The staff at Asher Community Health Center work together to ensure all people who enter feel comfortable and welcome. From left are Ashley Asher, Susan Moore, Roger Weddle and Joe Brill.

Fulfilling Needs in Fossil

Asher Community Health Center welcomes Joe Brill

By Jody Foss

Joe Brill is serving the region as the new physician's assistant at Asher Community Health Center in Fossil.

The new position seems to fit him like a glove.

"I love the Pacific Northwest. Pretty much everything about it," Joe says. "Now Mount Hood is practically in my backyard."

An avid skier, fisherman, hunter and hiker, Joe says he sees no limits to enjoying these activities not far from his home in Fossil.

"I prefer the rural lifestyle," he says. "The community of Fossil is one of the benefits of being in Eastern Oregon. You could be rural with no community, with a disjointed community or have a collective, harmonious community that works together. For me, Fossil was a good fit."

Raised in northern New Jersey, Joe graduated from high school in 2001. He completed his culinary degree at The Culinary Institute of America in New York in 2004. He worked as a chef in a number of restaurants on the East Coast, and spent one year in Aspen, Colorado, at The Little Nell Resort.

"It was such a great time," he says. "I had the opportunity to enjoy the Aspen experience without paying out of pocket. I had a ski pass and housing paid for and a great chef position."

After working a few years in an array of restaurants, Joe decided to further his studies at Cornell University, earning a business degree in 2007. He was hired by Cini-Little International, a commercial foodservice design consultant.

"Foodservice design combined my engineering mind and foodservice operation experience," he says.

The firm works with architects to design large corporate foodservice and preparation spaces. It provided the design for several foodservice facilities, including Yankee Stadium, an elaborate hotel in Cairo, Egypt, and the Qatar Convention Center that allows 10,000 guests to be served at one time. The group also designed the Google, Oracle and Twitter campuses in California.

Joe's job took him to Grand Ole Opry in Tennessee, Gaylord Entertainment in Maryland, and military bases and schools around the nation.

"We designed spaces where different chefs and operators could come in and create a unique experience for large groups in an attractive, sustainable setting," he says.

Joe spent a lot of time traveling to satellite offices in Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Los Angeles, London and Orlando. He spent his time off exploring Europe.

"That experience broadened my horizons and confirmed what I really wanted to do: help people," Joe says. "I realized I had moved away from the service industry. My experiences and exposure brought me back to my true passion."

While redesigning public schools in Washington, D.C., Joe noted lunch was the biggest meal of the day for many of the children—sometimes their only meal.

"Lunch would sometimes consist of four starches," he says. "I would peek my head into the classrooms after lunch where students were dozing off, and came to a sobering conclusion. Without proper nutrition, focus and retention would become a struggle. I saw the disconnect."

Despite a more sustainable design suggestion, Joe says the capital expenditure budget didn't seem to allow for it.

While in Colorado, Joe returned to school and worked as an emergency room and inpatient scribe at area hospitals.

While working in Qatar, Joe took the opportunity to tour the scenic countryside.

Photo courtesy of Joe Brill

He graduated in pre-med in 2013, then attended the Red Rocks Community College physician assistant program in Golden, Colorado, in 2017. The school's program focused on underserved rural communities.

Upon graduation, Joe saw an opportunity to relocate to Oregon—an aspiration he held before moving to Colorado. It took him almost a year to discover Asher Community Health Center. He was hired July 1, 2018.

"In my experience, underserved communities are typically deficient of resources, health care being a significant one," he says. "I was looking for a community where I could contribute my skill and resource to fulfill community needs. Fortunately, I discovered a recruiter that specialized in rural medicine who was able to put me in touch with ACHC, amongst other areas in Oregon."

Joe says Fossil was appealing because members of the community excel at combining their skills and talents to help the area function.

"The flexibility of wearing different hats and dedication to fulfilling the community's needs was the deciding factor to move to Fossil," he says.

As a physician's assistant, Joe says he is able to serve the community in a very real way.

"I take a very preventative approach to practicing medicine," he says. "Most preventable chronic illness is an insidious process. The body is very good at hiding symptoms for several years. Developing a healthful lifestyle—even a small degree—can bring on positive change in place of pharmaceutical therapy."

Joe says he has studied the positive effects nutrition can have on the body, which is not regularly practiced throughout the profession. By individualizing patients' health goals, he can make suggestions and encourage change.

"There is no magic bullet—one diet, supplement or food—but by looking at it from a holistic standpoint, positive change can be made," Joe says. "This can empower people to thrive. Some medications are necessary in the interim, and most times can be 'deprescribed' as lifestyle changes are realized. It's nice for people to be made aware of different options."

Joe says he is thrilled to be a part of the Asher community.

"The Asher team provides an invaluable service to its community and their dedication and support are the beating heart of the operation," he says. "They, too, are members of the local community who tirelessly strive to deliver excellent patient care. I could not attempt to provide care on any level without their support, and feel blessed to have been welcomed into their world." ■

Asher Community Health Center is at 712 Jay St. in Fossil, and has satellite clinics in Spray and Mitchell. Call 541-763-2725.

Angling's Hot Topic

Warming trends on the Columbia River prompt fisheries' remedies

By Kathy Ursprung

Sports angling brings people from around the world to the mid-Columbia River to battle salmon, steelhead, sturgeon and other species that make their home here. Anglers are concerned about the impact and necessity of thermal angling sanctuaries, particularly one proposed for the mouth of the Deschutes River.

Photo courtesy of Dave Eng

Some mid-Columbia sports anglers and guides are concerned about the impact a proposed thermal angling sanctuary for steelhead at the mouth of the Deschutes River will have on the fishery.

Salmon and steelhead require cold rivers and streams to support their life cycle, from an egg in gravel to smolt (juvenile fish) migrating downstream to adults returning home to spawn.

Fish authorities have identified 68 F as the safe upper temperature limit.

"It can't be too hot or they don't do very well," says Tucker Jones, who manages the Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program at Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

During migration, fish can find a cool-water respite in a sanctuary. They are attracted to the area because of the cooler water.

Physical changes in the river are causing warmer temperatures during migration season. Warmer winters and changes in annual snowpack have resulted in earlier spring runoff and warmer summer temperatures.

Weather models predict worsening conditions heading into the early 2030s.

Fishing enthusiasts from across the country plan vacations around sports angling on the mid-Columbia River, where they can expect to battle salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, bass and other species. Sanctuaries, however, are closed to fishing.

About 75 enthusiasts attended the Coastal Conservation Association's local chapter meeting January 15 to hear how Fish and Wildlife plans to proceed in implementing sanctuaries.

Tucker says the sanctuaries are a matter of how and when, not if. The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission ordered the measure last year. He says sanctuaries will likely be part of a matrix of measures.

"We want to develop reasonable and prudent alternatives to avoid jeopardy of listed stock in the Columbia River," Tucker says.

The sanctuaries may not be implemented every year. What measures will be used will depend on river conditions.

Thirteen salmon and steelhead species native to the Columbia River are endangered.

"We see this as precautionary," Tucker says, noting the strategy is based on field data, but additional benefits can be hard to quantify.

Fish authorities took particular notice of temperature conditions in 2015, seen as a bellwether year for things to come.

"It got very hot very early and very quickly, and it stayed hot a long time," Tucker says. "That caused a lot of problems."

Anglers remember 2015 as a year of heavy die-offs in migratory fish.

Most work has been focused on steelhead because of their life cycle. Steelhead moving upriver one year typically don't spawn until February or March of the next year. While chinook and sockeye salmon rush upstream to reach their spawning grounds in the same year, steelhead can stay in cold-water areas, leapfrogging from one to the next on their way to spawning grounds.

"Refuges can have a big impact on steelhead," Tucker says.

What isn't known is the impact on salmon and their migration strategy.

While 2015 raised the biggest alarms, 2017 also had a historically low summer

About 75 people crowded into the Cousins' Inn banquet room January 15 to hear about plans for thermal angling sanctuaries to protect steelhead at the mouth of the Deschutes River and the impacts sanctuaries may have on angling.

steelhead run, despite healthier-looking river snowpack and hydrograph conditions. This prompted rapid interim measures in 2018, such as rolling angling closures and a closure inside the mouth of the Deschutes.

This year, Fish and Wildlife is reaching out to the angling community to let them know changes are coming, and to give them the opportunity to comment.

A proposal is expected to be put before the Fish and Wildlife Commission at its June meeting in Gold Beach.

Since the Columbia fishery is managed by both Washington and Oregon, Tucker plans to work with Washington on strategies. The Washington Department of Ecology proposed a plan to regulate federal dams in relation to Columbia mainstem temperatures—as it has done with smaller dams—but the Seattle Times reported in February that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency yanked its permit for this strategy.

Oregon used a relatively large sanctuary area as a short-term solution in 2018, but Tucker says he has time to craft a more precise sanctuary area for a long-term solution. The smaller the steelhead sanctuary, the less it affects nearby salmon fishing.

"Whatever we do has to be recognizable, enforceable, definable in statute and biologically meaningful," he says.

Local anglers questioned whether the Deschutes provides much temperature relief, especially given warm water spills from Pelton Dam upriver. Tucker notes the Deschutes provides about a 3.6-degree difference.

Some anglers also questioned the validity of the temperature data compared to thermometer readings from their boats.

They also questioned the impacts of gillnetters, both tribal and commercial. Tucker says that take is established at 2 percent of the anticipated fish return for the year. Half of that number goes to tribal fishers, 20 percent to commercial and 30 percent to sports anglers. Once that number is caught, the fisheries close.

The Deschutes is the first proposed sanctuary on the Oregon side of the Columbia.

"Our work is going to focus upstream of Bonneville Dam, where most of the priority areas are and also where most of the recreational impact and non-treaty impacts are," Tucker says.

During the January 15 meeting, one angler asked about the economic impact.

"Shouldn't that be a cause of concern?" he asked.

"Short answer: No," Tucker said. "The Endangered Species Act stipulates that it not be considered."

Tucker says he wants to do what is right for the well-being of the fish, and he wants to see sports fishing on the Columbia. He says without fishing, interest in protecting the species would decline.

"I want people fishing," he says, "but if I think there is a biological need, I'm going to put the sanctuaries in."

A number of small communities along the Columbia heavily rely on sports angling for their economic well-being, according to Lisa Farquharson, CEO of The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce.

"I think they need to hear some of the economic impacts on communities that could be totally shut down by some of the measures," Lisa says. ■

Several meetings are expected to be announced in Columbia River communities to present information on the proposal and to gather comment from the public. Meetings should be announced online at www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP.

A True Recipe for Success

Cindy Brown empowers youth via cooking classes

By Drew Myron

Cindy Brown leads cooking classes with a focus on nutrition, health, planning and sharing at Sherman County School. Here she works in the kitchen with novice cook Ashlynn Flatt.

In a school kitchen, hot oil sizzles, hamburger scorches, smoke billows, a timer rings and a teen calls out, "My breadcrumbs are burning!"

Cindy Brown, the only adult in a room of busy teens, is calm in the chaos.

"This is pure joy," says Cindy, an educator for Oregon State University's Extension Service in Sherman County. "It's kind of organized chaos. I want them to have fun with it and have fun with food."

This afterschool program for junior and senior high school students—called #adulting—is not a routine cooking class but a vehicle for personal growth.

Undaunted by burning food, sharp knives and teen chatter, Cindy's fearless approach sets a tone for the students who appear fearless as well.

"This is positive youth development," Cindy explains. "They're learning to cook, yes, but they are also learning to think, to cooperate, to try new things."

Through cooking, young people learn about nutrition, health, planning and sharing.

"It's a life skill," Cindy says. "It's something you're going to do three times a day for the rest of your life."

Sherman County School in Moro serves students in kindergarten through high school but no longer offers home economics classes. Thanks to a partnership with Sherman County Extension, Cindy brings energy and enthusiasm to a collection of cooking and nutrition programs for all ages.

"The kids love Cindy," says Talese Slay, who teaches third grade.

Along with #adulting for junior and senior high students, Cindy takes part in SKORE—Sherman Kids on the Road to Excellence—by sharing with grade-school students basic cooking techniques, recipes, taste testing and nutrition. She also presents educational courses for SNAP—the federal nutrition assistance program—and leads numerous 4-H Club programs, including outdoor cooking classes, food preservation, day camps and excursions.

A new program at Sherman County School gives students the chance to taste-test new "Food Hero" recipes created in the school cafeteria. The program—a partnership of the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon State University and Sherman County Extension—aims to introduce and increase healthy eating using a variety of fruits and vegetables.

Cindy didn't set out to teach cooking. In fact, she has no formal culinary training, never took a home economics class, and her own home cooking is

From left, Shelby Havins, Pyeper Walker, Ashlynn Flatt, Aeden Phelps and Kiyonae Riggs display and discuss the meals they prepared in their afterschool cooking class.

limited to plants and whole foods as part of a diet emphasizing fruits, vegetables and limited meats. She adopted the eating plan four years ago after watching "Forks Over Knives," a documentary exploring the idea of food as medicine.

"I was never even much of a vegetable eater until a few years ago," Cindy says. "My family's meals had a short list of vegetables: peas, corn, tomatoes and broccoli, and iceberg lettuce on the side," says Cindy, 56.

She has eliminated wheat, eggs, dairy and meat from her diet.

"With a whole food plant-based diet, I have more energy and focus than ever, and weigh 4 pounds less than I did in high school," she says. "I like to eat and I like to be super healthy."

Born and raised in Sherman County to a family of wheat farmers, Cindy attended Washington State University and earned a master's degree in agricultural economics. For a short time, she worked at an engineering firm in Portland before she and her husband, Charley, opened Hughes Feed & Grain in The Dalles—a business they ran for almost 18 years.

Cindy then worked as the coordinator for the Tri-County Hazardous Waste and Recycling Program. In 2011, she joined Sherman County Extension as an educator. She is on the board of directors at Gorge Grown Food Network, is a master gardener and an avid hiker.

Superintendent of Sherman County School Wes Owens says the recipe for success is Cindy's energy.

"She's a worker," he says. "Cindy really interacts well with kids. The school is the hub of our community, and these programs are wonderful for our students."

For Cindy, the ultimate success is seeing a student experience a sense of achievement.

"When kids have life skills, it gives them confidence and resilience," she says. "When they get older they can take care of themselves."

Kiyonae works on her cooking skills.

Cindy beams at Ashlynn Flatt, 13, as she presents her first meal: a juicy hamburger, cooked to medium, and topped with lettuce, tomato and pepperoni.

"This is the first time I've cooked anything," Ashlynn says with a smile. ■

Members of the West Oregon Electric Cooperative Board of Directors discuss co-op business. From left are Brett Costley, Nick Galaday and Jim Buxton.

What You Should Know About Your Board of Directors

West Oregon Electric Cooperative's elected directors set policy, approve the budget and more

By Scott Laird

West Oregon Electric Cooperative is managed by a staff of industry professionals, hired to run the day-to-day operations and ensure the lights stay on for members. But the real business of the co-op is overseen by a group of dedicated volunteers who comprise the board of directors.

According to WOEC's bylaws, the business and affairs of the cooperative are managed by a seven-person board of directors, who are each elected by the membership for three-year terms. Directors represent a specific geographical region of WOEC's service territory to ensure representation is equitable.

During elections, members can vote for any and all director positions, not just those representing the members' geographic district. Elections are held prior to the annual meeting. This year's annual meeting is Saturday, August 17.

The current board of directors are Brian Baker, District 1, representing Elsie, Jewell and Necanicum; Robert VanNatta, District 2, representing Apiary Mist and Birkenfeld; Vice President Jim Buxton, District 3, representing Vernonia and Keasey; President Brett Costley, District 4, representing Vernonia; Nick Galaday, District 5, representing Buxton and Timber; Secretary Rosemary Lohrke, District 6, representing Scappoose and Chapman; and Larry Heesacker, District 7, representing Manning, Hagg Lake and Yamhill County. Officers are elected by the board following the annual meeting.

Brett, who replaced Robert as president this year, has a wealth of experience serving on local boards in Vernonia. He served for 10 years as an elected member of Vernonia City Council, and was elected to the Vernonia School Board and served as its chairman. He is president of the Vernonia Health Board, which oversees operation of Vernonia Health Clinic.

Directors must be members of the co-op and live in the district they represent. A member is not eligible to serve as a director if employed or they have a financial interest in a business enterprise that sells electric energy, hold an elected office that receives a salary of more than $100 a year or have been a full-time employee of WOEC within the previous five years.

Candidates for board positions must be nominated by another member at an open forum meeting, held each year in districts that require a director election. These meeting are scheduled and conducted by the co-op general manager.

Directors do not receive a salary for their services, but receive $150 for each board meeting they attend. They receive that same amount if they attend any other meetings, conferences or training programs directly related to co-op business. They receive no other benefits from the co-op.

"We actually get paid very little compared to other co-op boards in Oregon

and across the U.S," Brett says.

Directors at Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative in Baker City and Umatilla Electric Cooperative in Hermiston receive compensation of more than $20,000. Directors at Harney Electric Cooperative in Burns receive as much as $30,000. Directors at Central Electric Cooperative in Redmond, Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative in Heppner and Blachly-Lane Electric Cooperative in Junction City all receive around $8,000 annually in compensation for serving on their board.

The board gathers monthly for its regular meeting on the fourth Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the WOEC boardroom at the Vernonia headquarters building. Special meetings may be called by the president or any three directors.

All regular, special and annual meetings are open to co-op members. Written minutes are taken at meetings and are available on the WOEC website.

An executive session may be convened by the board to discuss the purchase of real property, personnel matters, any member-specific issues and litigation matters. Executive sessions are not open to the membership, but minutes are taken of any decisions made after the board returns to the regular meeting.

Prior to each monthly meeting, board members receive a binder of information that will be discussed in the upcoming meeting. Brett says he generally spends about one hour reviewing and familiarizing himself with business that will be before the board at the meeting. He says board members often spend several more hours during a given month communicating by email about particular subjects or responding on social media to members' concerns.

The monthly binder contains a report from General Manager Bob Perry. Directors also receive comprehensive monthly financial reports from Chief Financial Officer Dan Huggett. The reports include checks written and payments made, a summary of revenues and expenditures compared to the budget forecast for both the month and year-to-date, a report on loans and ratios of debt and assets, and any write-offs for outstanding accounts.

The co-op uses internal as well as external collection avenues to recover unpaid member bills. The board also approves new co-op members—and is notified of members leaving the co-op—as part of its process to approve the finance report.

The board takes time during each meeting to hear from members in attendance regarding concerns, issues or suggestions about operation of the co-op.

Operations Manager Don Rose provides a report that updates the board on any ongoing planned work and any unplanned work, such as outages or unscheduled repairs that took place during the month.

"He includes a pretty detailed report on outages, including how many members were affected by the outage and how many total hours members were out, as well as a reason for the outage," Brett says.

Approving the annual budget is another of the board's major responsibilities. A subcommittee of the board acts as a budget committee. Subcommittee members review the proposed budget from the staff, then take that proposal to the full board for discussion and approval. At its December meeting, the board approved the budget for 2019.

The discussion on this year's budget included a proposed salary increase for management. The increase in the proposal was for an 8 percent raise, but the board approved a 5.7 percent increase.

Brett says management salaries at WOEC are below industry averages for electric utilities. He says the board's plan is to increase salaries over several years to bring them near the average in Oregon, ensuring WOEC can offer competitive salaries when replacing members of the management team. Several key members are approaching retirement age.

"With our history of paying those positions much less than what other co-ops are paying, it's going to make it hard for us to fill those positions," Brett says.

The budget was approved by a 5-2 vote. Directors expressed differing opinions on how fast they should increase salaries and what the final salary target should be. Directors Jim Buxton and Brian Baker voted against it.

"We're definitely concerned about the cost of power bills for our members," Brett says. "But we're also concerned that WOEC continues to run and operate smoothly. Yes, there is concern about raising management salaries and the impact that has on our members. My position is that when you don't spend the money to hire skilled management, you end up paying for it one way or the other in either incompetence or mismanagement."

At most meetings, the board reviews a few policies to make sure they are updated and relevant.

"In many ways, this is one of the most important jobs of the board—to set policy," Brett says. "It can be pretty boring, but it really is an important thing we do."

The board also discusses any other business before them and may vote to make decisions on those topics.

Ultimately, board members look out for the best interest of all WOEC members.

"The board of directors are all members of the co-op," Brett says. "We pay our West Oregon bill every month, just like everyone else." ■

A Young Man With Grit

Mason Stuller is a national champion rodeo competitor at age 15

By Craig Reed

Eight seconds might not seem that long, but it can be for young Mason Stuller.

That's how long the 15-year-old must stay on bucking and twisting broncs and bulls to be competitive in junior rodeo events. He's proving to be good at it—like national championships good.

In December, at the Junior National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas, Mason rode all three of his bucking horses the required 8 seconds, earning high marks from the two judges and claiming the national championship in saddle bronc riding. That won him a belt buckle and a check for $1,540.

Then Mason was named the junior all-around champion, earning another buckle and $500. His first-place finish in saddle bronc and ninth-place finish in bareback riding garnered him enough points for the all-around title.

"I was pretty surprised, pretty excited," he says. "It was a pretty cool experience, to win something that big.

"I was doing pretty well throughout the year so I was pretty confident I could do well. I was hoping for a win, but not necessarily expecting one. You can always hope."

Mason, a freshman at Elmira High School, competes at the junior level in all three of the rough-stock events: saddle bronc riding, bareback riding and bull riding. His rides and scores throughout numerous 2018 events in Oregon, Washington and California qualified him for the junior national finals in the first two events.

At the national event, the top 10 competitors from the first two rides advance to a third and final ride. Mason was second entering the final round. By random draw, the competitor who was in first place went ahead of Mason and failed to stay on his horse for the required 8 seconds.

Mason Stuller practices bull riding at his home on a mechanical bull that his dad, Brian, controls.

"I was happy to have him go first so I knew what to expect," Mason says. "Then the pressure was on to stay on."

Mason responded with an 8-second ride to earn the championship.

In the bareback event, Mason was in fifth place after two rides and advanced to the final round. But during his ride, his rope rigging slid to the side of the horse, Mason slid off with it before the 8-second mark, dropping him to ninth place.

"I'm always nervous," Mason says.

"That's not a bad thing. Everybody is nervous. I've seen and heard of injuries. I just don't worry about it."

Mason has been riding animals since he was 5, when he rode a sheep during a mutton bustin' event at the Cottage Grove Fair. He was inspired to give the event a try after watching the movie "8 Seconds," the story of bull riding champion Lane Frost.

"He was like a kid watching a baseball movie and saying, 'That's what I want to do,'" says Mason's father, Brian. "That movie was a motivating factor for him."

Mason says he didn't stay on long during that first ride, but he wasn't discouraged.

"Sure, I was a little bit scared," he says.

That summer he rode in several more mutton bustin' events.

Darci, Mason's mother, admits she's always been concerned for her son's safety, but she also says she is "super proud" of him.

At age 7, Mason began riding calves at junior rodeos. Although he began to have some success with high placings, he also suffered his first major injury. After falling off during a ride, a calf stepped on his armpit, tearing his skin. He needed stitches to close the wound.

"It was still fun," Mason says.

He was soon riding steers, and at age 11 he sat astride young, small bulls. That year, riding a bull named Twist Your Face Off, he took first and won a buckle at the Northwest Youth Rodeo Association event in Philomath.

"I was super excited," Mason recalls. "I never quit smiling all day long."

At age 12, he rode his first horse. That horse, Calgary, bucked him off, and he hit the ground hard, ending up with a mouthful of dirt.

"I thought that was the end of that," Brian says. "But he came running back with the biggest smile on his face. He said that was awesome and that he couldn't wait to get on another horse."

A year or so later, Mason won his first bareback riding buckle at a youth rodeo in Klamath Falls.

His buckle count has quickly increased, totaling 35 in the last four years.

Along the way there have been a few more injuries: a broken arm and a broken wrist. But Mason hasn't been deterred from his goal of becoming a professional rodeo athlete in the three rough-stock events.

Mason's dad helps him practice on a mechanical bull in the family's garage. He has received training and instructions from past and present rough stock competitors, including Clint Wells of Cottage Grove.

In a December 2017 Eugene Register-Guard article about Mason, Clint says the teenager has "grit and try." Clint explained Mason tries all the time no matter what the circumstances, has ice water in his veins, and doesn't worry about the size or ranking of the bull or horse he is scheduled to ride.

Younger, smaller and the less violent bucking bulls and horses are used during the junior and youth rodeos.

Last June, during the Junior High School Rodeo in South Dakota, Mason placed third in saddle bronc riding, 10th in bareback and 11th in bull riding. Each event had about 200 entrants from the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

After his recent success in Las Vegas, Mason was awarded a Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association permit. According to Brian, it normally takes a list of impressive accomplishments in rodeo events and $1,200 to secure that permit, which allows a person to compete in PRCA events. With that permit, Mason can compete on the pro rodeo circuit in three years when he turns 18.

In the meantime, he will continue to train on mechanical bulls, preparing himself to come out of chutes on the backs of bulls and horses during high school and amateur rodeos.

As his father says, he's a young man with grit. ■

Bull riding is a technical sport, where hand placement and arm motion can make or break a ride.

"I'm always nervous. That's not a bad thing. Everybody is nervous. I've seen and heard of injuries. I just don't worry about it."

—Mason Stuller, 15

Holes are drilled into the lower part of power poles, allowing for better absorption of an oil preservative mixture during a preservative treatment. That end of the treated pole eventually ends up in the ground and wards off deterioration for a longer time.

The Mighty Power Pole

Often overlooked, power poles are the backbone of the electric grid

By Craig Reed

Those power poles that stand tall out across the landscape are special, so don't take them for granted.

There is more to the poles than just being a major part of the transportation system for electricity to your homes, properties and businesses.

All poles are treated by McFarland Cascade, a wood products company off Highway 99 between West Eugene and Junction City.

McFarland Cascade and its 30 employees provide special treatment to an estimated 50,000 power poles a year. The company's mission is to be a leader in the production of pressure treated power poles. Poles are shipped to utility companies, telecommunications companies and contractors across the U.S. and beyond.

"I tell the crew that what we do is very important," says Robert Campbell, McFarland Cascade plant manager. "There's a sense of pride that goes along with knowing we provide a product that is supplying a service that is very important to life, even though it is taken for granted."

Blachly-Lane Electric Cooperative has bought and installed McFarland Cascade poles for decades. Matt Smith, the co-op's construction general foreman, says the utility still has poles in service that were bought from McFarland Cascade and installed in the ground in 1948 and 1949.

"You want the straightest, most-treated, longest-lasting pole with the least cracks, and they seem to get those for

Above, McFarland Cascade Plant Manager Robert Campbell. Left, power poles are fed into a sealed retort, where they are treated under pressure with oil to increases longevity.

us," Matt says of McFarland Cascade.

The life of a power pole begins as a tree. McFarland Cascade foresters cruise potential timber sales looking for trees with qualities needed to become a pole. Those qualities include straightness, no excessive spiral in the wood, no excessive knots, and no breaks or cracks. Foresters make their selections from Pacific Northwest Douglas fir trees.

"In a natural stand of Douglas fir trees, only 5 to 8 percent are good for poles," says Dean Anderson, director of U.S. pole sales for McFarland Cascade. "Douglas fir provides an exceptional pole product that is straight, true, has a high strength factor and longevity. The most valuable use for a tree is to make it into a power pole."

McFarland Cascade either buys a timber sale with a lot of pole potential, selecting qualifying trees and selling the rest of the timber to a mill, or the company buys select trees from a sale made to another wood products company.

"We spend a lot of time and money making the selection," Dean says. "Obviously, we're trying to find sites that give us 15 percentage of trees for poles, but no tree is perfectly round, no tree is perfectly straight, so those sites are rare."

Once a tree is selected, it is delimbed, debarked and inspected again for defects.

At the McFarland Cascade plant, the tree is cut to an ordered length and prepped for a pressurized preservative treatment that increases its longevity by warding off pests and moisture. Holes are drilled in the bottom of the pole that eventually will be in the ground and a few feet above ground level. The holes provide access to the interior of the pole during treatment.

Poles are stacked on rail carts and rolled into large tubular cylinders, known as retorts. An average of 50 to 60 poles can be treated in a cylinder at once. Moisture is first removed from the wood by a process called "boiling under a vacuum." When that is complete, the cylinder is filled with an oil preservative mixture. Pressurized liquid is injected into the wood cells.

The final steps involve easing the pressure, removing excess oil mixture and storing it for future use, injecting steam for cleaning and sterilizing of the pole and a final vacuum cleaning cycle. The complete retort process can take 30 to 40 hours.

When the poles are removed from the retort, they are laid out and given a final visual inspection before being loaded on trucks or railcars for a trip to their new homes back in the ground.

"A big part of our job is to make sure premium quality poles make it into the supply chain for our customers," Dean says. "These poles are constantly being checked by our workers. We want to utilize the best fiber we can in our poles."

McFarland Cascade and its employees have been selecting trees and turning them into treated poles since 1916. At that time, the company was headquartered in Sandpoint, Idaho. Today, the company has its headquarters in Tacoma, Washington, and several production facilities across the U.S.

The Eugene-area plant was built in 1953 and used vats to dip the poles. In 1966 and 1967, the construction and installation of two retorts changed the treatment process. Two more retorts were added in 1996 and 1997.

"McFarland Cascade continues to invest heavily in updating the plant environmentally, improving technology and processes," Dean says.

In 2012, Stella-Jones bought McFarland Cascade, bringing two of the largest industrial pole companies in the U.S. and Canada together.

"Combined, we've continued to grow," Dean says. "We remain focused on quality and the environment."

In the last few of months of 2018, the McFarland Cascade Eugene facility shipped poles to Arkansas, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah and Wisconsin.

Matt, a 25-year Blachly-Lane employee, says McFarland Cascade has always been quick to fill the co-op's need for poles.

"Their service and the way they treat us is marvelous," he says.

Robert says he appreciates the work the Eugene crew does and the pole product its turns out.

"Our employees take pride in the product we supply to our customers," he says. "We really run the plant here as a team. Without the safety and the quality of the people we have running the plant here, we wouldn't have the successful business that we have today. Everybody does their part and everybody is professional in doing their part. In the end, that gives us the quality product that we produce here." ■

Isabella Cowdrey works on the third-grade class art project under the guidance of North Lake High School art teacher Sue Ingalsbe. The project and those from other North Lake elementary classes will be on display at the Christmas Valley Market this summer and through the following school year.

Young Artists Create Colorful Art

Student artwork brightens Christmas Valley Market

By Craig Reed

The white walls of the remodeled Christmas Valley Market needed some color.

The elementary-school children of North Lake School District took care of that. They have eagerly provided both creativity and color in several pieces of art each of the past four years. The students have been assisted by North Lake High School art teacher Sue Ingalsbe and the respective kindergarten through sixth-grade teachers.

During a visit to the market, look down the walls on either side of the front door and the front counter. You can't miss the art pieces created a year ago.

There is field of flowers—each made by a student's hand—from the kindergarten class. The first-graders created a huge sunflower with individually painted petals.

Yellow and brown flowers grace the second-graders' work of art. The third-graders decorated a brown tree on a colorful background with a variety of gear-looking blossoms.

Two galloping horses with the saying, "We Are Chasing Our Dreams" was the creation of the fourth-grade class. The fifth-graders hand-painted colorful foliage in a tree with the saying, "5th Grade grew strong by extending helping hands."

Completing the gallery is the sixth-graders' art, a branch with colorful origami birds hanging by fishing line.

"It always surprises me with the art they come up with," says Carrie Mace, manager of the Christmas Valley Market. "The kids are creative."

North Lake Elementary Principal Gail Neumann says it is hard to pick a favorite each year.

"They're just all terrific," she says. "Every piece is wonderful, uniquely wonderful. I just love what they do. There's a piece of every kid in every piece of art. They can look back at every piece they did and they can say, 'This is me.' It creates a personal connection between the art and each student."

Sally Rudolf, a 9-year-old third-grader, says the art projects have helped her improve at painting.

"It's been fun working on it," she says of this year's third-grade art project that involves painting around cutouts of each student. "It's fun because you get to learn how to do something new in art."

Tucker Gilbert, an 8-year-old third-grader, says his

Created in 2018 by the North Lake elementary classes, these pieces are on display at the market. Clockwise from top left, running horses were created by the fourth-grade class. A tree with gear-looking blossoms was the creation of the third grade. Yellow and brown flowers highlight the artwork of the second-graders. Origami birds are featured in the work of the sixth-grade class.

painting also has improved the past few years. He says the school art projects have inspired him to paint and color more at home.

The idea to have the North Lake elementary students provide the artwork for the market walls was Carrie's. She is a native of the area and a North Lake graduate.

"It is important that we support each other out here," she says. "So we just decided to support the school."

The "we" includes Fast Break, the corporation that owns the market and adjoining gas station. Carrie described her art idea to Fast Break management and not only got a thumbs up, but also financial sponsorship of the art materials needed for the first year of projects.

Carrie contacted Sue at

Continues on page 8

Student Artwork

Continued from page 5

the high school, and soon students from the elementary school classes were filing into Sue's art room.

High school art students help the younger kids. It usually takes four 55-minute sessions to complete each project.

Third-grade teacher Melissa Haworth says each elementary class makes its own decisions regarding the type of project, the colors and the materials.

"I think their appreciation for art has increased," Melissa says of the young artists. "Doing the art improves their fine motor skills and it increases their perseverance because they want to get better at it each year."

Gail says art experiences are rare in small schools, especially without an art teacher at the elementary level.

"We don't live in a community where there are many art opportunities open to us," she says. "These art projects give the kids another glimpse into doing something for fun, for enjoyment, maybe even for a career. It opens their eyes to another opportunity."

Finished art pieces hang in the respective classrooms until a year-end school assembly, during which students present and explain their work. Carrie then takes the artwork and displays it on the market's walls.

The previous year's art pieces come down and are put up for bid. Last year, the bidding was held during the Christmas Valley Music Festival in Flowerree Memorial Park.

The art has earned an average of $400 each year. The money and any donations are returned to the North Lake art program to buy materials for the next round of elementary school art projects. Any remaining funds go to middle school and high school art projects.

This year, the music festival will display the art and take bids on August 10.

"Art activates a different part of the brain for these young students," Gail says. "They discover new skills and many times an interest they never knew they had. It's exciting to watch the kids who sometimes have trouble focusing in class be able to concentrate on this project and do a great job with it." ■

The collection of 2018 art projects at Christmas Valley Market also includes, clockwise from top left, a large sunflower with individually painted petals created by the first-grade class. Carrie Mace, manager at the market, holds the kindergarten art piece that features a field of flowers, each flower made by a student's hand. The fifth-grade class hand-painted a tree with colorful foliage.

A drone saves Brian Kincade time when handling day-to-day monitoring and welfare checks on his Angus-cross cattle at Kincade Ranch.

Drone Gives Rancher a Bird's-Eye View

Eye in the sky helps rancher Brian Kincade care for his cattle year-round

By Dianna Troyer

Countless questions and chores confront Brian Kincade year-round as he manages his family ranch.

Do water troughs need to be filled in distant pastures? How can obstinate cattle be moved off a steep ridge so they can be herded to another pasture or brought home for the winter? Are cows in distress when they give birth in winter and spring?

To deal with those tasks, Brian dispatches a reliable, uncomplaining personal assistant that follows his instructions without question. Whenever he wonders what's up with his Angus-cross cows, he flies his drone at Kincade Ranch east of Connor Creek.

With its acute airborne electronic eyes, Brian's DJI Mavic Pro transmits data to his cellphone screen. The bird's-eye view helps him prioritize tasks.

"My drone is another tool to use," says Brian, 41, who bought it in the fall of 2017 at Costco. "It was compact and durable and had an affordable price of about $1,000. It's not the most expensive model that has infrared vision to see at night."

To begin a flight, Brian clicks the drone's propellers into place and slides his cellphone into the control module. It whirs to life on the ground. Toggling joy sticks, he makes it hover and go straight up. Once clear of obstacles and buildings, he sets it on a sport mode speed of about 40 miles an hour.

"I want to get it out there and back before a battery gets low," he says. "Each battery lasts about 21 minutes, so I always carry two extra when I'm out. You should keep batteries in the house, not in your truck, because they last longer if they're warm."

Arrows on Brian's phone screen show the direction the drone is moving so he knows where to guide it.

During calving season from January to May, the drone makes it easy for Brian to monitor cows giving birth in hard-to-access areas of pastures.

"Some like to calve in the clumps of willows along the creek," he says. "I can zoom in and see a cow's ear tag and know her history and whether she's had trouble calving before."

Sometimes, he might need to help a cow and pull her calf, or a cow might need to be brought into the barn, so a

Controlling his drone by smartphone, top right, Brian can get wide-angle views, above, or close-ups clear enough to read ear tags, right.

veterinarian can do a Caesarean section. While he says most of his cows are easy-going, a few want privacy and give a do-not-disturb look.

Once the drone has helped him locate each newborn calf, he gives the calf minerals and vitamins, tags its ear and records information about it lineage.

Brian says learning to fly the Mavic was fairly easy. He became registered to pilot it by correctly answering a short series of safety questions.

"You had to pass the test before the software would allow you to fly it," he says.

The drone must remain in the pilot's line of sight and cannot fly above 400 feet or in restricted airspace.

Brian taught himself to fly it by reading a brief instruction manual and watching classes on the internet.

"I call it You Tube University," he says, grinning. "You can learn just about anything there. The software is pretty sophisticated, so it almost flies by itself."

Set to a regular mode, the drone automatically avoids objects. It is also programmed to return to its launch site if its battery runs low. If it does go down, its location can be traced.

The drone proved its worth shortly after Brian bought it. It not only showed him what water troughs needed to be filled, it helped him herd his cattle.

"It sounds like a hive of bees, which can get them moving," he says, laughing. "I flew it low enough to bring them off a ledge and down into the canyon where I was riding my horse, so I could move them to where they needed to be."

Since then, most of his cows have become accustomed to the Mavic's sound and just look at it.

"I haven't had any trouble with it," Brian says. "Considering how much I use it, it's lasted a long time. It puts a little fun into a day's work." ■

A Wander to Whiskey

Couple crafts award-winning spirits at historic Hood River Valley farm

By Drew Myron

In the Hood River Valley, in an old red barn filled with wooden barrels, Sasha Muir and Phil Downer stand at the forefront of a growing culinary movement: local, handcrafted, small-batch spirits.

Headed by this husband-and-wife team, Wanderback Whiskey is making a mark as a top micro-producer.

It is an unlikely endeavor for the couple. Phil is an orthopedic surgeon specializing in hip preservation. Sasha is an industrial engineer who founded, built and sold two successful businesses: Butter London, a cosmetics company; and Bevee, featuring wallets and handbags.

Fifteen years ago, the two bought a 30-acre farm east of Odell in the central Hood River Valley as a way to combine their enthusiasm for outdoor sports—especially kiteboarding, motorcycles and skiing—with their love of the Columbia Gorge. Based in Seattle, the couple have made Hood River a second home to their burgeoning passion.

They say Wanderback is both a way of life and a family business.

Sasha and Phil didn't intend to get in the liquor business. In fact, until a few years ago, Sasha never even drank whiskey. And farming is a long way from where they started.

Sasha was born and raised in London. Phil is from Newfoundland. The couple met in Paris while attending business school at Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires, and then moved to the Pacific Northwest. They have been married 14 years and have children ages 8, 10 and 13.

Once in Hood River, the couple starting making new friends and curating spirits from distilleries around the country, with Phil—who is earning a distilling diploma from Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland—as whiskey maker. Sasha handles marketing and distribution.

At its essence, making whiskey is simple: Start with grain, add water, let set. But making good whiskey is a skillful mix of art and science.

Phil says the recipe starts with a good grain bill—clear spirit that serves as the "extremely variable and important" base.

The Wanderback base is mashed, fermented and distilled at a partner distillery, then transported to the Hood River Valley farm where it is barrel-aged, finished, blended and bottled.

Wanderback produces 2,500 bottles in each batch, called a release. The first batch of single-malt whiskey was released in fall 2017, followed by another in 2018. A third is in the aging process.

Sasha Muir and Phil Downer taste the latest batch of whiskey, now aging in their barn. With an emphasis on local, small-batch attention to detail, boutique distilleries are growing in popularity.

The first release was made in partnership with Westland Distillery in Seattle, with the whiskey aged in new American oak barrels. The second batch was aged in what were once Nicaraguan rum barrels, providing hints of tropical aroma and flavor. The third release is aging in barrels carefully chosen for heritage and condition.

The valley's temperate climate is ideal for the craft, Phil says, noting the mild winters and warm summers.

"This is a really good place to age whiskey," he says. "The climate here is very special. And the water here is just pristine.

"The fun thing about whiskey is that it's a rabbit hole. There's so much complexity. You learn so much. It's one of those things

Above, Sasha and Phil have restored and transformed their historic barn into a production area and tasting room. Left, Wanderback has produced two batches of single malt whiskey, with 2,500 bottles in each release.

like wine. It's endless the things you can learn. You could study it for decades and not fully understand it."

Phil's attention to detail earned a Double Gold Medal from the American Distilling Institute—a rare accomplishment for a first batch. High Proof PDX—a guidebook to craft spirits tasting—included Wanderback on its list of "Ten Oregon-Made Whiskeys You Should Try Right Now."

Far from the moonshine days of the past, in many ways Oregon distilleries are the new wineries. There are more than 50 distilleries in Oregon—several opened in downtown Hood River in recent years—and the number is growing. In 2017, sales of American whiskey grew more than 8 percent, according to the Distilled Spirits Council.

"Consumers, once convinced of the value of highest-end examples within a particular category, tend to eventually begin seeking out more idiosyncratic expressions of it," notes Forbes magazine. "This is just as much the case with whiskey as it is with watches, purses and more."

While being on-trend is a boon, just as important to the couple is the sense of place the whiskey represents.

The property was once a cherry orchard. In keeping with the agricultural history, Sasha and Phil are growing barley, which they hope to use in future bottles of Wanderback Whiskey.

They have restored the 1923 barn into a production facility and tasting room.

"We want to honor this special place," Sasha says. ■

Wanderback Whiskey is available at liquor stores throughout Oregon and at wanderback.com.

Students at Nehalem Elementary School play a game in the garden to learn how pollination works.

Garden Makeover Sprouts Hands-on Learning

Elementary school takes classrooms outside for earth science lessons in a garden

By Denise Porter

For a few years, the garden at Nehalem Elementary School sat and waited.

Much like Frances Hodgson Burnett's beloved tale of "The Secret Garden," this overgrown space needed someone to unlock its potential and revel in the magic a garden provides.

Thanks to a family's dedication, today children at Nehalem Elementary School are once again finding the joy a garden can bring.

"I noticed (the garden) was a bit disheveled—just lacking in attention," recalls Erin Derr of Garibaldi. "I asked what part it played in the larger school community. Did they use it for classes or learning?"

Erin learned that one school teacher, Kim Miller, was using the garden area to teach science with the younger grades. Kim was teaching decomposition lessons there. Otherwise, no one at the school was really teaching garden classes.

Erin says she could understand why. In 2016, when she began asking about the garden, it needed care and attention.

Erin rolled up her sleeves and got to work. The past two years, she and her husband, Benjamin, and their two children, Brennan and Delaney, have rebuilt all but one of the seven garden boxes. Time and coastal storms had rotted the wood.

Julia Yost of the Food Roots cooperative teaches students about plant life cycles and what seeds need to grow into plants.

Photos by Erin Derr

The family also replaced the garden fence and spent hours in the garden pulling morning glory and horse tail out.

"I had to go weed every couple of days," Erin says. "Now we've finally won the battle, and so it's so nice."

The Derrs were new to the area in 2016 when Erin began asking about the school garden.

"We'd been here a year, and I was getting more involved and sticking my nose into the parent council," Erin recalls.

Erin and Benjamin moved to Garibaldi in 2015 from Southern California. She says they wanted to live on the coast. After careful consideration, they chose a home in Garibaldi so their children would attend the Neah-Kah-Nie School District. Brennan is at the middle school. Delaney is at Nehalem Grade School.

The school garden was started by Charlene Gernert and her family. The Gernerts secured a grant for a school garden and tended it while their children were active at the school.

Erin says school gardens generally don't get funded through school districts. They require volunteers to make them bloom. After Charlene moved on, no one stepped up to help with the garden and it remained dormant, waiting for another family to take on that volunteer role.

Erin felt she was just the right person. Not only was she looking for volunteer activities to immerse herself in her new community, she had a fondness for gardens and all things pertaining to science.

"I have a degree in biology," she says. "My background is in science. My underlying interest is to facilitate more science learning."

She says a garden teaches about life cycles, composting and the nitrogen cycle, among other things.

In a school garden, children "can learn so many different things depending on their age," Erin says.

The parent council at the grade school started a garden committee, but the school was in need of seismic upgrading. Because of maintenance work on the outside of the building, "we really couldn't get to the garden for a year," she says.

Undaunted, Erin says she decided to take this delay as an opportunity to learn and look for community partners to help make the garden thrive.

First, Erin began Master Gardener classes at the OSU Extension Service in Tillamook. The classes are science oriented and discuss the "breeding of plants and plant disease," she says.

Erin got her Master Gardener certification, "thinking it would better help me," she says. "I wasn't versed in this growing environment."

Nehalem Grade School is somewhat sheltered from oceanic winds, but the cooler marine climate on the coast meant Erin had to learn about growing cool-weather crops.

While living in Ohio for a year, Erin grew a big garden.

"It was very easy," she recalls of the hot summer days.

She admits the cool climate here was daunting.

Next, the school's parent council began looking for donation partners to offset the material costs of rejuvenating the garden. Twice they asked for a donation from the Nehalem Bay Garden Club, and twice the club awarded a donation to the school. Warrenton Home Depot donated soil for the growing beds.

"We couldn't have done it without them," Erin says.

Lastly, Erin began looking for how to help teachers at the school use the garden in their curriculum. She turned to Food Roots, an area nonprofit dedicated to local gardening.

In January, Julia Yost of Food Roots began visiting the school monthly to teach all nine classes—approximately 200 students—about plant life cycles and gardening techniques.

It took two years of planning to reach this stage.

"It's nice to see it's finally coming to fruition," Erin says.

This spring, Erin anticipates the students will really begin to get "lessons in the dirt," she says. "They'll be outside and getting dirty."

Erin says the hard part is over, and now the kids can really begin to experiment.

"We're asking them, 'What would you like to grow?'" she says.

As for Erin's part in the garden, she and her family intend to help with the summer caretaking so the area stays weeded and in top shape when students return in the fall.

"I've stayed with it and adopted the garden," Erin says. "It's become a family project." ■

An Eye in Northern Nevada's Sky

Drone operator's career takes flight after retirement

By Dianna Troyer

When a bird's-eye view of a project or building is needed in Northern Nevada, Rick Anderson and his drone, Talon 1, whir into action.

The 64-year-old Carlin resident bought Talon 1 after retiring in 2016 and has used it to photograph potential mining sites, search for a lost pet, and provide aerial photos of property for real-estate agents, engineering firms and construction companies.

"It's been fun and intense to learn how to fly it and pass a certification test," Rick says.

When he earned his Remote Pilot Certificate from the Federal Aviation Administration in 2017, he was required to name and register his drone.

"I thought Talon 1 was a great name, considering what it does," Rick says of his DJI Phantom 4 Pro Plus. The 12-inch square unmanned aerial aircraft is equipped with a state-of-the-art camera.

He says he picked the name because an eagle taking food with its talons reminds him of a drone capturing photos and video.

To bring Talon 1 to life, Rick taps a transmitter button on a control module. It whirs like a buzzing insect and awaits Rick's instructions for its next mission. Maneuvering joy sticks while watching a screen attached to the module, Rick makes it hover before flying it to its destination. As Talon 1 flies, Rick soars vicariously, seeing from a bird's perspective hundreds of feet aloft.

Talon 1 is Rick's Phantom 4 Pro Plus drone.

Photos courtesy of Rick and Kandi Anderson

Rick says learning to fly was easier than studying for and passing the Remote Pilot Certificate exam—an FAA requirement if a drone pilot is paid for photos and videos.

"I was told some people have to take the test several times before passing," Rick says of the hour-long exam. "I was relieved to pass the first time."

The FAA certificate shows that pilots understand regulations, operating requirements and procedures for safely flying drones.

Pilots cannot fly above 400 feet, must maintain a line of sight with their drone, and are prohibited from flying in certain airspaces.

For drone pilots who want an FAA certificate, Rick recommends studying with Remote Pilot 101—an online training program with quiz questions similar to those on the FAA exam. He also studied materials in the FAA Airman Knowledge Testing Supplement.

After passing practice tests and studying a few months, Rick registered at the nearest test center—the Magic Valley Regional Airport in Twin Falls, Idaho, 185 miles from home.

"For me, learning to fly a drone was a completely different mindset from my previous work," says Rick, who retired as a supervisor in the machining and fabrication shop for Newmont Mining north of Carlin. "I was used to welding and machining parts, and here I was in retirement learning some things a pilot would need to know."

His wife, Kandi, is an award-winning photographer who specializes in industrial, newborn and maternity portraiture. She suggested he learn to fly a drone to offer more services to her diverse clients. She opened her business after retiring in 2012 as administrative assistant to the Carlin Combined School principal.

"With both of us being retired, we enjoy going on shoots together," Kandi says.

Rick's first client, a Canadian mining company, found his drone services through her website.

"They wanted an aerial viewpoint of test holes and survey boundaries of a potential mining site near Tuscarora," he says of the unincorporated community about 50 miles north of Carlin.

On another assignment, he photographed the Elko Junction Shopping Center so a prospective renter could visualize the size of a building available for lease. The job was his first experience dealing with the complexities of flying near an airport. Although he was not near buildings at the adjacent Elko Regional Airport, he technically flew in its airspace.

"Before I could even start, I met with the airport manager to get permission," Rick says. "Pilots were notified of the time I was scheduled to fly. On the flight day, I kept a required radio with me so I could listen for any pilots in the area."

Despite following

Rick flies Talon 1 in Northern Nevada.

guidelines, his drone would not start.

"The software shuts it down when it's in the vicinity of an airport," he says. "I had to get online to learn how to override it."

Another time he was asked to find a dog lost during a picnic.

"I flew but didn't see it," Rick says. "Several days later, it was found at someone's house about 17 miles in the opposite direction of where they thought it would be."

Rick says he has been impressed with Talon 1's ability to handle diverse assignments and flying conditions.

"It's stable in windy conditions and can fly 30 miles an hour," he says. "I've never had a problem with it being carried away or losing sight of it. It's programmed to return to its launch site."

A construction site in Northern Nevada photographed by Rick and Talon 1.

A battery lasts about 30 minutes, so Rick takes five with him and keeps one plugged into a charging system in his vehicle so he can stay onsite as long as necessary.

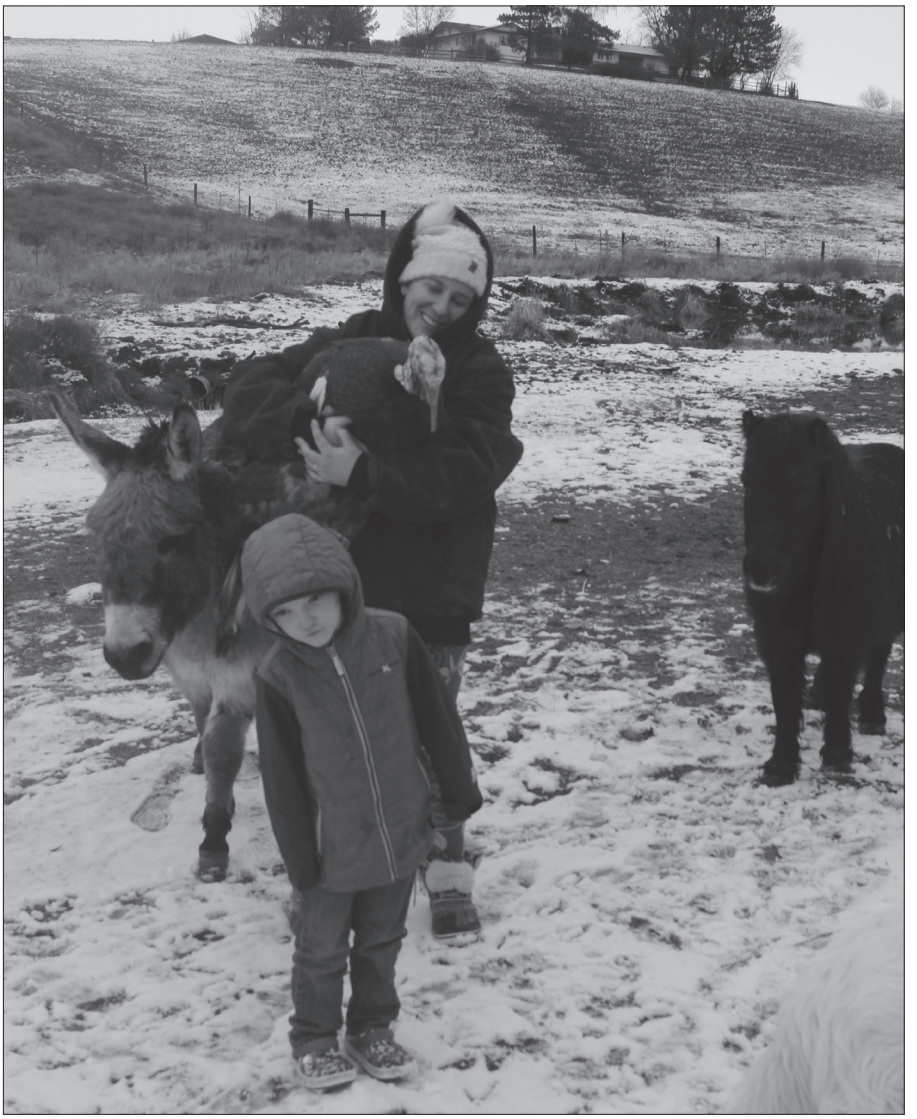
Rick says he is available for search-and-rescue missions and whatever a person needs.

"There are so many ways to use a drone," he says. "It's really enjoyable to fly one. "Since we're both retired, we can set our schedule to fly whenever the weather cooperates. We're doing what we like to do." ■

Pigture Perfect

Mandee Graham's love for pigs quickly became a mission with a growing community of fans

By Cris Ellingson



Mandee Graham and her son, Steele, enjoy some time outside with just a few of the animals at Pigture Perfect Rescue and Sanctuary.

The hillside in Badger Pocket—home to the Graham family—is often dotted with a pigscape of rescued pigs. Mandee, Tory and their three children—Shylee, 8; Lexee 5; and Steele 4—happily share their property with Pigture Perfect Rescue and Sanctuary, where they care for abused and mistreated pigs. Sharing the land with the pigs are ducks, rabbits, chickens, turkeys, cats, dogs, Johnny the donkey and miniature horses Jim and Dolly.

Mandee is the sanctuary's executive director. Her first rescue pig had been set aside by a rancher to die. Mandee and Tory nursed the pig back to health.

After that, Mandee was given two pigs by a woman who could no longer care for them. Debbie Dolittle, who operated a petting zoo until she found out she was terminally ill, brought six more pigs. Mandee says she was honored to take Debbie's pigs.

Pigture Perfect Rescue and Sanctuary, which began in 2016, has 29 pigs. Each is allowed to come in the house, but only five have chosen to do so.

"The pigs that come inside have their own beds, and a few of them sleep in my bed with me if they decide to come upstairs to my bedroom," Mandee says. "I take my pigs Phenyx or Roe with me whenever we go on vacation to the beach in Oregon or even just camping down in Vantage for the week."

She says the pigs enjoy riding in the front seat of the car when she takes the kids to school, and get a treat from the coffee stand.

"My pigs are a part of our family," Mandee says. "I cannot imagine my life without them in it."

Rocky and Pepa are two mini pigs that lived with an elderly couple in Kittitas. City officials said they were not allowed because they are swine, not pets, so the

Clockwise from top left, Mandee says Roe enjoys car rides and even gets treats at a coffee stand. The Graham's rescues enjoy family time just as much as Shylee, Steele and Lexee. Tory takes a nap with two of their rescues.

couple surrendered them to the rescue.

"They had all the reasons in the world about why pigs should not be allowed in the city limits," Mandee says.

Mandee asked the city to consider allowing mini pigs in the city limits.

"With the popularity of these pets growing every year, the ordinance change can encourage responsible pet pig ownership," she told the council. "It may prevent zoning violations that result in pigs being removed and landing in the local shelter. These intelligent, sensitive animals are amazing creatures, which should be recognized as a domesticated house pet, making extraordinary members of the family."

Her efforts were successful.

Mandee says the sanctuary gets many inquiries about adoption via Facebook. She and Tory then review the application to make sure applicants know about pigs

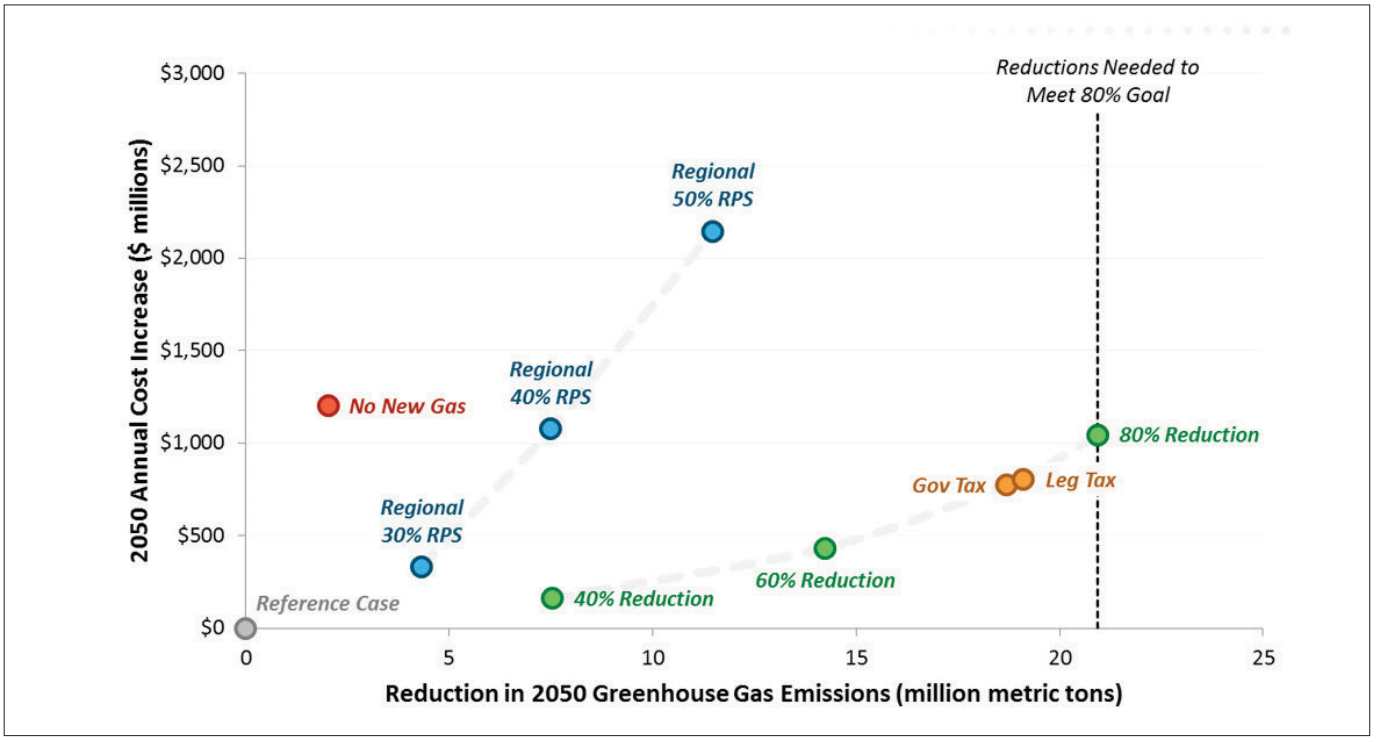
When it comes to caring for the rescued pigs, veterinary costs are a large expense. Because it is too costly to have all the females spayed before rehoming, adopters must provide proof of their being spayed shortly after taking them home. Mandee hopes to add home inspections to the checklist when finances allow.

"We are always terribly in need of donations and help," she says. "We could do so much more with more help and funds."

Mandee says they can always use building materials, straw, feed and money. Tory and volunteers are renovating a motorhome Mandee will use to sell LuLaRoe clothing from at parties to be a primary source of continued funding. All profits from the sales will go toward the rescue and sanctuary work.

Looking toward the future, Mandee has a favorite quote that has served as a turning point in her life and with the rescue: "Don't tell people your dreams. Show them." Those dreams include a better setup shelter for potential adopters to visit the pigs, more volunteers and more property to save more pigs. She also would like to share each pig's picture, profiles and story online. ■

For more information, to visit or to volunteer, call 509-312-0880 or go to the Pigture Perfect Rescue and Sanctuary's Facebook page.



This graphic illustrates a carbon tax is the least-cost alternative to reducing carbon by 22 million metric tons annually at just more than $1 billion a year by 2050. If a 50 percent renewable portfolio standard is used instead of a carbon tax, only slightly more than half of the desired 22 MMT reduction will be achieved at about $2.1 billion annually in 2050. If a restriction on no new natural gas generation, only slightly more than 10 percent of the 22MMT reduction can be achieved at an annual cost of about $1.2 billion annually in 2050. Additionally, without new gas generation in the mix, there are questions whether the reliability of the system could be maintained.

Graphic by Public Generating Pool

Oregon Carbon Bill Moves Forward

State Legislature unveils proposed cap-and-trade law to mixed results

By Lisa Jacoby

Just a week after the Oregon legislative session began in January, a bill proposing a cap-and-trade law was released to the public.

Reactions are mixed on the complicated issue of a tax on carbon, which has been in the works for more than a year by the Joint Carbon Reduction Committee. The goal is to reduce emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2050.

Businesses and industries that emit more than 25,000 metric tons of carbon a year would be directly affected by passage of this cap-and-trade bill, but everyone would pay a price.

Cap refers to the firm limit of emissions, which gets stricter over time. Trade refers to a market where companies can buy and sell allowances that let them emit a specific amount of carbon.

In 2017, Public Generating Pool did a study to determine the least-cost methods of reducing carbon—if, in fact, the state set that as a priority.

PGP is a trade association of 10 consumer-owned electric utilities—nine in Washington and one in Oregon—that work together on issues of common interest.

Therese Hampton, executive director of PGP, says the association's key finding was that a price on carbon, through cap-and-trade or a tax, is the least-cost approach. She says that is because every affected utility can choose how to reduce carbon.

"It gives you the flexibility to determine the best way to do it," she says.

The Effect on Industries and the Cooperative

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative buys power from the Bonneville Power Administration, which generates its power mainly from hydropower—a low-carbon resource.

"Hydro gets valued for its carbon-free

attributes," Hampton says.

In theory, the initial impact to BPA—and, by extension, OTEC consumers—could be minimal. In fact, BPA could see a benefit from selling power to California for a higher market price for power that is not needed by BPA customers such as OTEC.

Absolute Zero Carbon

Hampton says PGP researched the issue of maintaining electric system reliability and the feasibility of a mandate requiring the state to be 100 percent carbon-free, with no reliance on natural gas.

"Is it possible to have absolute zero carbon? It's impractical," she says.

The reason is weather. Wind and solar would be relied upon heavily as renewable sources of power. However, when the wind doesn't blow and the clouds block the sun, those sources do not produce power.

Hitting the target to reduce carbon to 80 percent below 1990 levels allows use of carbon-producing resources to provide an adequate and reliable power supply.

As for cost, Hampton offers this scenario: If the power supply loses 2,000 megawatts of energy from an existing baseload carbon-free resource such as hydropower, and we needed to replace this resource with another carbon-free resource such as solar or wind, it would take up to 7,500 MW from other resources (5,500 MW of renewables and 2,000 MW of natural gas generation) to meet the demand.

This is because the renewables need some form of backup generation. An average megawatt of electricity is enough power to serve 700 homes on a continual basis.

"That has a significant cost," Hampton says. "It costs more to make that up than to get to 80 percent of the 1990 levels."

OTEC Chief Financial Officer Anthony Bailey says a cap-and-trade bill will drive up OTEC's core cost of doing business.

"Is it possible to have absolute zero carbon? It's impractical."

—Therese Hampton, Public Generating Pool executive director

"Everything we buy, and the services we provide, all include fuel costs," Bailey says. "If BPA's secondary power sales market does not yield the hoped-for results, it will have a negative effect on rates."

OTEC faces the potential of several other environmental issues. For example, if BPA is forced to spill more water over the dams instead of generating power or remove dams, it will have less power to sell. BPA would need to go into the power market to buy additional baseload generation to replace the power. This could come at a higher cost to utilities such as OTEC.

OTEC consumers would see the bill's effect in other places, such as at the gas pump. In Oregon, the largest source of carbon emission is transportation (40 percent), followed by industry and then electricity, according to Ted Case, executive director of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Effect of Cap and Trade on OTEC Members

Rep. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, encourages the House of Representatives to analyze factors affecting the environment "to ensure that outcomes meet the objectives and that there are no unintended consequences," he says.

Findley points to Ash Grove Cement, a business in Baker County that he says is inhibited in its ability to pass through carbon costs due to international competition in China.

"What if the Durkee manufacturing plant is lost to Chinese competition because China doesn't have environmental, safety, labor, fuel and raw material regulations?" he asks. "If the manufacturing capacity at the Durkee plant is lost to Chinese competition because of the proposed carbon law, global emissions of carbon will increase by more than 417,000 tons per year."

Findley says closure of the Durkee plant would also result in the loss of more than 600 jobs in Baker and Malheur counties.

A food-processing plant in a border town, such as Ontario, could choose to expand across the Snake River and avoid this increase in operating costs, taking the jobs and tax revenue with it.

Other places OTEC members may feel the bite of carbon regulation could include heating their homes and business with natural gas, oil or propane.

Prior to the start of the legislative session, Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, expressed concern about rising gas prices for rural Oregon, where traveling long distances is a necessity. Bentz represents Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Wheeler, Jefferson and parts of Deschutes, Wasco, Lake, Marion and Clackamas counties, and serves on the Joint Carbon Reduction Committee.

Cap-and-trade regulations could also affect existing and potential business when considering whether to locate in or expand their businesses in Oregon or elsewhere. Given the choice, businesses—and the related jobs—may choose to locate elsewhere.

Get Involved

OTEC follows these important issues closely and remains committed to informing members of developments that would affect the cost and reliability of electricity service.

OTEC could use your help. Go to https://oreca-action.org and take action to make sure your legislators know you are watching.

For current news and contact information for senators and representatives, go to www.oregonlegislature.gov. ■

Turning Golf Balls Into Lentils

A trip to India inspired a Tanner Electric board member to make a difference

By Anne Herman

Dutch Siedentopf has found a way to turn golf balls in the Snoqualmie Valley into meals for children in India.

It's not magic, just a lot of hard work.

He got the idea for the project last year. While in India for a friend's wedding, Dutch discovered Diksha School, which serves undernourished kids found begging in the streets.

After verifying the families cannot feed their children, Diksha School takes them on as students. The school provides food, clothing, books and all the children's education through high school.

Dutch visited the school and met the students. He was so moved by the school's work that when he returned home, he decided to support it.

Dutch set a goal to raise $1,000 for the school, which provides almost 7,700 meals for students. Thirteen cents in U.S. currency buys a full meal of lentils, rice and vegetables in India.

"I've always been an avid golfer," Dutch says. "Before I retired and we moved to North Bend, we used to live near a golf course. I'd find lost golf balls and give them to The First Tee Youth Program."

After one visit to Diksha School in India, Dutch Siedentopf was inspired to help make a difference in the lives of the students.

Photo courtesy of Dutch Siedentopf

Dutch decided to use his previous fundraising approach for the new cause. He contacted the Club at Snoqualmie Ridge, which was enthusiastic about supporting Diksha School. The manager there invited Dutch to collect balls on Mondays from October through March.

About 75 percent of the balls come from that club. Another 20 percent come from the Mt. Si Golf Course. The remaining 5 percent come from miscellaneous sources.

It is often arduous work. At one location, Dutch has to scramble down into a ravine to find the balls, then carry them back up in buckets to his car.

From January to March 2018, he collected 2,090 balls.

"It takes me about seven hours to collect $70 worth of balls," Dutch says.

He brings them home, sorts them and scrubs each one by hand. His wife, Jean Buckner, suggested throwing them in the washing machine along with some old towels for the final cleaning.

When the balls are clean and ready, Scott Barter—who with his family owns Mt. Si Golf Course—buys the balls from Dutch. The price depends on the ball's condition. Pristine balls are worth more because they can be resold. More scuffed up balls go to the driving range.

"There might be up to 10,000 balls on a driving range at one time," Dutch says. "They need a lot of balls."

He needed to find a way to get the money to India without losing some of it in exchange fees. Dutch did some research and found a nonprofit in Dallas that converts dollars to rupees at no charge.

"Every penny goes to the Diksha School," he says.

Despite being retired, Dutch is busy. He is the newest member of the Tanner Electric Cooperative Board of Directors. He serves on the personnel committee, the policy committee and soon the technology committee.

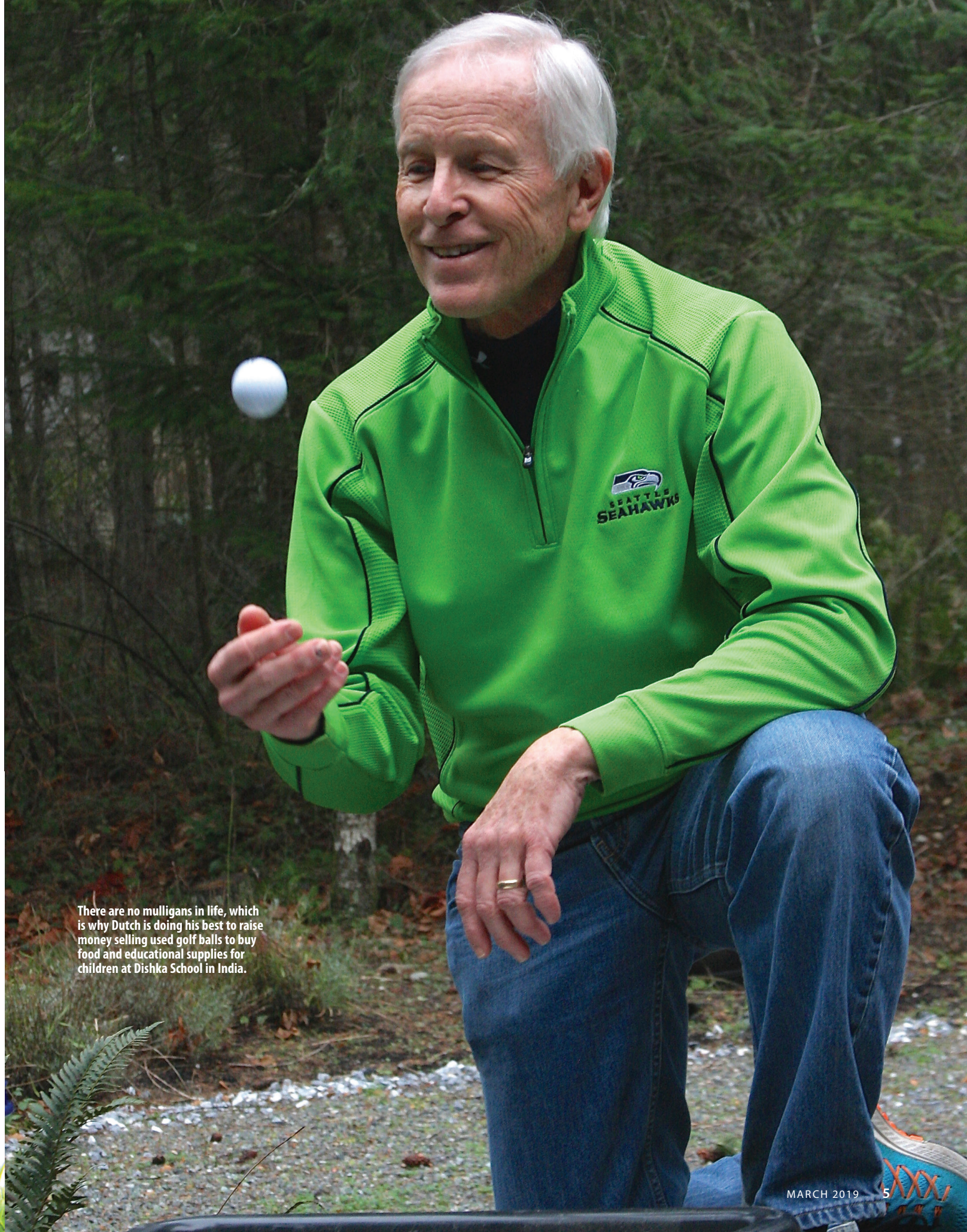
He plays golf a few times a week.

The proceeds from one ball equal two to three meals for Diksha students, but it is an enormous amount of work to reach his goal.

"I have personally cleaned over 2,000 balls," Dutch says. "There has got to be a better way.

He is looking for help, maybe from local golf teams. Now that he has the method down, Dutch thinks he can leverage it. Meanwhile, though, he says he is happy.

"It's a win for everyone," Dutch says. "The environment gets cleaned up, Scott gets balls for a good price and the kids get food. I have the pleasure of knowing there are a lot of children who won't go to bed hungry tonight." ■



There are no mulligans in life, which is why Dutch is doing his best to raise money selling used golf balls to buy food and educational supplies for children at Dishka School in India.

Finding Success With Something New

A local family of mint growers has found ways to create demand for its premium products

By Scott Laird

Warren and Mike Seely, third- and fourth-generation farmers near Clatskanie, have created new products they can manufacture from the mint they grow.

The Seely family has been growing mint in the Pacific Northwest since 1940. Now this fourth generation of farmers is finding creative ways to manufacture unique and high-quality products using its own mint crops.

Mike Seely is the third generation of Seely mint growers. His 26-year-old son, Warren, soon will take over the family business. The company's new product line has gained the family a surprising amount of attention. They have been featured in Oprah magazine, The New York Times and Sunset magazine, and are scheduled to appear this spring in an episode of a show on the Discovery Channel.

"It's really been a lot of fun," Mike says of the attention their new products have received.

Mike, Warren and Mike's wife, Candy, hold degrees in electrical engineering. They have operated the family farm outside Clatskanie adjacent to Port Westward in the Beaver Drainage Improvement District since Mike bought farm property in October 1980. The original family farm was near Battle Ground, Washington.

"I run 450 acres of mostly peppermint, with a little bit of spearmint," Warren says. "I'm expanding over the next couple of years because there has been a really good market demand for the products we produce. We're focused on high quality and we've had a lot of niche markets open up for us."

Candy leads the manufacturing portion of the operation, along with accounting and business management, but will jump on the swather and cut mint during harvest season. Daughter Karen is also involved in the family farm, running about 75 head of beef cattle and helping during harvest season.

The Seelys mostly grow heirloom Black Mitcham peppermint, which originates in England, and native spearmint.

The lower Columbia River region is known for producing mint, with growers starting on Puget Island and working their way up to Clatskanie and Rainier. Mike says it was the largest peppermint and spearmint producing region in the U.S. in the 1940s and '50s.

"Where you raise mint, how you raise it, the soils and climate, how we harvest it, when we harvest it—it all dictates the profile of the oil," Mike says. "That's what gives us a very sweet peppermint that nobody else can replicate."

Traditionally, mint farmers harvested their crop and distilled mint into an oil, which was sold to be blended into products such as gum and toothpaste. Farmers have struggled since the advent of synthetic oils, which can be produced less expensively.

"There's always been a lot of volatility in the market because cost for fuel, fertilizer and labor are always going up," Warren says. "But those large corporations are always concerned about the price point and always want to buy cheaper and try to push the price down. That is why the mint industry in the United States is in a state of collapse, with a lot of people being forced to exit the business."

Mike says peppermint production in the U.S. peaked in 1997,

when Oregon was producing about 95 percent of all peppermint worldwide. Since then, the shift has been toward the use of synthetically produced products or the use of what he calls inferior types of mints grown elsewhere.

"Peppermint oil has over 200 compounds to it," Mike says. "It's a very complex oil that you really can't replicate."

In 2007, the Seely family farm lost $100,000 growing mint.

"We thought we were done with mint," Mike says.

He and Candy visited the Portland Farmers Market looking for other profitable crops they might try and grow.

"On our way home, we suddenly realized no one there was selling mint," Mike says.

They rented space at the market and took a new product—mint tea—to try to sell a value-added product produced from their mint. Candy made dark chocolate mint patties to show people what could be made with their oils.

"I thought if I make something with this mint oil and they taste it, they'll want to buy our oil and make fabulous things for their families," Candy says. "The first person who tried one said, 'I don't want to make these, I want to buy them from you!' And that's how we got started."

Seely products—including mint patties, mint bark, candy canes, ribbon candy and mint meltaways—can be found in every Whole Foods market in the U.S. and Canada; in New Seasons markets; in Fred Meyer stores across the West Coast; in Ralph's, a grocery chain in Southern California; and a host of individual stores, mostly on the West Coast.

Mike says a 2,000-store chain in Canada expressed interest at the end of 2018, and Costco may be interested in carrying their products. Cold Stone Creamery, Salt and Straw, and Portland-based Ruby Jewell have been using Seely mint oils in their ice cream. A brewery in Vancouver has used their oils in a dark mint stout.

The Seely manufacturing facility is in a trailer on the farm. The company employs several workers who make the candy, and label and package the final products. Production of mint patties—their most popular product—is ongoing throughout the year. They can produce 10,000 patties a day during slower periods or up to 23,000 a day when preparing for holiday orders.

Seeley's mint oils can be used in cooking and baking, as well as to help clear sinuses, provide relief for sore feet and muscles, and ease headaches. Its candy canes are hand-pulled, and the ribbon candy is made on a machine manufactured in 1902. Their teas are premium quality.

"We know and grow mint, and we know what a good mint tea looks like," Mike says.

The Seelys have embraced sustainable practices in their farming and manufacturing. Their chocolate is fair-trade certified. Their mint is sustainably grown and is non-GMO certified.

Warren is upgrading and modernizing the facility. He is integrating GPS guidance systems he designed and built; upgrading the stills, harvesting and trucking equipment; and mechanizing the packaging equipment. The goal is to increase automation and improve efficiency.

Mike and Candy Seely hold some of the candy products they manufacture on their farm near Port Westward.

Warren says having value-added products has really helped diversify the Seelys' farming business. He says mint farming is now a balance between finding ways to connect with consumers and managing a working farm.

"I'm looking at how to have a sustainable operation that produces the quality that I want," he says.

Getting the manufactured products to market takes a lot of effort, planning and know-how in areas of business not always at the top of the priority list for farmers, including marketing, sales and distribution.

"It gives us a different avenue for income, but at the same time it's a challenge," Warren says. "Working in the food industry is very difficult, especially dealing with distributors. It's definitely not for the faint of heart."

Mike says the mint business has really changed during his lifetime, but a lot of it is still the same.

"We harvest at the same time of year and use the same methods that my parents and grandparents used," he says.

The Seelys plan to launch several new product this year.

"It's really taking off," Warren says. ■

Order Seely products online at SeelyMint.com.

TAKING FLIGHT

Drones make Pioche resident's heart soar

Marshall Stackhouse makes his drone hover before guiding it to take aerial scenic photos. Photo by Morgan Stackhouse

By Dianna Troyer

Marshall Stackhouse's drone sounds like a bumblebee as it hovers in front of him. Maneuvering joysticks on a controller attached to his smartphone, he guides it hundreds of feet above him. Looking at his phone screen, he sees what the DJI Phantom 4 sees—a 360-degree view of Pioche dusted with the first snowfall of winter.

"Flying a drone, you see the world from a whole new perspective," says the Pioche resident, who began flying drones about eight years ago as a hobby. "The light at sunrise or sunset makes an amazing backdrop for whatever I'm photographing."

Marshall, 30, says he always wanted to be a pilot but couldn't afford it.

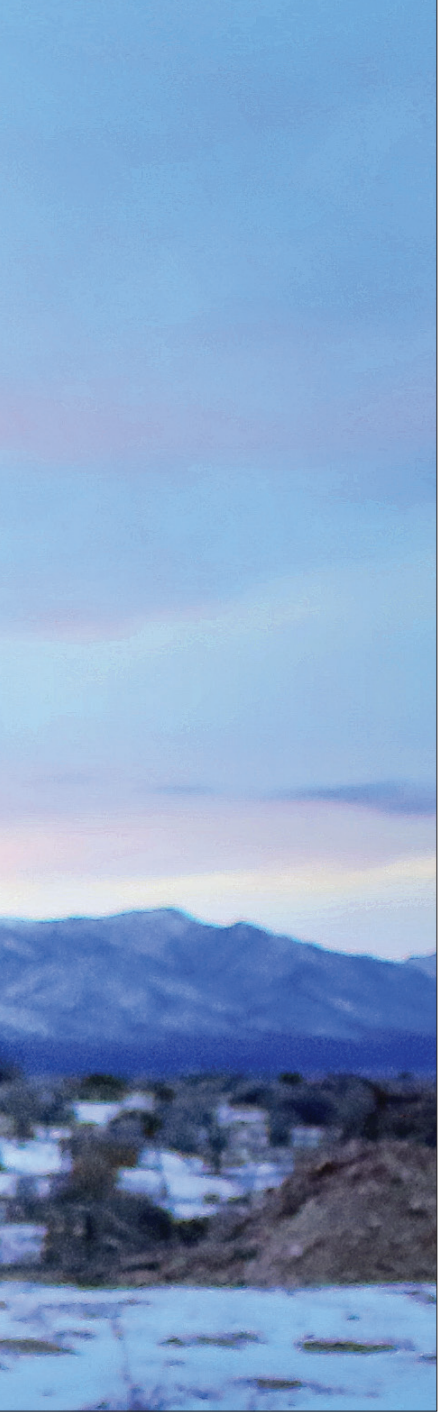
"This is a way to feel like I'm flying," he says. "A $1,600 drone is a lot cheaper than a pilot's license. Plus, it's safer to be on the ground."

Marshall has taken aerial photos and videos ranging from sentimental to practical. When his sister, Caleigh, was married in 2017, he gave her an aerial keepsake of the wedding ceremony and reception.

He sometimes produces aerial photos of people's homes and property for printing and framing. He's done work for realtors, who use the images to advertise homes they're selling.

A few years ago, when Marshall worked at the Caliente Youth Center, he used a drone to find juveniles who had run away from the correctional center. He also volunteered his time to help Lincoln County Search and Rescue volunteers find a missing person.

"We found the runaways," he says. "The missing person



Above, after snow fell on Pioche in January, Marshall Stackhouse was inspired to photograph the area with his drone. Below, a closer view of snow-covered Pioche at night. Photos by Marshall Stackhouse

wasn't where I was assigned to search, but they could eliminate it from the area that was in question."

Marshall's job as a driver for Jim Wilkin Trucking based in Panaca takes him throughout Nevada, where he sees the state's diverse scenic beauty, ranging from deserts to mountain panoramas.

"After I'm done working, I'll get my drone out and fly in the evenings," he says.

Once a flight ends, he starts the time-consuming task of editing his work.

"It takes me anywhere from three to 12 hours to make a 10-minute production depending on how detailed it needs to be," he says.

Marshall offers advice to would-be drone pilots.

"First, buy a small, inexpensive model and practice flying," says Marshall, who still has his first micro-drone.

After mastering the micro-drone, he bought a small stunt drone.

"I played around with that for a while and realized I wanted to get into videography, so I bought a drone with a camera," he says. "The smaller ones are a little harder to fly than the larger models, but that experience will make you a better pilot, so you won't lose or crash a larger, more expensive model. The more comfortable you become with the controls, you can focus on what you're filming and not the mechanics of flying."

He suggests using manufacturer-recommended batteries.

"A few years ago, I bought some cheap batteries, and they made my Phantom 3 blow up in midflight," he says.

To see what the drone sees, Marshall prefers using his smartphone.

"I tried using a tablet, but the processor was a little slower than my phone's, so there was a lag time," he says. "My phone can keep up with the drone's video."

Some pilots wear goggles to see what the drone sees.

"I'd rather use a phone screen, so I can have a wider view with my peripheral vision," he says.

As Marshall flies, he follows federal guidelines. Pilots cannot fly above 400 feet and must maintain a line of sight with their drone.

"People have really liked my photos and videos as much as I've enjoyed taking them," Marshall says. "I love flying. It's gratifying to be in the air. ■

Reps. Karin Power and David Brock Smith confer during a meeting of the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction.

Photos by Lynn Howlett

A Local Perspective on Carbon Legislation

Two rising stars in the Oregon Legislature bring different perspectives to climate policy, but share backgrounds in local government and a deep connection to their districts

By Ted Case

State Reps. Karin Power (D-Milwaukie) and David Brock Smith (R-Port Orford) are affiliated with different political parties, serve vastly different constituencies and are on opposite sides of the Legislature's centerpiece environmental issue this session.

But the two legislators have more than a few commonalities, besides sitting next to each other in their leadership positions on the high-profile Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction.

They share deep roots in local government, relentless work ethics and—refreshingly, in an era of deep political polarization—can disagree on policy without being disagreeable.

Power, co-chair of the Joint Committee, represents House District 41, where housing, child care and transportation are major issues for traditional working-class neighborhoods in Milwaukie.

A graduate of Lewis and Clark Law School, Power uses her legal training and passion for the environment for The Freshwater Trust, which focuses on innovative ways to protect river ecosystems. She has extensive experience in local government, including a stint as

The Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction is at the center of the Oregon Legislature's centerpiece environmental issue: a proposal to regulate greenhouse gases.

a Milwaukie city councilor.

Her background and legal training made her a natural fit for the Legislature's special committee to address carbon policy, but Power also brings a uniquely personal perspective to the climate debate—one of her highest priorities in the legislative session.

Power hails from New Jersey and saw the devastating effects of Hurricane Sandy on friends and family in the Garden State. Power said the storm was a searing experience—one she hopes Oregonians will never face.

"We have seen scientific patterns, but we haven't had entire communities leveled," she said.

As one of the key sponsors of HB 2020, which establishes a complex cap-and-trade program to regulate greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon, Power believes the state is primed to be a national leader in decarbonization.

"CO_2 is impacting how we live our everyday lives," she said, pointing out that smoke from summer fires choked the Portland area to a level where it was unsafe for her young son to go outside.

She also believes the bill can be crafted in a responsible way that does not harm Oregon's fragile rural economy.

"We can write this legislation in a way where the economy and environment are not mutually exclusive," she said.

Because of the scope of the legislation, the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction scheduled several meetings to hear testimony from a wide range of special interests.

Power noted the committee also planned field hearings to take testimony from Oregonians who rarely grace the corridors of the state Capitol.

"Rep. Smith and I value hearing from regular people," she said, adding that both have strong ties to their communities and service to them.

Smith, who represents House District 1, established strong ties to his "fisheries and forest" district along Oregon's south coast by serving in local government, including as chair of the Curry County Board of Commissioners. He was named co-vice chair of the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction after doing a deep dive into carbon policy during the 2017 interim, attending every work group session exploring various aspects of a cap-and-trade program.

"This allowed me a broad scope to see where we are moving and to craft conversations with a wide coalition," he said.

Smith said he ultimately wants a rational carbon policy that ensures "transparency, equity and fairness for all Oregonians." He has nothing but kind words about Power.

"It's a privilege to work with Rep. Power on this committee," he said.

However, he is not as sanguine about the economic impact of HB 2020—a 98-page bill that establishes an ambitious program to reduce carbon from industry, utilities and transportation sectors.

"Let me be clear," he said. "If this were to pass today, it would decimate our current state economy and devastate rural Oregonians," he said.

The stakes are high. While Power and Smith may not ultimately agree on the details of a carbon reduction program, they have not embraced the rancor and cynicism that has left the nation's politics deeply divided.

"I believe Rep. Power truly has a desire for a bipartisan effort that works for all Oregonians, not just those in Portland," Smith said.

For her part, Power believes she and Smith bring similar approaches to policy debates, even if their politics ultimately diverge.

"We cannot consider our colleagues to be wrong for representing people in their district," she said. ■