

Columbia River Gorge Business Review

November 2017

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Northwave makes a splash on waterfront

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Columbia River Gorge Business Review

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Northwave Sails, on the waterfront at Hood River, is
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Coffee supply company sets up shop in The Dalles

By **JESSE BURKHARDT**

THE DALLES — Post Canyon Coffee Roasters, a new company in The Dalles, is perfecting the art of roasting organic coffee beans at home and getting their product into the hands of local coffee lovers.

Co-owners Shawn Singhurst and Venus Allison, who have been married for 21 years, officially opened their new business in May, and the couple are slowly getting it out into the community.

"We're family-owned and operated," Allison said. "It's just me and my husband. This has been in the works for the past two years. My husband has a love of coffee; he's kind of a coffee snob and he wanted to make coffee like he likes it."

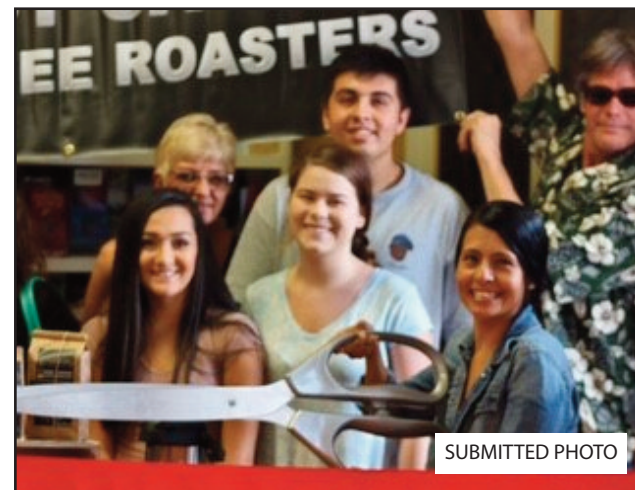
The partners converted the garage at their home on East 14th Street in The Dalles into an active coffee roasting center, which has been licensed and approved by the state. The roaster they operate can process about seven pounds of beans at a time.

"We're starting out small," Allison said. "Once we get more business, we'll get a bigger roaster."

Currently, Post Canyon Coffee is available for sale at just two locations, either by the cup or in bulk, at the Sweetheart Bake Shop, 515 Liberty in The Dalles, and at the Balch Hotel in Dufur.

"We also supply the local fire station," Allison said. "They are one of our clients."

The business imports coffee beans from six countries: Costa



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Venus Allison, co-owner of Post Canyon Coffee Roasters, wields the huge ceremonial scissors at a grand opening celebration for the new business at The Dalles Chamber of Commerce office on Aug. 11.

Rica, Mexico, Colombia, Honduras, Brazil, and Sumatra.

"We have six origins, and we roast them from light to dark. Each origin has its own way that it has to be roasted," Allison explained. "You have to figure out how to get the best flavor out of each one, and find out how they're best."

According to Allison, their most popular coffee is the one from Costa Rica. The beans they import from that small Central American nation are soaked in honey, which creates a very smooth finish.

"We also do a special four-bean blend," she said.

The married couple's love of bicycling spawned the name of their company, because it reflects a place they have enjoyed riding.

"We are avid mountain bik-

ers, and that's where the name, Post Canyon Coffee, came from," Allison said, adding that each of their coffees is named after a trail they like. For example, the brew that comes from the beans they get in Costa Rica is called "Hidden Trail."

Lately, Post Canyon Coffee has been setting up a booth for The Dalles Civic Marketplace, which is held at the Civic Auditorium (323 E. Fourth Street) on the second Sunday of each month. The market's next scheduled date is Nov. 12. At the Civic event, the company sells their coffee either by the bag or freshly brewed by the cup.

Post Canyon Coffee sells whole coffee beans for between \$10 and \$20 a pound, depending on where it's from. For those

See POST CANYON, page 3

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MCEDD Spotlight: Dwinell Country Ales

By THE MID-COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

For the Gorge Business Review

GOLDENDALE — Dwinell Country Ales, the newest member of the Columbia River Gorge's vibrant beer making community, recently opened the doors to their seven-barrel brewhouse and family-friendly tasting room in downtown Goldendale.

Founded by husband and wife team Justin and Jocelyn Leigh with longtime friend Graham Hogan, Dwinell Country Ales focuses on making Belgian-inspired beers and experimenting with local ingredients.

Dwinell Country Ales received a modest loan from Mid-Columbia Economic Development District that al-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

With the help of the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, Dwinell Country Ales has become a regional beer destination.

Even as Dwinell Country Ales focuses on making their Goldendale tasting room into a regional beer destination, beer hunters and craft enthusiasts alike can find their beers on draft in Washington along the Columbia River Gorge and at select bars in Vancouver. For more information, check out www.CountryAles.com or call (509) 773-3138.

The MCEDD Loan Program is available to entrepreneurs, start-up businesses and existing businesses in the five-county (Sherman, Hood River, Wasco, Klickitat and Skamania) Mid-Columbia Area. This loan program is part of MCEDD's efforts to strengthen and support the region's economy.

Contact Eric Nerdin at 541-296-2266 or eric@mcedd.org for more information on MCEDD's Loan Program.

lowed them to procure much needed equipment and, in the end, open ahead of schedule.

"Without MCEDD, we wouldn't have been able to be where we are," Jocelyn said.

"Financing from MCEDD has enabled us to create a unique space in Goldendale where

people can gather, converse, share a beer, and enjoy each other's company."

POST CANYON

Continued from page 2

who want pre-ground coffee, the company will grind it at no

extra charge.

Allison said the couple's long-term goal is to have their coffee blends available in numerous cafes and stores around the

Gorge.

"That would be a dream, if a bigger company wanted to carry our product," she said. We're trying to see what people

are liking and disliking. Our next step is to start going out and see who wants it."

Allison added that she and her husband are enjoying oper-

ating a business.

"It's been fun and a learning process," she said. "I didn't realize all the things that tie together to make it work."

Any cafes or restaurants interested in featuring coffee from this new local company are invited to call Allison at 541-980-3973.



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By ROSE MAYS

THE DALLES — We are quickly approaching that time of year. As the sun reflects on the morning frost, perhaps the glistening sparkles will inspire local small business owners to think, "I need to prepare for the best holiday season yet!"

One of the first things to consider is to prepare your holiday

Small Business Center: Plan for the holiday

inventory. While candy cane mugs or other holiday themed merchandise may get your customer in the holiday spirit, this inventory has a short shelf life and become obsolete on Dec. 25. Unless you're a retailer that specializes in holiday theme merchandise year-round, limit purchasing this type of product. Do add inventory that is considered gift items but keep to your core business concept. Your holiday

gift inventory should reflect your business concepts and price point.

Reflect on what are your top selling three or four items from past performance. Many times, these are the same items people will choose to give as gifts so stock these items accordingly for additional purchases.

Since holiday decorations takes up valuable floor space and display space, incorporate your merchandise

in your holiday decor. Not only is this a clever way to merchandise, it also draws attention to your product. In order that holiday décor is not disturbed by browsing, have a supply of the same merchandise displayed close by for purchase.

If possible, increase sales staff and extend your holiday hours for this shopping season. It is essential to train staff regarding key items and get them familiar with

locations since holiday décor may require merchandise to be moved. A well-prepared staff is a reflection of you and your business. Help set the tone for a festive holiday season. Offer your holiday shoppers a cup of coffee and a cookie, or some other holiday treat. Let them see how special they are to you and make new customers feel welcome. Most importantly, have fun and enjoy the activity the holiday season brings.

If you and your staff are enjoying the season, chances are your customers will enjoy shopping with you all the more.

Our staff at the Columbia Gorge Small Business Development Center is here to help you with your plans. Feel free to contact a counselor to help support the fine tuning of your marketing plan this season.

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Real Estate market offers mixed reviews, even with strong closing rate

THE GORGE — Real estate in the Columbia Gorge experienced a mixed market in September as they headed into the last quarter of the year.

Local agents say the Eagle Creek Fire “crushed” the market since it meant very little out-of-market during the fire.

Overall, however, out-of-market customers continued to be a big part of the buyers in the Mid-Columbia Real Estate area, a region defined by the Regional

Multiple Listing Service. Area real estate agents estimate that 50 percent of buyers are from out-of-market. Buyers who already live in the market make up the other 50 percent of buyers.

Sellers are facing a slowdown in buyers and the time their properties are on the market is growing.

“Some of these can’t be solved by lowering the price, there just isn’t a buyer,” said

Ross Henry, head of the Mid-Columbia Area REALTORS® community outreach team.

September had 119 new listings but that was fewer than August, when there were 151 new listings.

Closed sales were stronger than a year ago. In September, there were 83 closed deals while there were only 80 in September 2016. However, the



there was a decrease in closed sales from August, when there were 123.

For the entire area, the average market time was 51 days, according to the September Market Action report from the RMLS. In the city of Hood River, the total time a house was on the market in September was about 23 days. In The Dalles, it was 55. In White

Salmon, it was a bit longer at 147 days.

As fall and winter set in, area real estate agents expect a general slowdown in the market. They say it is a traditional and seasonal thing for the area.

The average sales price in September of homes within The city of Hood River, were \$412,600. In The Dalles, the average price was \$233,200. The White Salmon-Bingen area saw an average price of \$366,000.



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Northwave Sails specializes in custom made sails for windsurfers. It has been doing it for more than 30 years.

Catching wind

Northwave Sails sews up success at the Port of Hood River

By GINGER SHEPHERD

HOOD RIVER — Fun is a core part of the business philosophy at Northwave Sails.

That principle has helped the wind surfing business deal with turbulent flow as the wind-based water sport industry changed over the last 30 years.

Northwave Sails got its start in the early 1980s in the Seattle area, focused on making windsurfing sails. Founder Blake Richards had done some windsurfing but he had been primarily interested in hang gliding until he did some work with a friend. He had a good time and was hooked.

So he started making sails. It wasn't too long after that he moved his business to Hood River. The Columbia River Gorge and Maui were some of the hottest spots for windsurfing.

"Northwave grew fast," he said. In the 2000s, what Richards calls the windsurfing industry's peak, the company was



making about 2,700 sails and had about 50 employees.

But that was the peak. The wind brought changes such as more sail mak-

ers and new water sports.

"Kiteboarding diluted the market,"

See NORTHWIND, page 7

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NORTHWAVE

Continued from page 6

Richards said. "And the market was saturated."

Northwave had to adjust. Richards's partner Tim Ferrick said one of the things they started focusing on was building custom sails — not just stock sails. Customers can pick their sail colors and then it is built to fit them.

"It keeps it fun," Richards said of the limited production. It makes it easier to keep the production close to home. Every sail Northwave is Gorge-made — it is not outsourced. And that is very important to Richards as he points out that other companies throughout the U.S. have started to outsource their production.

With the focus on keeping production in Hood River, Richards also had to make sure there was work for his six-person crew throughout the year, since the fall and winter brings a slowdown in demand for sails. To do this, Northwave does custom commercial sewing projects.

Part of creating custom sails is building an awareness of what Northwave offers. The company has a demo program that allows windsurfers to try



PHOTOS BY
GINGER SHEPHERD

the sails before they buy them. The company will have a demo team out along the river equipped with sails. Windsurfers have the option to try it then. The company also sends out demo sails to windsurfers in other parts of the country.

The idea of trying the sail first is what brought Ferrick into the company. Ferrick has been windsurfing since 1975. About 15 years ago, he had an opportunity to try the Northwave Sail while out on the river. He tried one sail and then tried four or

five different sail sizes.

By the time he got back to the beach, he was exhausted but he had a big smile on his face because the sails were great. He was hooked and knew he wanted one.

"My wife looked at me and said 'no you're not,' Ferrick said, adding that he looked up at her and said "But dear, you try this."

After she tried the sail, she appreciated the smile and it was ok to be involved with Northwave.

Ferrick is an example of how Northwave is more than just a place to get sails. It is a community. It is a place where the customers are part of the process.

When the Northwave launched a new line of sails, it turned to its customers — its community — to name it. Ferrick said an electrical engineer proposed the name Sine Wave since the mathematical term refers to a perfect continuous wave.

The idea of building a community goes beyond customer-named sails. Richards and Ferrick will hosts coffee and doughnut sessions where windsurfers can come and talk about windsurfing. They have hopes of doing more sessions. Richards said next spring they hope to go beyond coffee and

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doughnuts. The idea is to make it more of a clubhouse.

"Just keep it fun," he said.

With a customer-focused approach and being Gorge-made, Richards and Ferrick found another way to make it fun for

them. Neither men take a salary from Northwave. Richards is quick to point out that both have other jobs that "pay the bills."

"This is my retirement job," Ferrick said.

Port property by the numbers

The Port of Hood River leases 209,000 square feet of industrial buildings in Hood River and Hood River County.

They currently have a vacancy rate under 1 percent. Most leases are five years or longer. Smaller properties come available periodically.

Their building portfolio has 14 buildings that range in size from 2,300 square feet

to 60,000 square feet. Eighty percent of the port's space is industrial; 20 percent is office space. There are two office buildings, three warehouse buildings and six flex buildings.

They also lease three commercial hangars and a FBO building.

Port of Hood River also manages the marina and airport.



ABOVE: Patty Thomas works on a commercial sewing project.

ABOVE RIGHT: Skip Whitley tapes a sail.

LEFT: Customers choose the colors for their sails.



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