

# UCEDC Today!

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Union County Economic Development Corporation

## Union County Business

# Banner Bank: Active and Growing

Banner Bank, headquartered in Walla Walla, Washington, opened a La Grande Branch in the spring of 2007, with Jeff Puckett serving as Branch Manager. The branch staff was made up of veteran bank employees that had previously worked at another financial institution in Union County, and they felt that Banner would be a better fit for both themselves and Union County. The first branch was in a rented building on the Island City strip, and at the same time a vacant lot closer to La Grande was purchased for what was to be a future 3,000 sq. ft. branch office building. Their local business grew at a greater than expected pace, and it soon became apparent that a much larger building would be needed. That growth set the stage for what is now a two-story 6,300 sq. ft. building that was constructed by Mike Becker, General Contractor. The staff was very pleased that local contractors constructed the vast majority of this new building.

With over 36 years of Union County banking experience, Branch Manager Jeff Puckett grew up in Cove, and attended Eastern Oregon State College (now Eastern



Oregon University). In addition to his management duties, he heads up the branch's mortgage department and construction lending. Rhonda McLaughlin, with 34 years of banking experience, grew up in Heppner, and heads up the deposit operations team. The branch has two veteran new account officers, Wally Daggett, from Wallowa County, with 33 year of banking experience, and Amanda McFetridge. Additionally the branch has an onsite Commercial and Ag lending team consisting of Craig Nightingale, who was raised in La Grande, with 40 year of banking experience, and both David Stirewalt and Susan Bunch. The ten employees of the local branch have over 234 years of total banking experience. Jeff Puckett said that most of the employees of the branch have worked together for so many years that it truly feels like a family.

Jeff Puckett says "we have great clients and a great staff. It simply boils down to our staff taking good care of them and living by our motto: 'Do the Right Thing.' It is great to see your customers want to come to the bank, even if they don't have a

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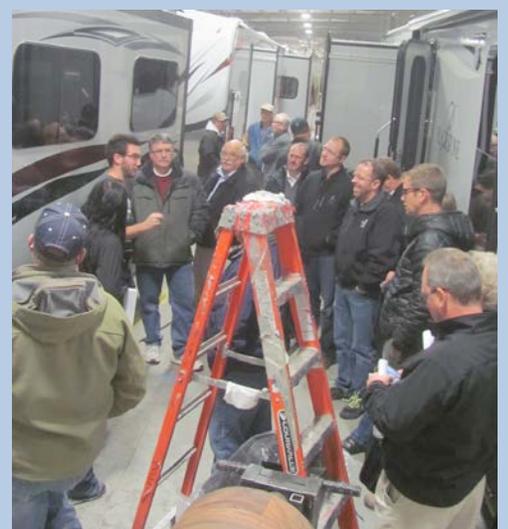
## Outdoors RV Tour

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 the Membership Committee of UCEDC conducted a tour of Northwood Investment Corporations Outdoors RV Manufacturing Facility adjacent to the Baum Industrial Park. About 25 people attended the event, including local Business Members, and elected officials from the County and Cities in Union County.

At the beginning of the tour, Kevin Pfeifer, Sales Coordinator, told the group that the recently expanded facility is now housed in several buildings, with a total of 148,000 sq. ft. of floor space. This includes a new 20,000 sq. ft. lamination building; built 2 ½ years ago, as well as a new 50,000 sq. ft. manufacturing building, built a year ago. The tour itself included a close up look at what was happening in both of these newer buildings. During the tour, Mick Pickler, Director of Manufacturing at the facility, also accompanied us.

In the new Lamination Building, which we

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### UCEDC Board of Directors

- Mark Davidson, *President*
- Russell Lester, *Vice President*
- Carrie Brogoitti, *Secretary*
- Mike Poe, *Treasurer & Finance Chair*
- Dale Case, *Past President & Property Chair*
- Robert Strobe, *Communications/Marketing Chair*
- Steve Anderson, *Membership Chair*
- Jeff Crews • John Lackey
- Tim Seydel • Greg Barreto
- Staff:** Dan Stark, *Executive Director*
- Mandi Case, *Administrative Assistant*

### Members

- |                                 |                                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A&B Enterprises                 | La Grande Family                   |
| Burger King                     | Eye Care                           |
| By-Rite Texaco                  | Legacy Auto                        |
| C&M Country Store               | Group- Dodge                       |
| Flying J Plaza                  | Legacy Auto                        |
| Oak Street Shell                | Group- Ford                        |
| Subway                          | Lewis, Poe,                        |
| Waldrop Oil                     | Moeller, Gunderson                 |
| Allied Mortgage Services        | & Roberts                          |
| Anderson Perry & Associates     | Loveland Funeral Chapel            |
| Avisita Utilities               | MJ Goss Motor Co.                  |
| B&K Auto Salvage & Recycling    | Mountain Valley Therapy            |
| Baggett, Griffith & Blackman    | Mountain West Moving & Storage     |
| Banner Bank                     | Oregon Trail Seeds, Inc.           |
| Barreto Manufacturing           | OTEC                               |
| Baum Smith LLC                  | Pendleton Grain Growers, Inc.      |
| Bearco Loop, LLC                | Red Cross Drug Store               |
| Becker Construction             | Reed & Associates                  |
| Blue Mt Auto Parts              | Robert Brooks Painting             |
| Boise Cascade                   | Roger's Asphalt Sandridge          |
| Bowman Trucking                 | Agripriests                        |
| Brogoitti Construction          | Scott's Heating & Air Conditioning |
| Cam Credits, Inc.               | Stephen Anderson                   |
| Carpet One/Fashion Floors       | Steve Joseph                       |
| Carrie Brogoitti                | The Observer Training              |
| Colkitt, Inc.                   | Employment & Consortium            |
| Community Bank                  | Tri County Equipment               |
| Davidson Machine                | Umpqua Bank                        |
| Dr. Eli Mayes                   | Union County Chamber               |
| Dr. James Kopp                  | Valley Realty                      |
| Dr. Joseph Petrussek            | WC Construction                    |
| Dr. Stephen McLean              | Wheatland                          |
| Dr. Welsey Rampton              | Insurance Center                   |
| Eastern Oregon Title            | William                            |
| Eastern Oregon University       | Whitmore                           |
| Ed Staub & Sons Petroleum, Inc. | Williamson's Insurance Service     |
| EONI                            |                                    |
| Frontier Communications         |                                    |
| Grande Ronde Hospital           |                                    |
| Guyer & Associates              |                                    |
| Hermann Financial               |                                    |
| John J. Howard & Associates     |                                    |
| La Grande Amusement, Inc.       |                                    |

## New Member Blue Mountain Auto Parts

Monte Reed, owner of Blue Mountain Auto Parts, says the reason his business joined UCEDC was because they felt it was an organization that they was trying to help the community. In July 1975, Monte moved back to Oregon from Dubois,



Wyoming and started the Auto Parts Business here in La Grande. Having been born in The Dalles, he chose to return to La Grande because it was a moderately sized community, with four seasons, good schools, and a lot of recreational opportunities that his family has enjoyed.

The experience of his 11 employees, the depth of the inventory, and the fact that they are open seven days a week (since 1985) are some of the things that Monte says sets his business apart from competitors. Jerry Baker (35 years) and Brian Colvin (25 years) are some examples of this experience. The business includes a full Machine Shop that specializes in rebuilding Automotive Parts, and as a NAPA affiliated dealership they also offer a full line of tools and related automotive equipment.

### Outdoor RV, continued from page 1

toured first, we were shown how the 2" bonded aluminum frame walls are constructed for all six models of the coach in a climate controlled environment. This frame wall is thicker than many other competitors' models, and also includes solid wood blocking within the aluminum frame tubing, which provides a substantial anchor for any fastener holding the unit together.

In addition to these extra strong frame walls, Outdoors also utilizes 2 lb. per square foot of high-density block foam in all their walls, rather than fiberglass batt insulation. This gives the wall a more rigid structure, while eliminating soft spots. The block foam also allows for a complete lamination surface for the fiberglass exterior coating, one that wood framed units with batt insulation cannot provide. In addition, the procedures used in the facility for binding these wall elements together, results in a tough rigid, well bonded, and fully tested wall unit.

In the new Manufacturing Building, where the three "top end" models are produced, we witnessed a coaches' heavy insulated and laminated floor structure being placed on a new steel frame chassis, a chassis that was constructed locally at the nearby Northwood Plant. We then watched as interior walls and cabinetry, built from scratch at the plant, were screwed (not stapled) into place on the floor structure. After the exterior walls were set on the floor, and heavily screwed together, we saw how the roof truss structure was screwed together on site, and then lifted into place. While all of this was taking place, others were constructing "tip-outs" alongside this assembly line, to be placed into the units at certain points in the process. An inspection of one of the final coaches revealed a luxurious and comfortable

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## Christine's Corner

# Workforce: a key factor in economic development

In November, I accompanied Dan Stark with Union County Economic Development, and Kristen Dollarhide with the Union County Chamber of Commerce, to FAB TECH, an advanced manufacturing trade show held in Chicago. Together, we represented eastern Oregon as part of Team Oregon. Participation on the "Team" provided us with an opportunity to represent Oregon at our booth, as well as meet with site selectors who specialize in guiding clients through the location selection process.

Along with two other colleagues from Team Oregon, I had the opportunity to meet with a representative from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) who is actively looking at Oregon as a location for several of his clients. This representative gave us a "checklist" of what he looks for regardless of the client's industry. **Available, trained workforce is at the top of the list.** Other factors included, access to highways/ports, and incentives (but only after they have narrowed the list to 3 to 5 sites).

Knowing the linkage of workforce development to site selection reinforces the importance of ongoing efforts to



*Christine Jarski, Economic Development Director, City of La Grande*

better prepare our students to enter the job market. Fortunately efforts are already underway in this area. The La Grande School District is taking a leadership role in workforce development and portion of the \$33 million school bond that was passed in 2014 will be used for the construction of a new Career Technical Education training center. The LGSD has engaged local industry and business owners to develop a curriculum, which will create a pipeline of students who will be trained in a variety of job specific areas through the multi-disciplinary fields. Three specific pathways have been identified including mechatronics, medical and agriculture/natural resources. These students will gain skills, knowledge and certifications to make them immediately marketable for positions in our local economy.

Other organizations are developing projects around entrepreneurial development and workforce development. It is anticipated that these projects will be launched over the next few months, so expect another update on our efforts to help develop training to meet the needs of our existing industry and new industry that may be locating to our area.

## Banner Bank, continued from page 1

banking transaction to do that day, but just come down to the lobby to have a cup of coffee, a bottle of water, or maybe a cookie or two, and simply read the magazines and visit the staff. Our bank is big enough to take care of any of our customers financial needs," Puckett says. "And we're still able to provide hometown customer service and meaningful community support."

Banner Bank offers online and mobile banking services, including snap shot deposit. They also provide their clients the ability to use any ATM in the world by refunding ATM fees at non-Banner ATMs.

The bank itself was founded in 1890, and has been serving the northwest for 125 years. At the time the La Grande branch was opened, there were 49 branches, and as of this year, Banner has grown to over 200 branches. This fall, the bank completed its acquisition of American West Bank, thus expanding its footprint over 5 western states, including Oregon, Washington, Idaho, California, and Utah.

The La Grande staff play a major role in helping to make Union County a great place to live, with their active participation and involvement in such things as (1) taking the lead in the county wide food drive, (2) service on the United Way board of directors, the Blue Mountain Conference Center Foundation board, the Community Connection Housing Rehab board, the Imbler school charter board, and the La Grande loan committee, (3) membership in the La Grande Rotary club, (4) sponsorship of the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show, and purchasing of Union County Fair animals (5) participation in the Cattle Women, Union County 4-H, Imbler FFA, Union County Crop Tour, Union County Cattlemen Association, EOU Foundation, and Grande Ronde Child Center, and (6) the delivering of Christmas trees each year for the Festival of Trees program.

In the past, Jeff Puckett served as a board member on UCEDC, and he now continues to serve on the UCEDC property committee. He believes that UCEDC plays a valuable role within our community because the organization is actively working to bring new businesses to Union County, help to expand existing businesses, and thus create more jobs, all of which are essential in trying to keep more of our youth here at home.



*The staff at Banner Bank*

## Director's Corner

# UCEDC Update

Every discussion of economic development in Union County eventually settles into a conversation focused on the need to attract new, family-wage jobs and new investment to the County. Our local program has been both responsive to business leads forwarded to us by Business Oregon, and proactive in seeking new business leads. To be successful in the long term, we need to understand business attraction requires an investment in time and dollars and also patience. Why patience?

In 2013 and 2014, we received 33 business leads from the State of Oregon – businesses looking in Oregon for potential relocation or expansion sites. Of these 33 leads, Union County was able to respond to TWO of the leads (6%). Why only two leads? Most of the leads disqualified Union County as a potential site because the company was (1) looking only for an existing building greater in size than any available building in the county; (2) was only interested in siting along I-5 or U.S. 97 (Bend/Redmond); and/or (3) needed to site near a commercial airport or a university with graduate programs in science and engineering. To add to the frustration, which often accompanies these efforts, both the leads we responded to in 2013 and 2014 failed to take the next step of identifying a short list of communities to visits.

On a brighter note, 2015 has seen our ability to actually respond to leads improve, at least in relative terms. To date, we have been able to respond to three leads out of the thirteen leads we have received (23%). Of these three opportunities, one is very active and for the other two, we are still awaiting a definitive yes or no as to Union County making the short list for site visit. Two of the three positive leads have been from companies that targeted Union County and specifically requested we provide them

additional information. The third lead is a lead we generated proactively by participating with Team Oregon at FabTech 2015.

FabTech is the largest trade show for advanced metal fabrication. This year the event was in Chicago November 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. The 2015 trade show had 1,800 exhibitors and over 40,000 attendees. Union County joined representatives of nine other Oregon jurisdictions and organizations to participate in a booth at the show talking to show attendees about Oregon, walking the show floor meeting exhibitor companies, and visiting with professional site selectors in the Chicago area.

Attending from Union County were myself, Christine Jarski, Economic Development Director for the City of La Grande, and Kristen Dollarhide, Executive Director of the Union County Chamber. For Kristen and me this is the second year we have attended FabTech. We left this show with a number of company contacts to follow up with and one active lead generated from a site selector visit– Project Everest – a manufacturer and assembler of equipment. One big advantage to our participation in Team Oregon at FabTech is this lead was reserved for only those jurisdictions attending the show.

The record shows Union County cannot only be reactive to leads forwarded by Business Oregon. We need to also proactively generate our leads through attendance at trade shows such as FabTech and continue to cultivate our contacts with professional site selectors.



*Dan Stark, Executive Director, Union County Economic Development Corporation*

## Outdoor RV, continued from page 2

interior, and fully enclosed fiberglass exterior, of a well built coach.

Outdoors RV's products are what they refer to as "Climate-Designed Four Seasons, Mountain Tough RV's." The majority of the sales are made to customers who are looking for a "top of the line coach," and are willing to pay more for one. Besides the heavier and more rigid wall construction, some of the additional outstanding features of these coaches include:

- Custom Built Cambered Off-Road Chassis, with a Rubberized Suspension System
- Triple Layered Four Seasons Roof Insulation Package
- Fully Enclosed Front to Back – Heated Underbelly with Double Mountain Floor Insulation
- Trekk Outdoor Tough Flooring
- Roto-Torqued Real Wood Cabinets



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## Outdoor RV, continued from page 4

The facility produces approximately 2,400 “Off Road Coaches” a year under six different brand names, including the high end Glacier Peak, Black Stone, and Wind River models, as well as the thrifter Timber Ridge, Creek Side, and Black Rock models. The majority of the plants sales are in the 11 western states, as well as western Canada and Alaska, with the majority being sold in Oregon and Washington. Outdoors RV employs 257 people, working a single day shift from 7 AM to 3:30 PM, at these

facilities. After the tour, one of the UCEDC Business Members, Jeff Crews, of EONI stated *“I learned a lot and was seriously impressed with the tour and the team running that plant.”*



At the end of the tour, a short hosted members appreciation reception was held in the facilities conference room, where drinks and snacks were served.

Our thanks go out to Ward King, the Plant Manager, and his staff, for providing us with a very worthwhile tour of their facility.



**UCEDC Today!** is being sent to you as a supporting member of the Union County Economic Development Corporation.

The publication is produced by the membership committee: Steve Anderson, Tim Seydel, Carrie Brogoitti, Jeff Crews, Greg Barreto, Dan Stark and Mandi Case.

- **UCEDC is a public-private partnership.**
- **Our primary goal is job retention and creation.**
- **UCEDC manages and markets its own and other “shovel ready” industrial sites.**

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## Board Member Profile

# Dale Case

The Union County Commissioners appointed Dale Case to the UCEDC board in 2000. He has held the offices of UCEDC’s Secretary, Vice President and President. He is currently chairman of UCEDC’s Property Committee, and was involved in both the Alicel Grain Silos financing and construction, and in UCEDC’s purchase and development of the La Grande Business Park.

Dale was employed by Del Monte Corporation for 31 years, retiring in 1999 from his position as Area Superintendent of the company’s N.W. Seed Operations in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.



While employed at Del Monte, Dale was transferred to Idaho Falls, Idaho, where he was an active member of Idaho-Eastern Oregon Seed Association, and served as President. While in Idaho, Dale joined the Russet Lions Club, where he served a term as the President. Since returning to Union County, he has served on the Oregon Ag Foundation, Oregon Wheat Foundation Board, Union County Budget Committee, Union County Weed Board, US Wheat Associates Board, and Oregon Wheat Commission. His appointment as an Oregon Wheat Commissioner has allowed him to visit with farmers and flour millers in China, Korea, Japan, New Zealand and Costa Rico in recent years.

Dale’s family includes wife, Wanda, of 33 years and daughter, Lynne, who works as an insurance adjustor and lives in Portland. Hobbies include hunting, skiing, golfing, and farming. The latter occupies most of Dales leisure time. He is “a farmer” at heart, and owns 160 acres in Union County, where he actively grows wheat and alfalfa; as he has done for the last 40 years. He retains shared interest and involvement in the Case Family Century Farm in Union County.