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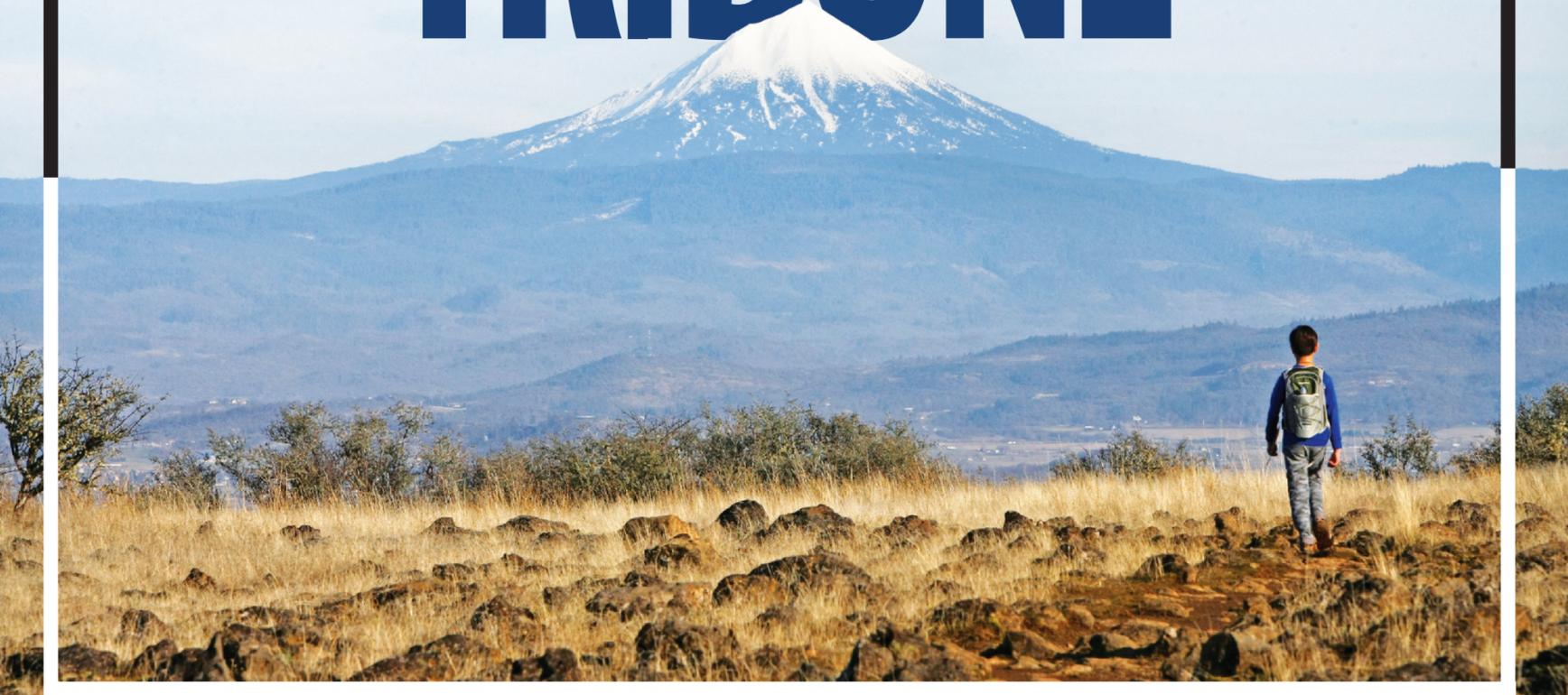
ROGUE VALLEY TRIBUNE

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ROGUE VALLEY TRIBUNE



We are here to cover local news: Tribune site already live; newspaper begins Feb. 18

BY DAVID SMIGELSKI
Rogue Valley Tribune

Our mission starts with our name, the Rogue Valley Tribune. We are a new news operation with plans to cover the Rogue Valley like a blanket of February fog.

Big picture: We expect to be the most authoritative news source from the Rogue River to Mount Shasta and from the Cascade crest to the Southern Oregon Coast.

Full disclosure from the Department of Don't Over-Promise: We can't do a comprehensive job of covering an area that large right out of the gate, and we know it. So, we're going to start where we're based — Medford — and radiate outward to Central Point, Jacksonville, Phoenix, Talent, Eagle Point and other communities of the Rogue River and Bear Creek valleys.

We'll reach into the Applegate, Prospect, Butte Falls and the communities of the upper Rogue. And we'll work with our friendly competitors and

colleagues at Ashland.News to cover the home of Southern Oregon University and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

We will strive to be a mirror of the community, telling your stories and helping all of us make sense of it.

We will be a digital news operation first and foremost. We will cover stories fast, as they happen, and promptly get them up on our site, rvtrib.com, seven days a week.

We'll share those stories through every social media channel at our disposal to make sure you get the news as it breaks. The beauty of social media is that it allows readers to share stories at the speed of light with their friends and family, and allows people to provide instant feedback that adds to the depth and reach of the stories.

Anybody who lived through the Alameda Fire knows how important it is to communicate with each other quickly and not depend on others to save us.

See [RV Tribune / A2](#)



Photos by Jamie Lusch \ Rogue Valley Tribune

The new Rogue Valley Tribune will be located inside the iconic JC Penney building in downtown Medford. TOP: A hiker looks out at Mount McLoughlin Wednesday from the top of Lower Table Rock.

The Rogue Valley Tribune's first subscriber continues legacy

BY BUFFY POLLOCK
Rogue Valley Tribune

Before the Rogue Valley Tribune had set up shop in downtown Medford — virtually as soon as news broke that Southern Oregon was getting a new newspaper — Central Point resident Debbie Saxbury took to social media and began firing off emails to people associated with the paper.

Her mission: She wanted to be the Tribune's first subscriber.

Saxbury has history in this area. Her father, former Central Point Mayor William Saxbury, was subscriber No. 1 for the Central Point Times when it launched Dec. 17, 1964.

She wanted to continue the family tradition.

"I think I was about 7 when that paper started, and I remember my dad... always coming home and telling stories, talking about the paper starting up, and it was just such a big deal for our little town to have our own newspaper."

— Debbie Saxbury, Central Point resident

Saxbury said she was devastated when the Medford Mail Tribune abruptly closed Friday, Jan. 13.

But she was energized when news broke days later that Oregon-based EO Media Group, a family-owned company that publishes 14 newspapers in Oregon, would launch the Rogue Valley Tribune to continue local news coverage for the region.

One of Saxbury's posts reached EO Media Group Chief Operating Officer Heidi Wright.

"I sent her a message and said how happy I was they were coming here and that I would support what they were doing," Saxbury said. "I told her how my dad had been the first subscriber when we had a new paper come to town back when I was still just a kid."

Saxbury shared an old, yellowed news clipping with Wright that included a photo of her father getting a certificate acknowledging his status as subscriber No. 1.

See [Subscriber / A2](#)



Jamie Lusch \ Rogue Valley Tribune

Lifelong Rogue Valley resident Debbie Saxbury holds up a copy of the Central Point Times from 1964. Saxbury's father, former Central Point Mayor William Saxbury, was the first subscriber of the small town paper, and Debbie Saxbury is the Rogue Valley Tribune's first subscriber.

*** NOT AFFILIATED WITH ROSEBUD MEDIA OF MEDFORD OR ITS FORMER PUBLICATION THE MAIL TRIBUNE. ***

'BECAUSE IT'S IMPORTANT'

RV Tribune to focus on needs of Southern Oregon

BY DAVID SMIGELSKI
Rogue Valley Tribune

"For me it's like going back home," I told Gerry O'Brien, the editor of The Bend Bulletin, who was interviewing me about being brought in by EO Media Group to help build the newsroom and hire the staff of the Rogue Valley Tribune.

EO Media Group, which owns the Bulletin, Capital Press, The Astorian and several other papers in Oregon, mobilized as soon as the Mail Tribune closed. EO Media Group has been family owned for four generations.

They are true newspaper people with great reputations in the industry.

The Medford area is home to roughly 250,000 people. That's too big of an area to go without a newspaper, they said. People need news.

Their immediate focus on the needs of the community took me back to my roots.

When I started at the Mail Tribune 16 years ago, the paper was part of Ottaway Newspapers,

a family-owned company with several newspapers scattered around the country.

By the time I came on board, Ottaway was part of Dow Jones, the company that owned the Wall Street Journal, but the Ottaways were still involved with the operation and we considered ourselves part of the family.

For a little while. That was before we became pawns in a multinational media chess game that led me last week to a dusty mezzanine inside the historic JC Penney building in downtown Medford.

But I digress. In my first year at the Mail Tribune, Dow Jones sent a bunch of guys in suits from New York to take a stronger hand in our operations. They were fast talkers with big ideas about how to grow newspaper profits.

Among their initiatives was a plan to launch a series of magazines, websites and feature sections in the paper. The talk was about building audience, delivering a larger market to advertisers by having more places to sell ads.

They didn't say much about



David Smigelski

news or serving the community. They didn't offer tools or training to improve our news-gathering efforts. But they sure could talk about money.

A couple of years later, Rupert Murdoch, one of the biggest media moguls on the planet, decided he wanted to own the Wall Street Journal. He landed his prize, of course, but it came with a catch. He also had to buy the former Ottaway papers, now known as the Local Media Group of Murdoch's sprawling News Corp.

The first thing he did was put us and the other LNG papers up for sale. But the timing was bad. The Great Recession of 2008 had begun and nobody was buying newspapers. So, they took us off the market, and we got to be run by the people who owned 20th Century Fox and a bunch of British tabloids.

We felt queasy some days as we read international wire stories about phone-hacking scandals and other political activities around the globe by our owners, but for the most part they left us alone — other than laying off employees and selling off our property.

There was a stretch where they announced layoffs every quarter for something like 12 straight quarters. They sold off the Ashland Daily Tidings building and the

Tidings staff moved to Medford or began working from their homes. "Do more with less," was the mantra.

After wringing us as dry as the Agate Desert in August, News Corp sold us in 2013 to Gatehouse, the largest owner of newspapers in the U.S.

When Gatehouse came to town, they told us, "We know you can't do more with less. So, we're going to do less with less."

How do you do that? Economies of scale. Leveraging. Lay off the people who lay out the pages. Build the Medford paper in a design center in Texas that does the layout for 100 other papers or more.

Lay off the people who answer the phones in Medford and farm the work out to India. Stuff like that. We bled people.

But we published listicles. They loved listicles — "10 places to spend New Year's," "5 ways to lose weight," "7 movies to see this month."

They had quotas for how many we had to publish every fiscal quarter. If we jumped through all of their hoops and checked all the boxes on their plan, we got a certificate saying we were in the Gatehouse "Inner Circle."

After four years of that, we were sold to an owner from the

East Coast who said newspapers weren't just dying, they were already dead and just didn't know it yet. He believed the future was news videos set to music.

"That's what millennials want," he said many times.

Millennials seemed not to agree, and the experiment unraveled. The Ashland Tidings was the first to go down.

Then the printed paper ceased last September. And the Mail Tribune was abruptly closed on Friday the 13th of January, with just two days' notice to employees.

Ten days later I was standing inside the JC Penney building in Medford with Bulletin publisher Heidi Wright, figuring out where to put desks and phones. As we planned, she used words I could understand.

"We know newspapers aren't a cash cow, but we're not here to get rich," she said. "We want to do this because it's important."

I wanted to hug her, but I thought it might be unprofessional. Crying was probably poor form, as well, but I couldn't stop a little mist from building up.

After 16 years I feel like I'm back home. With newspaper people. Family people.

Reach Rogue Valley Tribune editor David Smigelski at dsmigelski@rvtrib.com.

Subscriber

Continued from A1

"I think I was about 7 when that paper started, and I remember my dad ... always coming home and telling stories, talking about the paper starting up, and it was just such a big deal for our little town to have our own newspaper," she added.

Wright said having Saxbury reach out to pledge her support was a heartwarming reminder of the reasons behind the push to provide reliable news for communities around the state.

"She sent me the whole story of her dad being the first subscriber for that local paper, and I can't express how much that affirmed what I was sensing from the community from the get-go," Wright said.

"Having Debbie reach out was such a positive assurance that this is going to work and make sense and be of value."

Mayor Saxbury got his subscription for \$1 back in 1964, so Wright decided to give Debbie Saxbury the same deal for being RV Trib's first subscriber and looks forward to presenting Debbie with a "First Subscriber" certificate.

Saxbury made a trip to the Southern Oregon Historical Society library last week to retrieve the news clipping of her father. It was pure coincidence that the library is inside the historic JC Penney building, where the Rogue Valley Tribune will first make its home.

The Rogue Valley Tribune's website, rvtrib.com, is scheduled to go live Feb. 16. The paper will publish a printed edition three times a week — on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays — starting later in the month. The papers will be printed in Klamath Falls and mailed to subscribers.

"When the Mail Tribune went down, it was devastating," Saxbury said. "I started looking at what other newspapers were doing that this happened to, and I always had said, 'These guys need to look at the Bend Bulletin and what they had done to make it work.'"

The Bulletin is one of the papers published by EO Media Group. Others include The Astorian, the Baker City Herald, Blue Mountain Eagle, East Oregonian, Capital Press and Hermiston Herald.

"This is so important for our community," Saxton said. "And it was important for me to make sure I was first on board, showing my support."

Reach reporter Buffy Pollock at bpollock@rvtrib.com. Follow her on Twitter @orwritergal.

Starting from scratch, appreciating the support

EO Media CEO sees outpouring of enthusiasm for new publication

BY HEIDI WRIGHT
EO Media Group

When The Bulletin in Bend joined EO Media Group, it had the overwhelming support of the community as well as local investors to ensure that the newspaper would remain a voice for Central Oregon.

I have felt that same support in Medford and across the Rogue Valley as we embark on a new journey with a brand-new news

operation, the Rogue Valley Tribune.

My recent visit to the valley was likewise filled with support and well-wishers across the community, including a warm welcome from longtime colleague Patsy Smullin and introductions around town by Bob Hunter, former long-time editor of the Medford Mail Tribune, who came out of retirement for a few months to help us get started.

That enthusiasm and support extended to quickly securing office space at the Southern Oregon Historical Society building at 106 N. Central Ave. in downtown Medford. A big thank you to

SOHS executive director Ron Kramer and the SOHS board.

There is a lot of work ahead to get all 32 staff members hired and operations underway, but things are coming together and we anticipate having reporters and photographers out into the community capturing news and images of the Rogue Valley as you read this column.

Editor David Smigelski has hit the ground running, interviewing and making selections from a very



Heidi Wright

talented pool of newsroom candidates. It's heartening to see their commitment to community journalism and know they believe in the mission of producing credible, local, relevant content and want to be a part of this new venture. There will be familiar names and some who will be new to our readers.

As far as how we will operate, our focus will be to post stories to the website www.rvtrib.com first and then go into the print and digital edition of the newspaper three days a week on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Your subscription pays for our news gathering efforts, so please consider subscribing.

If you do subscribe, be sure to sign up for the digital edition of the print newspaper, which will be delivered via email by 6 a.m. on our publishing days. The printed newspaper will also be mailed with same day in-county delivery, beginning Feb. 18.

We are starting this venture from scratch and are not affiliated with the former Medford Mail Tribune, also known as the Mail Tribune that ceased operations on Jan. 13, 2023.

Thank you for your support.

Heidi Wright is the Chief Operating Officer for EO Media Group and Publisher of The Bulletin in Bend.

Our news staff brings experience and diverse skills

TROY HEIE, who has worked on Rogue Valley newspapers for 25 years, will serve as city editor for the Rogue Valley Tribune.

Troy most recently served as the copy desk chief at the Mail Tribune and previously was a reporter, copy editor and page designer for print and digital publications locally, starting at the Ashland Daily Tidings in 1993.

A journalism major at Cal Poly Humboldt, he also was a reporter for the Los Angeles Times' Ventura County edition in 1998.

Troy will work with Rogue Valley Tribune editors and reporters daily and also will help coordinate the Rogue Valley Tribune print publications.

You can reach Troy at theie@rvtrib.com.

A native Rogue Val-

ley resident with a lifelong interest in the arts, **ALISSA CORMAN** is the Features Editor for the Rogue Valley Tribune.

Her primary responsibility will be shepherding our arts and entertainment coverage online, and she will coordinate the Go! Rogue section that will appear in Thursday print editions. Alissa will make sure our entertainment and activities listings are comprehensive and up to date, and keep readers current on the region's theater, visual and performing arts, festivals, activities and live music.

"The Rogue Valley is home to me," she says, "and the arts scene here is incredibly strong. There's always something going on."

You can reach Alissa at acorman@rvtrib.com.

KRIS HENRY, the Rogue

Valley Tribune sports editor, has 25 years of experience serving the Southern Oregon community as a sports reporter and editor.

The former Mail Tribune sports editor, Kris has written everything from game stories to features to columns, as well as worked on the desk taking game reports and designing pages.

"Covering high school and community sports has always been a passion of mine," he says. "Being able to document those special moments in the life of a young athlete is a privilege and responsibility that I have taken great pride in since I got my professional start 28 years ago."

Kris was the 2022 recipient of the Media Award presented by the Oregon Athletic Coaches Association and has earned numerous



Kris Henry

awards as a sportswriter from the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association and Society of Professional Journalists.

He was national runner-up in the Associated Press Sports Editors 2018 contest for Breaking News.

Henry also proudly serves as a member of the Southern Oregon Sports Commission and Medford Sports Hall of Fame committee, and has spent nearly two decades as a youth sports coach and volunteer in football, baseball, soccer and basketball across Medford.

"It's exciting to be able to continue telling the incredible stories that stem from the amazing folks here in the Rogue Valley," said Henry.

A familiar name has been brought kicking and screaming out of retirement (and off the golf course) to be the Opinion editor of the Rogue Valley Tribune.

ROBERT GALVIN, whose

40-plus years in newspapers included 20 at the Mail Tribune in a variety of roles, will be responsible for writing editorials and columns for the paper, along with fielding reader submissions by way of Guest Opinions and Letters to the Editor.

"We have a vocal and politically diverse population that is passionate about local, regional and national issues," Rob says, "and I'm glad to be part of once again giving those voices a place to be heard."

A graduate of the University of Massachusetts, he worked at papers there and in Florida as a news reporter, sports reporter, columnist, theater and movie reviewer, and profile writer before joining the Mail Tribune in a management role in 1999.

See Staff / A4



Robert Galvin

RV Tribune

Continued from A1

Along with a fresh, constantly updated website, we will publish a printed newspaper on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays with stories that have been posted to our news site over the preceding few days. The paper will be printed in Klamath Falls and mailed to subscribers.

A newsletter version of the paper will hit your email inbox by 6 a.m., and the printed paper will hit your mailbox when the mail carrier arrives.

We'll have the traditional things subscribers say they want: Comics, puzzles, local sports, letters to the editor, outdoors cover-

age, as well as world and national news. If you see holes in this plan, drop us a line and we'll see what we can do to adjust.

The website will have all of the arts, music and entertainment listings you need to plan your social life, along with restaurant reviews, theater coverage, movies and more.

We'll also publish a weekly arts and entertainment section called Go! Rogue that will keep you current on happenings around the region, along with TV listings for the week.

The operation will be staffed with seasoned journalists — some familiar names, some new ones. We will start with 14 people in the newsroom and 32 people overall. We will launch as the largest news

team in Jackson County.

The website and paper will also flex their muscles with a robust mix of stories from around the state, because our company, EO Media Group, is a homegrown, family-owned company with established newspapers across Oregon — from Medford to Astoria, out to the Willows and across to Bend.

But our sweet spot is the Rogue Valley.

Our first home will be inside one of the most distinctive buildings in Medford, the 1947 JC Penney building at the corner of Sixth and Central, in the heart of the Medford Downtown Historic District. We'll be in part of the space formerly occupied by KidTime Children's Museum before they remod-

eled the old Carnegie Library.

The building is best known as the home of the Southern Oregon Historical Society library, and we're going to be their housemates.

If you have paid attention to the travails of newspapers across the U.S. in recent years, you probably realize that something special is happening here. Newspapers are going under by the week, but here in Medford we're going the other way.

Maybe we'll match our new office location by going down in history as the company that saved the Rogue Valley from being a news desert.

Reach Rogue Valley Tribune editor David Smigelski at dsmigelski@rvtrib.com.



Oregonians are generators of abundance. For 50 years, we've helped each other thrive. From safe shelter to art supplies, we've stepped up when someone needed support. Leaned in when they needed help. Dug deep when they needed food. Gave back, when given the chance. **So when the news broke that Medford was losing its local newspaper, the Mail Tribune, Oregonians once again rose to the occasion.** With abundance. The proof of which you're holding in your hands right now: the launch of the Rogue Valley Tribune from EO Media. Which tells us that in our next 50 years, **Oregonians helping Oregonians**, through thick and thin, will continue to lift us all. Cheers to you, Oregon. As your statewide community foundation, we celebrate our 50th anniversary in honor of you.

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HOT SHOTS



Jamie Lusch /
Rogue Valley Tribune
Bob Robinson fishes for
bull trout in the Meto-
lius River near Sisters.

Award-winning photojournalists join staff

The Rogue Valley Tribune's staff photographers have been casting their sights and turning their lenses on Southern Oregon for decades.

JAMIE LUSCH, the former photo editor of the Mail Tribune, has spent his professional career in the Rogue Valley.



Jamie Lusch

For the past 15 years he has photographed countless local stories, receiving 13 first place awards from the Society of Professional Journalists for sports, feature, portrait and news photography.

"Being a photojournalist is my dream job," says Jamie, a graduate of Southern Oregon University. "It is what I love to do, and I feel



Andy Atkinson / Rogue Valley Tribune

A snowboarder makes his way down the "Bottom" trail at Mt. Ashland Ski Area during the most recent snow blast.

lucky to have the opportunity to continue my career with the Rogue Valley Tribune."

Jamie's affinity for nature photography comes

from many years working in the outdoors.

"I worked my way through college as a fishing guide, raft guide, a tour

guide in Alaska, and then traveling and fishing in Oregon, Alaska, Mexico and Central America," he said.

See **Photos / A10**

Staff

Continued from A2

Rob is also known to readers for a succession of columns he wrote for the Mail Tribune on entertainment, culture, cats and general-interest topics, most recently the award-winning Sunday offering "Get Off My Lawn."

You can reach Rob at rgalvin@rvtrib.com.

After nearly three decades as a journalist and photographer, **BUFFY POLLOCK** prides herself on establishing long-term community connections and having a knack for reporting on unique and in-depth news.



Buffy Pollock

Buffy, who will cover a variety of beats, began scribbling stories and random bits of information into notepads at a young age and grew up watching "60 Minutes," local news broadcasts and reading the daily paper.

Buffy began her career as a freelance reporter for the Tampa Tribune in her native central Florida in 1996 and earned a multimedia (print and broadcast) degree from Polk State College in 2000. She came to Southern Oregon months later and quickly gained a reputation for in-depth reporting of news and topics of human interest.

Her favorite thing about community reporting is the ability to hold local government and other entities accountable and to help document stories of the people who live, work and impact daily life in the Rogue Valley.

"Bad days don't exist," Buffy says, "and every situation, no matter how good or bad, has the making of a great story."

ERICK BENDEL, who will cover social issues and health care for the Rogue Valley Tribune, has spent many years working as a journalist for the EO Media Group on the North Oregon Coast. In 2011, he interned at The Astorian

through the Snowden internship program and later worked as a reporter and features editor at the publication.



Erick Bengel

Long ago, he majored in English literature and minored in philosophy at Southern Oregon University, while working at Rogue Valley Community Television. He continued his education in Portland and went on to study journalism at Columbia University in New York.

While Southern Oregon is not his homeland, it is the first region Bengel ever thought of as his home. Along the Rogue River and in the shadow of Grizzly Peak he learned what it means to fall in love with a place. He looks forward to returning to tell its story, and be present at the birth of a newspaper.

Among **BILL MILLER'S** fondest memories of his Oregon upbringing are the days he spent listening to Mrs. Joseph, his elementary school teacher telling his class stories about Sacajawea, Lewis & Clark and others from the earliest days of the state.



Bill Miller

"She said each of us was a pioneer, and I think we all believed her," Bill says. "I know I did."

Along with the school days, Bill says it was his great-grandmother — who would read to him the letters of his Civil War ancestors — that permanently hooked him on history.

Bill, who spent nearly two decades at the Mail Tribune as a reporter and columnist, brings his passion and perspective to the Rogue Valley Tribune with stories about the region's past in a regular column.

"I try to find the humanity in the stories I write, the little things overlooked in a person's daily life," he says. "I prefer to tell the tales of everyday people, who so often have been forgotten."

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- Derek DeBoer
Owner/Operator



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CHEVROLET

Welcome to the Neighborhood

Quality journalism is vital to our region.
Having more sources of local news
available will benefit our viewers
and your readers.

NBC5 News and the Rogue Valley Tribune
may compete, but we are both dedicated
to achieving the same goal every day: to
provide accurate, balanced, relevant news
and information that directly affects us all.

KOBI-TV/NBC5 has served Southern Oregon
and Northern California for 70 years. We are
excited to have the Rogue Valley Tribune
join us in serving our communities now and
for decades to come.



News business buzzing over the launch of RVT

BY BOB HUNTER

For the Rogue Valley Tribune

The announcement that EO Media Group is launching the Rogue Valley Tribune newspaper and website in Medford elicited news responses and stories in newspapers across the country.

An Associated Press story on the news was published in dozens — and, quite likely, hundreds — of newspapers, websites and television news stations.

A cursory review on the Internet showed reports of the start-up published in virtually every daily newspaper in the state, U.S. News & World Report, and in numerous out-of-state newspapers ranging from the Seattle Times to the Connecticut

Post, the Tulsa World and the Houston Chronicle.

Why the burst of interest from so many locales for a newspaper opening in a relatively small city in a rural area of Oregon? No doubt it's a least partly due to the man-bites-dog nature of the story, the twist that journalists find hard to resist.

Failed papers are old news; a new paper launching, now that's something different.

And newspaper journalists in particular are happy to note a glimmer of light in an industry that saw more than 2,000 newspapers pull the plug on their presses between 2005 and 2021.

Following are comments from several media members and advocates,

from within Oregon and outside the state:

Francis L. Wick

"The closure of the Medford Mail Tribune is a reflection of the challenges local news organizations face today, culminating with nearly two decades of changes in readers' habits; long term conditioning of news on the internet as free and digital advertising being commoditized and controlled by just a few Silicon Valley tech companies. ...

"... (T)he long term success of the newly minted Rogue Valley Tribune will only occur through the support of local readers paying for subscriptions, participating in the news conversa-

tion, and local merchants purposefully engaging their local news organizations to service their advertising/marketing needs. Ultimately, the actions of local stakeholders, and how they value community news and information today, will be a hallmark reason why the Rogue Valley Tribune can serve the greater Medford area for years to come."

— *Francis L. Wick is president and CEO of Wick Communications, a family-owned, Arizona-based community media company with newspapers, websites, magazines and specialty publications in 11 states.*

Patsy Smullin

"I couldn't be more pleased that EO Media is

starting a newspaper here. It's a good solid company, Oregon-based, family-owned, conscientious — and they care.

"I think that newspapers provide a terrific community service. The information a newspaper provides helps the community understand the challenges it's facing. A newspaper can be successful by continuing to work hard, continuing to listen to readers, continuing to ask the community what it needs and wants. There is still a niche for newspapers, and radio and television and social media."

— *Patsy Smullin is president and owner of KOB-TV NBC 5, based in Medford.*

Mark Garber

"As a family-owned company, (EO Media is) able to take a longer view, and they have shown they put journalism first, even as our industry goes through this massive transition in our business model.

"EO Media has the deep journalistic values and Oregon roots needed to be successful in Medford. The community there just experienced what it's like to lose its newspaper. Many readers were mourning the absence of their daily companion. I think that experience will motivate readers, advertisers and community leaders to support EO Media's efforts to bring back what they had lost."

See **Launch** / A10

EO Media: Deep roots in Oregon, emphasis on local reporting

BY GERRY O'BRIEN

EO Media Group

EO Media Group is a private, family-owned company with deep roots in the Pacific Northwest.

The company, which has been family-owned for four generations, was previously known as the East Oregonian Publishing Company.

Its history dates back to 1908 when the East Oregonian in Pendleton and The Daily Astorian were under joint ownership. However, the first of the properties that would become today's EO Media Group was the four-page East Oregonian, established in 1875. Later, Edwin Aldrich helped engineer the purchase of the Astoria Evening Budget that eventually became the Daily Astorian in 1919.

Jumping ahead to today, the current EO Media Group owners are Kathryn Brown (4th generation); CEO Steve Forrester (3rd generation); Harrison Forrester (4th generation); and Susan Forrester Rana (4th generation).

More than ever, EO Media group is focused on its readers. Audience desire for credible news has grown exponentially, as have

ways to deliver the content. EO Media has become a "digital-first, then print" operation, including expanding coverage across a wide breadth of social media platforms. To that end, it offers digital-first content across 14 websites, Facebook pages, Twitter and Instagram, also via email. Its newly released ReDiscover Oregon streaming TV channel and website, rediscoveror.com, serves worldwide and regional audiences wanting to learn about what they can expect from a visit to Oregon.

EO Media believes in the printed newspaper and will continue delivery of hard copy newspapers in its markets, as it will in the Rogue Valley with three-day-a-week mailed delivery.

"Today, we are able to reach out to much larger audiences and focus on understanding their needs," said Heidi Wright, COO and Publisher of The Bulletin in Bend. "We listen to our readers and respond accordingly. We want to bring readers all the news that affects them, but not just the headlines; stories with context and insight so readers can act on issues affecting them and their

'Grit and Ink': A detailed history of EO Media

"Grit and Ink," by historian William F. Willingham, is about the Aldrich-Forrester-Brown family's devotion to community journalism.

The book focuses on the East Oregonian Publishing Co. (now the EO Media Group), taking readers from the rugged early years of Oregon newspapering to the present — from the dusty frontier to the digital frontier, from riverine Astoria to agrarian Pendleton.

The book's subtitle is "An Oregon Family's Adventures in Newspapering, 1908–2018," but Willingham opens with the EO's founding in 1875, a rough, risk-laden period in the state's history.

"Along with schools and churches, a newspaper provided an important measure of civilization and order," he writes. Having a newspaper "was a way of proclaiming that a town was real and here to stay."

Willingham explains how small-town papers survived uncertain early years, how they weathered crises — such as the 1922 Astoria Fire and the Great Depression — why some papers succeeded and others folded, and why they aggressively promoted the development of their towns. "If the paper's going to thrive, the community has to thrive, and vice versa," he said.

The book is available on Amazon and from various EO Media outlets.

Redmond Spokesman; The Bulletin in Bend; and The Other Oregon magazine.

In 2014, EO Media Group partnered with the Pamplin Media Group, which publishes the Portland Tribune and 24 other weekly and monthly publications in Oregon, to form the Oregon Capital Bureau, a co-staffed news team in Salem focused on government and legislative reporting. The bureau also publishes the Oregon Capital Insider newsletter and website.

With a combined readership of nearly 90,000 and about 160 full-time employees, EO Media is deeply committed to local news. Besides in-depth local coverage, Rogue Valley Tribune readers will get a larger picture of what is happening across the state from news shared among the EO papers as well as what is happening in Salem via Capital Bureau reporters.

"It is our hope that rvtrib.com readers will see the commitment of the company owners to keep community journalism alive in Oregon and support us as we work to connect them to their communities," Wright said.

community. It is part of our vision, to empower the communities we serve."

EO Media consists of the East Oregonian in Pendleton; Hermiston Herald; The Daily Astorian;

Chinook Observer; Seaside Signal; Coast River Business Journal; Capital Press in Salem; LaGrande Observer; Blue Mountain Eagle in John Day; Wallowa Chieftain in Enterprise; the Baker City Herald;

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The logo for the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association is a stylized map of Oregon composed of horizontal yellow lines of varying lengths, creating a grid-like pattern that follows the state's outline.

**Oregon Newspaper
Publishers Association**

Streaming video channel one more option for viewers, advertisers

BY GERRY O'BRIEN

EO Media Group Pamplin Media Group and EO Media Group have jointly launched a 24/7 TV travel channel filled with streaming video that highlights and promotes the wonders of Oregon.

Called Rediscover Oregon, the channel focuses on Oregon-centric places and events one can visit and partake in. Video content includes stories from Astoria and the Coast to Pendleton and Eastern Oregon. The channel features scenes from downtown Portland to downtown Bend, the Willamette

Valley and Medford in Southern Oregon.

Rediscover Oregon includes locally produced videos by local content creators and social media influencers. Topics include Oregon escapes, tips on places to hike, mountain bike, ski and where to eat or find good wines and vineyards. It explores some of the hidden gems in Portland and other cities.

This streaming channel can be accessed via a Roku, FireTV, AppleTV or other sticks that plug into the back of your smart TV set. Simply search for Rediscover Oregon. One also can go

directly to the channel by going to rediscoveror.com.

"We hope this encourages Oregonians and visitors to fan out and explore our home state, to get a better understanding of what we have to offer and why people choose to live here," said Heidi Wright, COO for EO Media Group and publisher of The Bulletin in Bend.

The Rediscover Oregon channel will reach 1.84 million readers of EO Media and Pamplin Media Group weekly using all their media assets — print, digital, social media and email.

The channel is still in

the buildout phase and will eventually offer geographic segmentation if one wants to learn more about the coast or other regions of Oregon.

The channel does offer a limited number of these video segments now for those who stream the channel on their televisions.

One of the goals of Rediscover Oregon is to partner with local content producers to highlight their videos about Oregon. Content producers can go to the Contact us page on rediscoveror.com to send an email about their videos and why they would be a good addition to the channel.

Launch

Continued from A6

— Mark Garber is vice chair and president emeritus of Pamplin Media Group, which publishes 22 newspapers in Oregon, including the Portland Tribune. Pamplin and EO Media have numerous business ties, including operating the Oregon Capitol Bureau together.

Brier Dudley

"EO Media is hiring a newsroom staff of 14 in Medford, which is relatively big in an era of ghost newspapers owned by hedge funds.

"That's part of its strategy to fill, rather than trim, newsrooms because 'our product is our content,'" Chief Operating Officer Heidi Wright said.

"... It's rare for dailies to fail without at least merging with another paper or perhaps becoming a weekly. It's also unheard of nowadays for multiple newspapers to replace them," according to Penelope Abernathy, the journalism professor who led research documenting America's news deserts.

"I'm not aware of any other situation like this, where you've had both a journalistic and business commitment made this swiftly, when a daily has closed," she said.

Abernathy is a visiting professor at Northwestern University's Medill School, which found two papers a week are failing, primarily weeklies.

— excerpts from a Seattle Times column by Brier Dudley, published Jan. 27.

Dean Rider

"While the current media environment is challenging, it is truly encouraging to see the creation of a new local news initiative. I applaud

Heidi Wright and Steve Forrester of EO Media in taking the risk to create a new local news product for the people of Medford and Jackson County. I feel confident that their experience with managing local newspapers will result in a successful operation that will be well received by the community."

— Dean Rider is CEO of America's Newspapers, a Dallas, Texas, advocacy and education organization supporting newspapers and the First Amendment.

Tony Ahern

We applaud EO Media for its drive and commitment to Oregon community journalism, and if there is a company that can immediately dive in and resuscitate the business of a Medford-based newspaper operation and Southwestern Oregon journalism, it may indeed be EO Media. We have proof here in Central Oregon. The company took over the (Bend) Bulletin a few years ago out of the previous ownership's bankruptcy, not long before COVID and all its gifts to the economy. But EO Media Group reinvigorated the Bulletin, and in fact won the best daily newspaper in Oregon award at the most recent Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association event.

All of us who care about newspapers, news coverage, community journalism and maintaining the stories and history of our towns should celebrate EO Media's effort and hope for their success.

— Tony Ahern is publisher of the Central Oregonian, a Prineville-based newspaper serving Crook County.

Bob Hunter is a former editor of the Mail Tribune.

Photos

Continued from A4

Jamie, who grew up in Eugene, spends his free time — with his wife Azalea and son Liam — fishing, skiing, backpacking and mushroom hunting.

You can reach Jamie at jlusch@rvtrib.com.

ANDY ATKINSON has been involved with media his entire life from family beginnings.

Andy graduated from Ashland High School and was published in the Ashland Daily Tidings during his senior year.

"I never thought of anything else I would rather do but take photos throughout the Rogue Valley," he says. "I was recognized in a photo-journalism class at SOU and was hired by the photo editor of the Mail Tribune straight out of college."

While his work has appeared in Adidas Running and other national publications, he says he has "found my way to live here and never let go of everything this area has offered me."

Andy has made a career capturing memorable moments in history, includ-



Rogue Atkinson stands atop of Roxy Ann Peak in Medford.

Andy Atkinson / Rogue Valley Tribune

ing national and Olympics trials races, daily news, floods and forest fires — as well as championship games and meets on the local level.

"I'm extremely proud to represent our local media through my eyes and camera," he says. "I'm looking forward to capturing everything this valley wants to see."

Andy is a proud father of two young adults growing up in the valley — one working on a new career and the other chasing higher education.

Andy can be reached at aatkinson@rvtrib.com.



A steelhead jumps in Steamboat Creek.

Jamie Lusch / Rogue Valley Tribune

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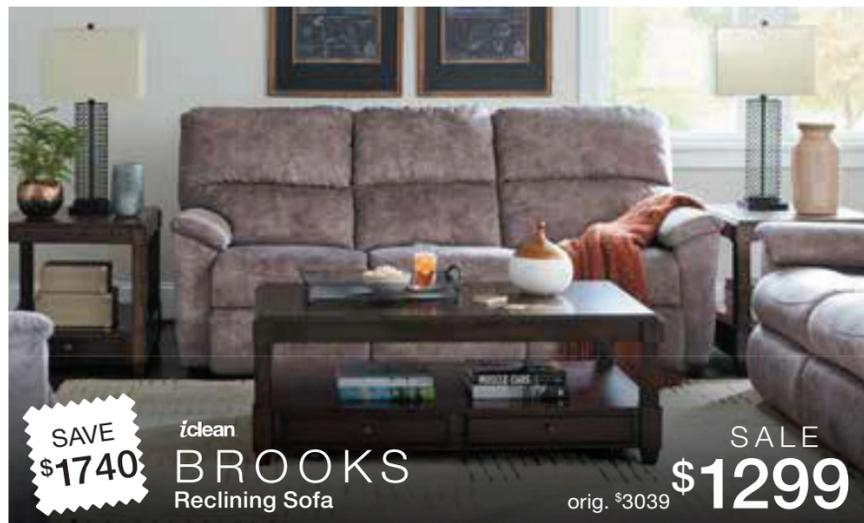
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