coos County's industry sectors by function.

Coos County Private and Public Employment, 2016



Nearly 60 percent of the county's employment occurs within three industry sectors. Coos County's education and health services account for over 27 percent of county employment.

This includes not only professional staff (e.g., teachers, physical therapists, etc.), but also the office staff, grounds crews, and

Please see **UPDATE**, Page C7



COURTESY PHOTO

Samantha Perez is spending her summer working at the Coquille Indian Tribe's Community Center. She's learning about food preparation, nutrition and the working world.

Port has big plans in store

SPENCER COLE
The World

SOUTH COAST — The Port of Coos Bay has the task of maintaining the largest deep water channel between San Francisco and Seattle and all the additional transportation infrastructure that goes along with it.

In the coming years, the Port will focus its efforts on rehabilitating the Coos Bay rail line tunnel, replacing the Vaughn Viaduct Bridge and installing a stormwater system at the Charleston shipyard.

Earlier this spring, the Port announced plans for a \$400 million channel modification project.

Dredging the channel

The project would involve dredging the current channel and deepening it 8 feet along more than 8 miles of river, beginning near Roseburg Forest Products. The same stretch west of the McCullough Bridge would likewise be widened 150 feet.

A 1,400 foot long by 1,100 foot wide "vessel-turning basin" would also be created at the upper end of the proposed modification.

Currently, the channel sits at a depth of 37 feet with a width of 300 feet.

Those numbers would change to 45-foot deep by 450-foot wide at the project's conclusion.

If completed, the work would be the largest and deepest dredging project in Coos Bay's history.

According to Director of Maritime Operations Mike Dunning, the Port is working collaboratively with the state and "various private partners" to fund the project.

External Affairs Manager Margaret Barber said part of the funding came from a \$60 million state grant that the

Cultivating success

Summer is growing season for tribe's kids

CLARK WALWORTH
Special to The World

CHARLESTON — Most week-day mornings find 15-year-old Samantha Perez chopping fruit and making sandwiches for the Coquille Indian Tribe's Head Start pupils.

Preston Shea, 17, may be ripping old carpet out of a housing unit on the tribe's Killkich Reservation.

Other teens are stuffing envelopes, answering phones and chopping weeds.

They're all part of the Killkich Youth Corps, a summer program that exposes tribal teens to the

working world. It exists because pursuing business opportunities isn't the Coquille Indian Tribe's only economic development priority. Cultivating tribal members themselves is just as important.

Driven from its ancient homelands and traumatized by a century of forced assimilation, the Coquille Tribe gradually is emerging from a legacy of poverty and discrimination. Achieving self-sufficiency is Goal 1 — both for the tribal organization and for individual members.

Youth Corps began in 2007, supervised by Don Ivy, who has since become the tribe's chief. He wryly remembers, "It was an opportunity to keep some kids busy who otherwise would be running around causing trouble."

It became much more than that. Ivy set out to teach the youngsters personal accountability and teamwork. They learned to pay attention, plan their day, and review their work at day's end.

Clad in work boots, hardhats and orange vests, Ivy's first crew spent the summer battling Scotch broom, washing windows, and helping out wherever needed. Ivy expected the kids to show up on time — and without ear buds.

A decade later, Youth Corps has broadened to include various summer jobs, but it remains focused squarely on workplace skills and life lessons. Preston Shea, a Marshfield High School senior, describes it as "a job before a job" — a chance to gain experience and

learn from mistakes.

Shea is spending this summer doing maintenance for the tribe's housing authority. After graduating next year, he plans to attend Western Oregon University and become a military police officer.

Youth Corps is not an entitlement. Participants submit applications and face a panel of interviewers. Preparation begins each spring at tribal Teen Night gatherings, where youngsters learn interview skills and how to dress for a positive impression.

"These kids interview better than 40-year-old people," said Rachele Lyon, the tribal government's human resources director.

Please see **SUCCESS**, Page C4

Please see **PORT**, Page C7

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Downtown

From C2

Tin Thistle made the jump from downtown Coos Bay to North Bend due to a need for a commercial kitchen. “One thing about our area — the whole region and especially Coos Bay and North Bend — is that downtown commercial kitchens are very hard to find, when one comes up for rent, usually it’s taken pretty quickly.”

According to Gibbs, downtown areas in both city’s will always be desirable, largely due to the tourism draw that both locations receive from U.S. Highway 101.

He said companies were weary of drifting too far off from the highway’s main corridor.

“Usually when you stray even a block from 101 you see a drop in traffic,” he added. “It does affect the stores quite a bit. It is impactful. And I can’t blame them, honestly.”

“When you look at our economy and the amount of impact tourism has

— even if it’s seasonal — and the draw from 101, I think that’s huge for driving business whether it’s a small or large company.”

Jim Berg, owner of North Point Real Estate and Development, is a sitting member on Coos Bay’s Planning Commission.

He said that while downtown in both cities are attractive places to open a business, the recovery process takes time, especially for small, relatively isolated communities like Coos Bay and North Bend, which have in many ways have still not fully recovered from even the 1980s economic recession.

“Certainly things are happening,” he said. “We’re just kind of waiting for some of the backstreets to start to fill in. It’s always pretty easy to get property leased right along (Highway) 101 but going back two or three blocks is a bit more risky.”

The fears associated with such risks will hopefully be alleviated as investors’ confidence in the economy rises, according to Timm Slater, executive

director of the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce.

“I think we can see from stuff going on currently is that a lot of people have a view of the economy moving in the right direction,” he said. “The (national) unemployment rate is the lowest it’s been since the early 2000s, so there’s a lot of positive indicators, not just for the whole country but also locally. It’s more of a sign that in our area and the state of Oregon that (people) have expectations that things are gonna roll along better than they have.”

It is that newfound confidence from entrepreneurs and investors that Berg said he hopes will be capitalized on before more economic woe rears its ugly head.

“It’s just a matter of trying to move ahead before we have another backswing,” he said.

Reporter Spencer Cole can be reached at 541-269-1222, ext. 249, or by email at Spencer.Cole@theworldlink.com. Follow him on Twitter: @spencercole.

Real estate

From C2

construction sector workforce is the foundation to begin new housing projects.

“We don’t have any building projects to speak of, so if the price is going up, that tells me there’s a demand for housing,” Shelton-Tideman said.

Compounded with the demand problem is an aging construction workforce, where one in five workers is over the age of 55.

Add that to a county that has only seen a population increase of roughly 200 individuals over the past year and the result is a fading workforce with no one to replace them.

“We can say we have a stable or stagnant population but we are not growing,” she said.

Jim Berg, owner of North Point Real Estate and Development and a sitting member on Coos Bay’s Planning Commission, told The World last month the housing market would need time to recover.

“There’s limited inventory and we have more people looking than properties for sale but the inventory will develop as we start to see more building,” he said.

In the end, Shelton-Tideman admitted that she didn’t have a panacea to solve the myriad of problems affecting the South Coast economy.

“Building is not something that you can just pop up overnight,” she said. “It’s going to take time: you have to have the roads in place, sewer lines, power lines ... it’s an investment from a community per-

spective and it involves everyone in the community; all different businesses. But the demand is there.”

The economist did however offer perspective on why she believes the South Coast is still struggling and will continue to do so until its communities take action.

“Housing seems to be that common denominator for economic well-being in the area,” she said. “Housing and construction go hand-in-hand: the construction industry was decimated, its workforce is older and there’s a high demand for housing but a scarcity of workers.”

Reporter Spencer Cole can be reached at 541-269-1222, ext. 249, or by email at Spencer.Cole@theworldlink.com. Follow him on Twitter: @spencercole.

Other Coquille tribal ventures

The Coquille Indian Tribe and its business arm, the Coquille Economic Development Corp., have a diverse portfolio:

Forestry

The Coquille Tribal Forest comprises 14 separate parcels of timberlands in eastern Coos County, totaling 5,410 acres, and the tribe added 3,200 Curry County acres in 2015. Tribal forests support approximately 200 local jobs

and provide up to 3.6 million board feet each year for local mills. The tribe’s innovative forest management has earned prestigious certification from the Forest Stewardship Council.

The Laundry Mill

Dissatisfied with the quality and consistency of commercial laundry services, CEDCO launched its own company last year. Situated across U.S. Highway 101 from The Mill Casino-Hotel, the Laundry Mill now offers linen and janitorial services meeting The Mill’s own high standards. The company is pursuing new customers in the local hospitality industry.



Bay Brew

The recently opened coffee stand in The Mill’s RV park is conveniently located for drivers on Highway 101, but Bay Brew’s real target market is

the RV park itself. An overnight visitor who craves caffeine can text-message an order and have a steaming cup delivered pronto.

The Cedars at Bear Creek

The Tribe has ambitious dreams for a 2.42-acre parcel it owns in south Medford, where it hopes to convert an existing bowling center into a small casino. Facing opposition from a competing tribe, the casino has an uncertain political future. But the Coquilles also operate an adjoining

golf course, and this year they bought another 3.6 acres. All three properties have Highway 99 frontage in a burgeoning part of town. With or without the casino, CEDCO expects a strong return on the tribe’s Medford investment.

Ko-Kwel Wharf



Remember the Home Depot disappointment? Nearly a decade ago, a wobbling economy scuttled development plans on the tribe’s property north of The Mill. K2 Exports, a log-loading venture, provides a profitable and photogenic stopgap, but CEDCO is working toward a new master plan for eventual development of this prime bay-front site.

Other North Bend property

The tribe and CEDCO own land on the west side of U.S. Highway 101, stretching from Newmark Avenue to

the Laundry Mill. CEDCO is examining several development opportunities.

Places to live

With housing increasingly scarce in the area, CEDCO is exploring

options to help meet the community’s residential needs.

Fiber finale

ORCA Communications has supplied fiber-optic and broadband service to commercial and institutional customers in the Bay Area since 2003, but the Internet service business is growing more competitive. So the

tribe recently sold ORCA’s assets to Roseburg’s Douglas Fast Net (DFN). Selling ORCA’s cables and associated routing gear generated capital to strengthen the tribe’s federal contracting venture.

Success

From C3

Those chosen undergo standard background checks and employee orientation. They’re paid minimum wage.

Teens “age out” of Youth Corps after the summer of high school graduation. Some will go to college or trade school. Others go directly to work for the tribe, the Mill Casino-Hotel, or other local employers.

Wherever they go, their Youth Corps experience will strengthen their personal prospects — and the tribe’s collective vigor.

A leg up on the future

The Coquille Indian Tribe and its business arm, CEDCO, have several programs helping tribal members and non-tribal employees improve their skills and job prospects:

The Mill Casino-Hotel’s training manager helps Mill employees advance in their careers.

CEDCO helps employees seeking individual training, certifications and professional licensure.

A “Career Pathways” program targets tribal member employees who aspire to management roles, with both formal education and in-house training.

The Mill works in tandem with the Killich Youth Corps to offer summer jobs for tribal teens.

Tribal members attending college can apply for summer internships.

A micro-lending program makes business loans and personal loans to tribal members.

A “financial literacy” course, taught by CEDCO executives, offers basic personal-finance education to the children of all Mill employees.



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The Coos Bay Manor Bed & Breakfast was founded in 1991 and makes its home in the Historic Nerdrum House. This 7,400-square-foot Colonial Revival style house was built in 1912 by Hjalte Nerdrum, who worked for the C.A. Smith Lumber Company. The Manor estate is his legacy.

The stately presence of high ceilings and large rooms make this inn warm and inviting. The house has a unique open air balcony that surrounds the second floor, with detailed woodwork throughout. There are five large bedrooms; four rooms with private baths and one room that shares a bath to make up the Family Suite.

To fully appreciate the life and amenities of the Coos Bay area and South Coast, it takes the perspective of those who have made their lives here. Both Coos Bay natives and graduates of Marshfield High School, Coos Bay Manor owners Dave and Madge Osborn are delighted to share their knowledge of the local recreational opportunities and other features that make this community one of a kind!

Entertaining guests and being ambassadors for the community is their greatest passion. They both can share plenty of stories to tell that reflect on the traditional Coos Bay experience. Don’t forget to ask Dave about his experiences working in the rugged woods of Oregon as a logger for nearly four decades.

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BETHANY BAKER, THE WORLD

Erik Hesseling, the Program Coordinator of the Reedsport Main Street Program, stands in front of the Burdick Building in downtown Reedsport. The Reedsport Main Street Program has been awarded a \$100,000 Oregon Main Street Revitalization Grant to support the renovation and rehabilitation of the second-floor of the Burdick Building.

Resuscitating Reedsport's business

SHELBY CASE
The Umpqua Post

REEDSPORT — Fifty cents a square foot. For Through The Years owner Lori Dawkins, that's a steal. Various merchants are trying to work with city leaders and Reedsport Main Street Coordinator Erik Hesseling to get empty store fronts filled.

The baby clothes store is located at 392 Fir Ave., Suite 108, and Dawkins opened shop Jan. 16, 2017.

City officials received superb news in early May, hearing that state employees granted Burdick Building owner Guadalupe Jones \$100,000 to refurbish her structure. She's the spouse of B. J. Jones, who operates B. J. Jones Realty Co. She has to come up with a 30 percent match for the Burdick, located at Fourth and Fir.

It's been a struggle, but slowly over time Old Town is seeing more life. Butterfly Effect moved in, plus Defeat River Brewery, Through The Years and the 4 J's

Stop & Shop, which sits next to Through The Years.

That's exactly what Hesseling likes to see.

Still, there has been some confusion among some Highway 101 merchants, who wonder why they can't get some money too for remodeling.

"For this grant, Oregon Main Street members are the ones who apply for it," he said. "The primary ones are downtown."

Old Town encompasses Third to Sixth streets along Highway 38.

"The city is really willing to work with businesses to find creative solutions for them to move downtown or anywhere in the community for that matter," Program Coordinator Hesseling emphasized.

"Downtown Reedsport is like a blank canvas. We've been overshadowed by Florence and Coos Bay," Hesseling said.

Projects are critical to Old Town, he noted.

"We have about 4,000 or 3,900 average daily traffic," the program

coordinator said.

Hesseling assumed the coordinator role from Katie Lockard, who grew up in Reedsport and graduated from the high school there.


Main Street accomplishments in recent years have consisted of:

- bike stop at the Safeway complex parking lot;
- the Reedsport façade program for businesses;
- and banners for merchants' businesses.

Please see REEDSPORT, Page C6

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Reedsport

From C5

Still challenges remain in attracting merchants and other building users.

'There's a lot of buildings that could use the money'

Hesseling then decided to count the number of empty storefronts in early March, counting 33, and "approximately 17 are empty."

"We've got a lot of vacancies downtown," he said.

"That was at one time and I think it has changed a little but it's really half," the coordinator said. Since that time, a couple of new businesses are coming in.

Per requirements, there are quarterly and yearly reports to state personnel related to the Burdick Building grant. Hesseling said "there's a lot of buildings that could use the money."

"He'll do a phase and then submit his receipts to us for reimbursement. So it's not a blank check. It's very structured," the program coordinator emphasized.

"It's been in better condition before," Hesseling said. Plans call for seven new apartments at the Burdick Building, which will "really increase the amount of downtown activity whether it's the bakery or the Brewery or MindPower."

A big conversation topic in recent months has been which companies will move into the Reedsport Commerce Park, how many jobs they'll provide, what wages they'll offer and when the firms might come in.

Supporters say once the commerce park kicks in, that will act as a domino effect, bringing in extra business to Old Town.

"I mean any economic development is a benefit to Main Street, especially if people come in and buy a house. It increases the customer base for any downtown business," he said. "Downtowns are the heart, soul and identity of communities and Reedsport is no exception."

The Burdick Building has had several names over the years, including Pirate Mall and Moo Mall. Next to the Burdick Building is the former Sand Rail Café.

"That would be easily eligible for the Diamonds in the Rough Grant," he said, referring to one that's specifically for getting structures on a national regis-



BETHANY BAKER, THE WORLD

Vacant buildings line U.S. Highway 101 in Reedsport.

"Downtowns are the heart, soul and identity of communities and Reedsport is no exception."

Erik Hesseling, program coordinator of the Reedsport Main Street Program

tration of historic buildings. This grant is separate from Main Street, but if a business owner is fortunate he can receive up to \$20,000 and get his building on the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register provides a list of the United States's historic places "worthy of preservation," according to the register's website.

The National Register dates back to 1966 with passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of that year, which is "part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources."

Hesseling took two visitors down a couple of blocks, including next to Defeat River.

Two empty buildings sat side

by side, one at 451 Fir Ave. and one at 457 Fir. The asking price is \$115,000, which gives the new owner 3,900 square feet of space, the potential of a one-bedroom apartment and alleyway access.

"Where else are you going to get something like that for that price?" he asked.

He looked inside 451 Fir, saying "I mean that's just a huge space."

Hesseling walked down the block, greeting Butterfly Effect's Tommy Starner.

"This one's going to be fantastic," Hesseling said of the remodeling. "Yeah it should look nice when the façade and awnings are in."

Butterfly Effect received separate Main Street funds about a year ago.

"I think half the battle is getting people to change their thinking,"

he said. "Little projects can have a pretty big impact. Most of a community's new jobs come from existing businesses and I think that's 80 percent across the country."

He referred to the Rural Development Initiative for this percentage. Rural Development Initiative or RDI, has a number of functions, including economic revitalization and business retention and expansion.

Hesseling looked at the big picture and has encouraged others to do so too when it comes to downtown revitalization.

"Revitalizing (structures) to their original glory creates benefits that flow outside toward the rest of the community," he said.

Part of the challenge however is the type of business that moves in.

Hesseling said residents need to bring life to neighborhoods or traditional downtowns, "which have been damaged by disinvestment..." He said strip malls, so-called big-box stores and online retail have hurt downtown. Yet that's not unique to Reedsport.

The view from Old Town itself

Tamara Szalewski has owned Mindpower Gallery with her sister Tara for 28 years.

Szalewski discussed what's needed to bring new life to Old Town and throughout Reedsport.

"I think a lot of it is how we market it and who we cater it too," she said.

"So if someone wants to go fishing, supply them to go do that," the gallery co-owner said. "If they want to go bird watching, where do they find the maps?"

She emphasized that it's hard to find a store in town that offers backpacks for other outdoor enthusiasts.

"So I would fill in all those gaps if it were me," Szalewski said, adding that in early settlements outback suppliers filled a specific need. "Reedsport needs to see itself from an urban perspective and from a big city perspective we are very much the outdoors and the

Please see REEDSPORT, Page C8



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Port

From C3

Port is set to receive in three installments.

She said the Port was also putting up money along with Jordan Cove LNG but declined to specify amounts.

The remaining funding is still being determined, according to Port officials.

Rail Line tunnel rehabilitation project

The Port is also in the early phases of a \$19.5 million project to improve all nine tunnels along the Coos Bay Rail Line, according to Barber.

The longest tunnel on the line spans 4,200 feet.

The repairs are long overdue — all of the tunnels are aged 100 years or older — and some of the tunnels still have the original timber tunnel support structures.

The project will not only include structural repairs, it will also address some significant drainage issues, Barber said.

“This project is an essential step in preserving and maintaining the line, which ensures that the Coos Bay Rail Link can continue to operate safely and efficiently,” she added.

The companies that utilize rail shipping in the South Coast employ over 750 people and move more than \$275 million in products annually, according to Port officials.

“Rail service is an essential component of our intermodal transportation network in Southwest Oregon,” said Fred Jacquot, Port development director. “The Tunnel Rehabilitation Project will help to ensure that we can keep freight moving in and out of the region for years to come.”

Charleston Shipyard stormwater project

Meanwhile, the Charleston Shipyard will soon welcome a state-of-the-art stormwater



BENJAMIN BRAYFIELD

The Charleston Marina is one of the most visible properties for the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay. It has both commercial and sport fishing boats harbored there.

treatment system.

The Port will be investing between \$650,000-\$750,000 in the new system, which will be one of the first systems of its kind to be implemented on the Oregon Coast, Barber said.

The technology that the new system utilizes is called Chitosan Enhanced Sand Filtration, which filters stormwater runoff before it enters either the South or Joe Ney sloughs.

The system will move the filtration process from a passive system, to an active system, improving the quality of the runoff by more than ten times, Port officials say.

The system is designed to target zinc and copper, two elements

commonly found in marine paint: zinc is used in paint to reduce corrosion, while copper is used to reduce the amount of barnacles that affix to the underside of vessels.

Barber said the new system will minimize the presence of those elements in stormwater runoff.

Project Manager Joe Caruso said “the new stormwater system will enhance water quality in the vicinity of our shipyard in Charleston and continue the Port’s goal of being responsible environmental stewards.”

Vaughn Viaduct bridge replacement

The Vaughn Viaduct Bridge

project will replace the existing 100-year-old structure with a newly constructed bridge which will be classified for speeds of up to 40 miles per hour, according to Barber. She said the new bridge will be a five-span precast concrete girder structure.

The existing bridge will be utilized for rail traffic on the existing tracks while the new bridge is constructed alongside.

Once construction is complete, the rail line will be connected to the new bridge over the course of one weekend, and disassembly of the old Vaughn Viaduct Bridge will then commence.

Port officials say the bridge will be seismically retrofitted.

All of the traffic on the line either travels over or switches across the Vaughn Viaduct — without the Vaughn Viaduct, rail traffic and the goods it transports are unable to flow into or out of the South Coast. Additionally, the new bridge is designed to accommodate unit train traffic, which is essential for the future growth, development, and long term viability of the line.

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Update

From C2

others who work for these business entities.

The second largest industry sector in our area is trade, transportation, and utilities; retail trade accounts for 66 percent of the jobs. Coos County’s leisure and hospitality sector employs more than 2,600 people and is the third largest industry sector in our area.

Not surprising, job growth is expected to be strongest in the largest sector: education and health services. Also projected to offer employment opportunities are manufacturing; leisure and hospitality; professional and business services (this includes staffing agencies, call centers, as well as accounting offices, etc.); and trade, transportation, and utilities.

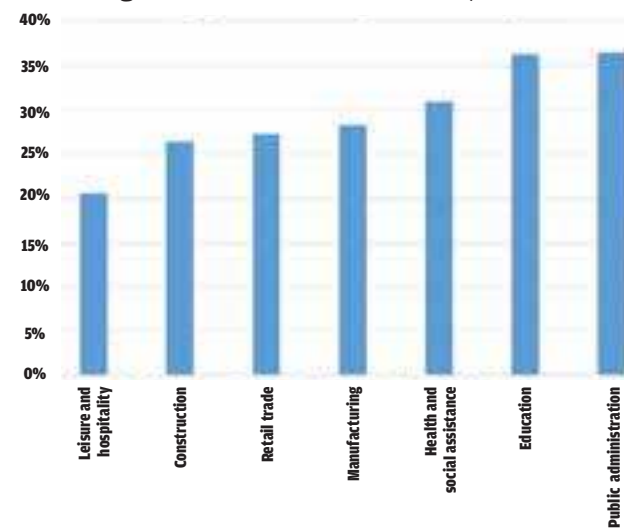
Workforce Characteristics of Some Industry Sectors

It may seem odd that manufacturing, which only employs 7.7 percent of the county’s workforce, would rank second in anticipated job growth. This can be explained, in part, by looking at the age-related characteristics of this industry’s workforce. It has been said that, “demographics are destiny” — for some of our businesses, that is true.

Education and public administration (government) have the oldest workforce members with 36 percent of those employees being age 55 or over — in other words, one out of three workers is within 10 years of retiring. In addition, roughly 9 percent are already over age 65. Manufacturing workers also tend to be older; 28 percent are age 55 or older. All of these industries offer opportunities that often require not only post-secondary education or training but also on-the-job experience. These people will likely be difficult to replace.

The other end of the spectrum are those industries offering more entry-level positions. For example, one out of every five workers in leisure and hospitality — the basis of much of our tourism, is under the age of 25. It is easy to see that many of our youth find their first jobs in this seasonal and dy-

Selected industries in Coos County Percentage of Workforce 55 and Older, 2016



amic industry. Retail trade, also a source of many jobs, has a younger workforce. Although 16 percent of workers are under the age of 25, one-third of retail workers are under the age of 35. These large business sectors offer many job opportunities at the entry-level and provide important experience for those new to the workforce.

Joined at the hip: Construction and housing

From an industry viewpoint, construction work falls into one of three categories: construction of buildings (29 percent of the industry’s workforce), heavy and civil engineering construction (27 percent of the workforce), and specialty trade construction (44 percent). Job activities, skills required, wages, and availability of workers varies depending on the category and specific building project. Although there are some entry-level employment opportunities, the construction industry encompasses a wide-range of highly skilled occupations. This is clear from the age breakout of this industry’s workforce: 26 percent of workers are within 10 years of retirement; only 8 percent are under the age of 25.

Coos County’s construction industry saw its peak employment levels in 2006 through 2008, just prior to the Great Recession. Construction employment opportunities shrank up, as evidenced by the lack of building permits issued for single-family residential homes. This decline in building permits, coupled with a slow-down in previ-

ous years, laid the groundwork for limiting current and future housing options as well as employment opportunities for construction workers. Sixty-seven percent of Coos County’s housing was built prior to 1980.

An economist’s standard approach: Supply and demand

When we talk about an area’s economy, we always seem to end up talking about supply and demand. From a workforce perspective, we have data from the Oregon Employment Department’s recent vacancy survey which tells us that businesses continue to have unmet needs for skilled workers. Our demographics reveal that we can anticipate many retirements within the next 10 years — retirements that will likely remove the county’s most experienced and skilled workers from the workforce across nearly all industries.

As is typical in rural Oregon, Coos County relies on in-migration to maintain and grow the region’s population. Yet recently, school enrollment figures show an increase in student numbers. This represents potential demand for goods and services as well as future members of our workforce. Economic capacity-building is often characterized as the dynamic exchange between identifying demands, inventorying supplies, and characterizing and implementing effective and efficient means for developing infrastructure and workforce supplies to meet the demands — stay tuned, there are challenges and opportunities ahead!

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Reedsport

From C6

more we understand that, then the better we can market ourselves and cater to that.”

The gallery merchant said “the more unique and the more fun it is to walk into your store, that’s your market because they’ll remember it.”

There are a variety of web sites merchants, city leaders and others can peruse for tips on business and downtown renewal but a key one is <https://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/downtown-revitalization>.

Boosting business along 101

Then there are also empty store fronts along Highway 101. Although some businesses, such as Don’s Diner and Bedrocks Pizzeria, have done well over time, other areas sit empty.

Former Reedsport Pharmacy co-owner Leslie McLain managed the business with her husband Jim from 1979 to December 2015. The native Oregonians live now in Winchester Bay and moved to the area in 1976.

“Yeah, when we came the whole town (Reedsport) was full,” McLain said. “Fully operational. There were three pharmacies. Sears had an outlet. We had two clothing stores. Several restaurants.”

She added however that some still survive to this day, such as Harbor Light and Leona’s Sugar Shack. Reedsport had two car dealers – Jim Vick’s Chevrolet and Thompson Ford.

What about moving forward? How can residents best work together with others to fill empty storefronts?

“That’s a tough question because business is changing so much,” McLain said. “Brick and mortar versus online.”

The former business owner spoke of the strength Reedsport and other rural communities possess. McLain said the more “you can spruce up” Reedsport and start independent businesses, “you will attract customers and people will drive to see you.” She emphasized this isn’t unique to Reedsport.

Building investment costs are also a question.

“It’s a function of income and sales,” she said. “You have to have the business capital up front to at-



Tommy Starner, an owner of Butterfly Effect in Reedsport, repairs part of the business facade earlier this spring.

BETHANY BAKER, THE WORLD

tract people in your doors. It’s a real Catch-22.”

Part of the situation – as with any town on the coast – can’t change much and that’s the weather. “It’s pretty seasonal here. October through April, it’s pretty quiet here.”

A larger national perspective

Author Christopher Leinberger, writing for The Brookings Institution in “Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization,” provided some tips and historical background.

“Determining whether the intention for a long-term effort is present in the community requires the mining of the most important asset a downtown revitalization has: memory and the emotion it unleashes,” Leinberger wrote in his March 2005 article. “Emotion is why we create great civic structures, such as city halls, performance halls, arenas and



A photo of the Reedsport mainstreet from the early twentieth century hangs in Reedsport city hall.

BETHANY BAKER, THE WORLD

museums. Emotion is the reason great historic buildings are renovated, even though the cost of renovation is usually greater than tearing down and building a new building.”

“Contrary to evocative memories of downtowns past, however, is the reality of the great suburban land rush, starting in the 1950s, which led to the disinvestment in our downtowns in the first place.”

he wrote.

Some in Reedsport who are 60 or older have quite fond memories of what Reedsport used to be like. The town’s not unique by any means as The Brookings Institute author points out.

He wrote “many of those who grew up in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, when our downtowns were still vibrant, if fading, have indelible memories of the place.”

“Downtown in the afterglow of World War II was ‘where all the lights were bright,’ where first dates occurred, where parents worked and parades were held. The downtowns of this era were where you went for the fancy department stores and to see tall buildings,” the author wrote. “It was where the sidewalks were jammed with people, unlike any other place in the region.”

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71 Celebrating our 71st year
in business on the South Coast with many more to come!

We are excited to share the news about our name change and remodel. Many of you know us as McKay’s, Price ‘N Pride, and Freshmart. We will be restoring all of our locations back to McKay’s. That is who we are, and what we are known as. We are also in the process of refitting all of our stores with new frozen and refrigerated cases that are more energy efficient.

The company was founded by Kenny McKay, Chuck McKay’s father in 1946. We currently employ 300 people during the summer months and have 9 locations north to Lincoln City and south to Gold Beach.

We are a big community supporter in all of our locations. We help all food banks, schools, boys and girls clubs, churches, and pretty much everything from A to Z. Last year at Christmas time we donated over \$9,000.00 worth of food in our locations.

Chuck McKay was a big supporter of the Coos Art Museum and a SWOCC Alumni

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Charles “Chuck” Patrick McKay
On the Rogue River, October 2010



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