

Columbia River  
**Gorge**  
**Business**  
Review

December 2017

Volume 9, No. 12



Tapping local brew

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Gorge Granite Works leaves its mark

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# Columbia River Gorge Business Review

On the cover:  
Mark Gunter poses in his Gorge Granite Works studio in Hood River. See story, page 6.



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## Set new goals as you celebrate your success

**By Rose Mays and  
Rick Leibowitz**

As we approach the end of 2017, many business owners reflect on the goals they set for their business for the past year. If you achieved or surpassed your goal, it will be a time for celebration for you, your staff, your family and sometimes even your vendors. It is a time to thank everyone involved in your business for helping you be a success. This is when you and your staff share in the excitement of achieving business and, perhaps, personal accomplishments. Celebrate the moment with them!

Even if you did not have any goals for 2017, it's never too late to make this the best holiday season that your business has ever experienced.

Creating a celebratory atmosphere with your workers, vendors, and your customers can help improve morale at the least and will more likely lead to an enhancement in your sales performance and productivity.

If you haven't established any goals yet, there are five elements needed for a goal to lead to a successful fruition. Remember to use the SMART acronym. The goal must be specific, measurable, achievable,



relevant, and time bound. For example, a daycare provider may decide that she would like to take her business to the next level. Will she achieve her goal? Most likely not since this is a fairly vague goal.

Perhaps she may say that she would like to go from having \$3,000 net income per month to \$3,500 per month in revenues; or maybe she could say that she would like to go from having an average of 6 children under her care per week to 7 children per week within 6 months. In this case, the goal would clearly be within her reach, it has a measure of success and a timeline in place for achievement.

With closely held small businesses, we suggest having a monthly measure of some key areas such as revenues or expense budgets to ensure that things are staying on track.

Determine what you want to accomplish towards your goal at end of each month in order to help keep you on schedule.

If monthly does not work for your business, maybe create a quarterly review and consider using an outside set of eyes, like your business counselor at the CGCC Small Business Development Center, a bookkeeper or an accountant.

At the minimum, every business should do an end-of-year reflection and set goals for improvement.

Remember your business goal can be anything from increasing your sales, decreasing employee turnover rate, writing a policy/procedure manual, or anything you deem beneficial for your business.

Consider including your staff input in determining your goals for 2018 along with how all of you are going to achieve them. Your employees are always your front line to success.

It's never too early to start thinking about what you can celebrate achieving next year.

■  
*Rick Leibowitz is director of the Small Business Development Center, Columbia Gorge Community College. Rose Mays is a program specialist at the Small Business Development Center.*

*They can be reached at (541) 506-6120.*

## Fitzgerald joins Chronicle staff

THE DALLES — I'm excited to introduce myself as the newest addition to the staff at The Dalles Chronicle.

I grew up in Hillsboro as the second of three girls. My hobbies include cooking, chilling with animals like a Disney princess, and traveling however far and frequently I can afford.

I graduated from the University of Portland this past May with an English literature degree, nearly \$30,000 in debt, and a desire to do work that I care about — all of which

bring me here, to the Chronicle.

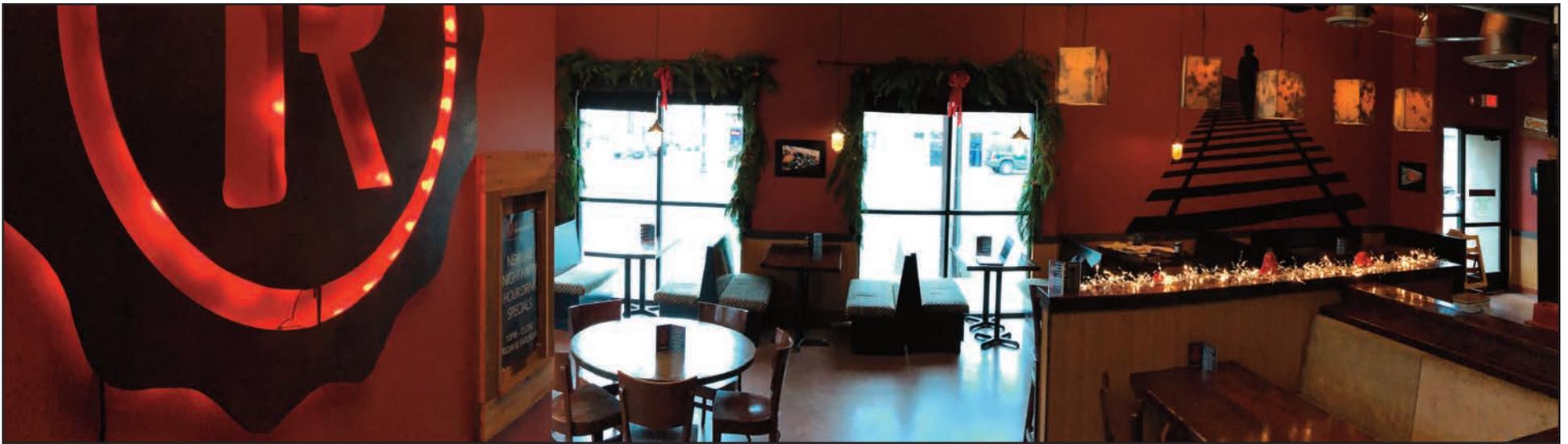
I've had a passion for stories since I picked up my first book (Goodnight Gorilla, by Peggy Rathman) and have been writing my own since I was old enough to hold a pencil. Once I got a taste of storytelling, my life became a whirlwind of finding new stories and ways to tell them, and eventually I branched out into photography and video.

Stories — fiction and non-

*See Fitzgerald, page 4*



Emily Fitzgerald



# MCEDD Spotlight: Rivertap Pub

## By the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

For the Gorge Business Review

**THE DALLES** -- Tom and Holly Wood had the idea that The Dalles needed a community gathering place where people can enjoy foods and beverages crafted in the Columbia River Basin, enjoy music from local artists, and connect with each other in a comfortable atmosphere.

Rivertap Restaurant and Pub received a loan from MCEDD to start up this concept in 2009. Since that time, Rivertap has become all that and more for The

Dalles: it is a focal point of activity for the Historic Downtown The Dalles East Gateway, an area that has been struggling with urban renewal for over two decades.

This MCEDD loan also helped with the construction of the 4,391-square foot commercial building at 703 E. 2nd Street that is home to Rivertap Restaurant and Pub.

"We love our customers!" was a theme for Rivertap's radio ads last year as it speaks to how focused Rivertap is on the customer experience and making people feel at home.

"Rivertap really created mo-



SUBMITTED PHOTOS  
Rivertap offers a place for customers to grab some food and taste local beer.

mentum in the community to use the historic downtown the way it was designed. A business designed to fill this need came true with the help of MCEDD."

Rivertap Restaurant and Pub is open Sunday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., plus Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to Midnight for American grill fare, regional beers and live music at this warm, upbeat sports pub.

You can find out more infor-

mation by calling 541-296-7870 and at their website at [www.rivertap.com](http://www.rivertap.com) or look them up on Facebook.

The MCEDD Loan Program is available to entrepreneurs, start-up businesses and existing businesses doing business 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](mailto:eric@mcedd.org) for more information on MCEDD's Loan Program.



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## FITZGERALD

Continued from page 2

fiction alike, in whatever form they take — are how I believe we bring communities together, solve problems, and connect to one another. For me, journalism is a way to get to know people of all different backgrounds and, ultimately, to be a force of good in the world.

I look forward to making my mark at the Chronicle and getting to know the stories of this community.

# BUSINESS NOTES

## Free parking downtown Dec. 11-26

The City of Hood River's downtown free parking period runs Dec. 11 to Dec. 26. Time limits will be enforced, along with other violations.

## The Darling Boutique moved to Oak

The Darling Boutique owner Rachel McAllister announces that her shop, located for several years on Third Street, has recently moved to a new location at 104 Oak St.

## Art on Oak gallery adds artists

Art On Oak in Hood River has added artists Mark Nilsson, painter and muralist, and Mary Mosier, who transforms discarded items. The gallery, at 302 Oak, now has 30 artists displaying works from oil paintings to painted kitchen towels. The gallery will be open during downtown holiday festivities Friday night, with complimentary warm drinks and artists on hand, and will start extended hours on Dec. 13.

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## October Building Permits

### HOOD RIVER COUNTY Commercial Structural

Port of Cascade Locks, 170 NE Herman Creek Lane, Cascade Locks – Sprinklers for flex

Catapult LLC, 1500 Osprey Drive, Hood River – Tenant improvements

Mt. Hood Forest Products, 4865 Highway 35, Mt. Hood Parkdale – Dry pipe sprinkler system

Thunder Island Brewing, 515 NW Portage Road, Cascade Locks – Solar roof mount

Meadows North LLC, 14040 Highway 35, Mt. Hood Parkdale, -- Gateway Sign Replacement

### Residential Structural

Andrew and Margo Fowler, 5800 Miller Road, Mt. Hood Parkdale – Bonus room

Elaine R Adsit and Stephen Delaere, 4450 Firwood, Hood River -- Replacement dwelling including basement

Loren T & Tina Hightower, 4165 Douglas Fir Drive, Hood River – New single-family dwelling

Osprey Homes, LLC, 968 SE Windsong Drive, Cascade Locks – New single-family dwelling

Osprey Homes, 956 SE Windsong Drive, Cascade Locks – New single-family dwelling  
Dennis and Janet Bloom, 3880 Sherrard

Road, Hood River – New single-family dwelling

Elaine Adsit and Stephen Delarere, 4450 Firwood, Hood River – New detached carport

Chapman LLC, 4290 Alpenglow Drive, Hood River – Roof mounted solar array

Magdalen Bouvard, 3625 Dee Highway, Hood River – New pole barn

Zachary and Holly Yoder, 1415 Country Club Road – New pole barn

Osprey Homes LLC, 75 SE Sheridan Street, Cascade Locks – New single-family dwelling

Neal and Linda Thornton, 3849 Neal Creek Road, Hood River -- New pole barn

Daniel Bubbs Trustee, 1270 Tucker Road,

Hood River – New carport

Joseph and Mari Beth, 3296 Aga Road, Hood River – Remodel

### CITY OF HOOD RIVER Commercial Structure

Horse Sense Land and Development Co., 115 State Street, Hood River – Two-story addition to northside of existing building

Nichols Office LLC, 33 Nichols Parkway, Hood River – Fire sprinkler alteration

Nichols Office LLC, 33 Nichols Parkway, Hood River – Design and install fire detection and alarm system

Frances M Schlosser Trustee, 6 Oak Street, Hood River – Demolition of existing building

due to fire damage

Providence Health System, 1125 May Street, Hood River – Remove and replace concrete steps and sidewalks

Kathryn Scheer, 505 A 17th Street, Hood River – Addition to single-family dwelling

Hood River Residential LLC, 709 Oak Street, Hood River – New two-family dwelling

Mark and Susan Deresta, 1016 Columbia, Hood River – Kitchen remodel

Lizabette Olberding, 101 State Street, Hood River – New opening in existing bearing wall for fireplace

Tegner and Tabitha Weiseth, 1820 May Street, Hood River – Opening kitchen wall

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# Roots etched in stone

*Gorge Granite Works keeps busy installing slabs in Gorge homes, businesses*

By GINGER SHEPHERD

THE DALLES — Mark Gunter just couldn't get away from his roots.

The Georgia native came to the Columbia Gorge in the 1990s to work with the Army Corps of Engineer as a limnologist — a scientist that studies fresh water, or inland waterways. He focused his research on water quality.

At the time, he wanted very little to do with granite. And it is easy to understand why. Gunter grew up in the granite capital of the world, Elberton, Ga., and many of the people he knew worked in, with and on granite.

"I moved 3,000 miles to escape granite work," Gunter said.

He worked with the corps until the early 2000s. The change came when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast and the Army Corps of Engineers' priorities shifted and along with that change meant research dollars went to other locations. For Gunter, it meant a change.

The corps offered him new assignments, but they were all in the south -- like Mississippi or South Carolina. He wasn't interested. He had



fallen in love with the Columbia Gorge.

So what to do? Gunter continued working as a limnologist — just as a contractor. It was in 2006

that he was approached to do granite work in three townhouses. One job lead to another and then to another. Gorge Granite Works was born.

Mark Gunter started Gorge Granite Works in 2006 after he was asked to install granite in three townhouses. Since then, business has been steady.

PHOTO BY GINGER SHEPHERD

Workflow is steady at Gorge Granite Works. It keeps crews busy, but it also allows Gunter to keep his operation the size that he wants — small and in the family. His crew is about four people. His wife works with him and another relative does the bookwork.

The small crew means he can work with team members and ensure quality craftsmanship and that the stonework will last. For instance, weak spots can happen when sinks are cut out of the stone. Gunter and his crew reinforce the spots with steel.

Gunter and his crews also stay up on current trends and know how to incorporate them into their customers' homes. In homes that have a modern look, some customers want an effect

*See Granite, page 7*

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## GRANITE

*Continued from page 6*

called waterfalling. When this is done, the craftsmen install the granite counter top and then side piece. It is mitered where the edges meet, and the pattern

is matched — creating this constant flow of granite.

For Gunter, working with granite is more than just installing. It is about the customers and material.

Many people don't always think that granite — or stone —

is doable. Gunter said the material is affordable and is low maintenance. He gets to help them find the right stone for them and their budget.

When the finished product is done, Gunter gets to watch the reactions. The best reactions come when Gunter and his crew are part of a remodel project. In these cases, the customers are overcome. Many didn't think their kitchens — or bathroom — could look a certain way.

Finding the stone for projects is fun too. Gunter's granite and marble come from all over the world. Some from South American, some from Italy. In his shop on Crates Way, there are two large slabs of Italian marble.

Where it comes from is part of the adventure. The colors and variety are something spectacular. He recently sourced a piece of stone called Van Gogh. The stone offer vibrant colors and swirls and is very unique. It is also very expensive, Gunter said.

Offering beautiful stone to change a room is one thing Gunter can do with granite. He can also help a customer remember a loved one that has died. Gorge Granite Works can source granite that is ideal for monument stones. His crew then uses specialty software to

LEFT: The Van Gogh granite is special with its blue and rust colors.

BELOW LEFT: A miter saw makes a cut into stone. With the right tools, Gunter crews can make a piece of stone fit any space.

RIGHT: Crews weld steel supports before installing a granite desk.

design the headstone.

While granite has allowed Gunter to make a living and offer something special to customers, it has given him something more. Through the work, Gunter has a new appreciation for granite and home.

When most of us visit larger cities — even just Portland — we enjoy the monuments made of granite or note how beautiful buildings that feature granite cornerstones or floors, or other features are. Gunter sees something more.

He knows the work that went into getting the stone and working the stone to fit a space or become art.

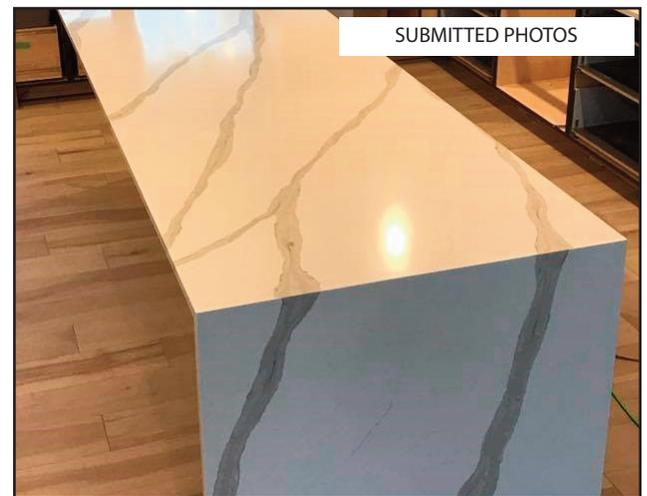
He also feels a little closer to his father, who was a granite architect and helped put some of those stones in place.

When Gunter sees those stones, he home.

Gorge Granite Works keeps up with the latest trends in stonework. One trend they have perfected is the waterfall — where stone is mitered and provides a continuous look from floor to counter top.

Mark Gunter, owner, says this trend can be found in modern kitchens.

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# TV helps bake up sweet reality

By **JESSE BURKHARDT**

**THE DALLES** — The SweetHeart Bake Shop is making customers happy around the Columbia River Gorge thanks to a television program that enticed a married couple, Jason and Amiee Blevins, to bake up a fresh idea for a new business venture in The Dalles.

According to Amiee, a few years ago they were both working in retail jobs, and not real enthusiastic about it, when something serendipitous happened.

"We were sitting on the couch watching 'Cupcake Wars,' and I told Jason I had no idea what I wanted to do for work in the future," Amiee said. "He told me I should make cupcakes, and I started laughing. And then I stopped laughing and thought about it."

Amiee said she started making small cupcakes for various events, and people kept ordering them, so she decided to go to school to enhance her skills. She subsequently graduated from the Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Portland.

For about five years after that, the couple set up booths at Portland Farmers' Markets, but they eventually realized they wanted something more permanent.

A visit to look at property in The Dalles changed everything.

"We wanted a little bakery and missed the small towns," Amiee said. "I wanted the cutesy, live-above-your-business dream. We fell in love with this house. We were here five minutes and knew this was it. And the community welcomed us with big hearts and arms."

This year, with the holidays coming up, the SweetHeart Bake Shop plans to create a special treat for its customers, and the owners hope to see more visitors from Hood River, White Salmon, and elsewhere around the Gorge.

"We'll be offering holiday sugar cookie kits," Amiee explained. "People can take them home and decorate them. And we will make pie dough that people can pick up and go home and make a pie."

Jason pointed out that their pie dough has a stellar reputation.

"We were named the best pie-maker in the state of Oregon by The Oregonian," Jason said. "We make good pie dough."

The Blevins' bakery is located at 515 Liberty Street in a home that has a story of its own.

"The house was built in 1865 and is a National Historic Building," Jason said.

In recent decades, the house

has been used as a restaurant, a café, and a business office. Now, the entire bottom floor of the 4,000-square-foot house is where the fledgling bakery business is, while upstairs is the couple's personal living space. That makes commuting to work a real snap, which is a nice benefit considering the work schedule a bakery typically requires.

"I'm down here between 3 and 4 a.m., depending on the day," Amiee said. "An hour or two later, Jason comes down and makes the coffee and does the last-minute work."

Jason joked that he has to handle a variety of roles at the bakery.

"I'm co-owner and everything else she doesn't want to do," he said. "That's my official job title."

The bakery is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays.

"On Sunday we sleep, and on Monday we do errands and get business done," Amiee said.

Amiee added that their next step is to start baking breads.

"Maybe a year from now we'll be making baguettes and sourdough," she said.

Amiee praised the involvement of Nan Wimmers, a local Realtor who helped the Blevins



Jason and Amiee Blevins own the SweetHeart Bake Shop, which specializes in "pies, cakes, cookies, and more, made to order with love." The bakery, at 515 Liberty Street in The Dalles, opened in April.

JESSE BURKHARDT PHOTO

purchase the old house on Liberty Street.

"She felt our business would be good for the community," Amiee explained. "She is all about the community and what's best for people in the Gorge. She helped push the deal through. If not for

Nan Wimmers, we wouldn't be here."

Amiee reflected on the changes she and Jason have shared over the last few years.

"I love to bake, and was always interested in it, but never believed I'd be doing it for a living,"

she said. "If someone told me 10 years ago I'd be living in The Dalles and owning a bakery, I would never have believed it. It's amazing how life can change. We can live here and have a bakery down below. It's a happy ending; that's the best part."

## Funds raised for Underwood Fruit employees

By **ELAINE BAKKE**

**BINGEN** — Three big announcements were made during the recent Fruta del Fuego.

The event, a benefit for the employees of the Underwood Fruit Company, saw a large gathering of area residents in attendance. There was a live auction, a pie baking contest and bake sale, games for the kids, and a yummy dinner and drinks. Unofficially, the event raised around \$5,000.

The most important part of the evening, however, was the announcement of two large donations and the updating of plans

for Underwood Fruit Company.

Washington Gorge Action Programs (WGAP) Executive Director Leslie Naramore started the evening out right, announcing her organization had agreed to donate \$30,000 of its discretionary funds to help Underwood Fruit employees. This money has not yet been earmarked and will be put in the general fund for basic needs.

Naramore said, to date, WGAP has helped over 80 families with rent and utility bills.

In addition, Naramore has requested funding from the Klickitat County Commissioners for a

financial literacy program which WGAP will coordinate in conjunction with Mid-Columbia Housing Authority, who, the housing authority will provide three financial literacy classes and WGAP will be doing in depth budget counseling and planning with employees who were laid off and are residents of Klickitat County. The contract is currently being drawn up for \$6,380.

The second announcement came from Skyline Foundation board member Bob Weisfield. Last Wednesday night the foundation, on a suggestion from

Weisfield, unanimously voted to donate \$25,000 toward meeting the healthcare needs of the families impacted by the Underwood Fruit fire. Exactly how these funds will be used and disbursed is yet to be determined.

"When the request was made to support our friends at Underwood Fruit Company, there wasn't a board member who hesitated," said Elizabeth Vaivoda, Skyline Foundation executive director.

"It's humbling to be part of an organization that gives back to our communities so freely and believes when we come together

we can make a difference. My heart is full."

When it was his turn to speak, Underwood Fruit and The Dalles Fruit Company Superintendent Ed Ing started by thanking all those individuals who have been so instrumental with the progress made by the company so far.

"It was a devastating fire for our operation. It was like losing your home," he said. "I want to publicly thank all those who helped."

He then thanked the 15 fire departments who were on site to fight the blaze, Bingen Mayor

Betty Barnes who offered the company the use of Bingen City Hall for its temporary office headquarters, and Klickitat County EMS, which provided support and help wherever it could.

"We're going to rebuild as quickly as possible," Ing said. "We intend to stay in the community as a cherry, pear and apple packer. Our number one goal is re-employ all of our people."

He further stated Underwood Fruit Company plans to be back in business by next year with buildings in place for next August's crops.

# Dear ARTERY

They said it was a bad block. I said it was a good thing they knew how to tackle the issue. Because I'm taking a pass on this part of my family history.

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James

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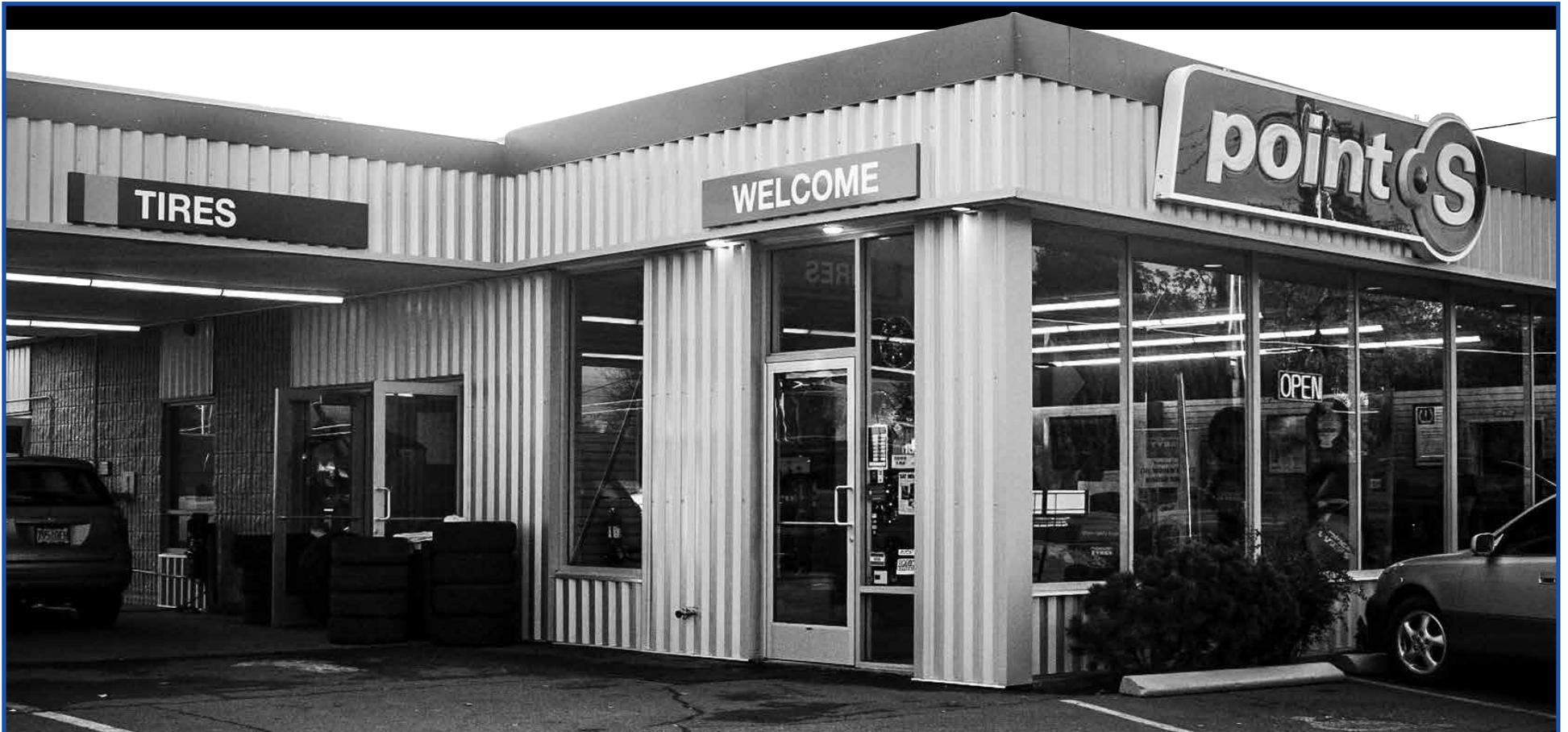
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