Grants Pass Daily Courier

Wednesday, November 18th, 2026

**Agritourism conference hosted by OSU (Business Buzz)**

*By Kathleen Alaks of the Daily Courier*



*JULIE ANDERSON / Daily Courier, 2025*

Dylan Toll, 4, and Walden Houghton, 4, explore the texture of a bumpy pumpkin being lifted into a wheelbarrow by Eric Houghton. The Fort Vannoy Farms harvest festival is a signature agritourism event in Josephine County.

Agritourism has the potential to create new revenue streams for farmers and ranchers, strengthen local economies, and connect the public with agriculture.

At the same time, agritourism raises important questions about land use, farm viability, infrastructure, and community character.

To that end, the Oregon State University Extension Service Small Farms Program, the Talent Business Alliance, and the Rogue Valley Food System Network are hosting the Rogue Valley Agritourism Summit next month.

"This summit is an opportunity to have meaningful conversations about how agritourism can support working farms and ranches while strengthening connections between agriculture and local communities," said Maud Powell of OSU Extension Small Farms, in a statement.

"We hope participants leave with new ideas, new partnerships, and a deeper understanding of the role agritourism can play in Southern Oregon's future."

The summit will take place on Dec. 10, from 8:30 a.m. to noon at the Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center, 569 Hanley Road in Central Point.

It is designed to bring together farmers, ranchers, tourism professionals, planners, elected officials, and community members to explore both the opportunities and challenges associated with agritourism in Southern Oregon.

Participants will hear from regional and state leaders working at the intersection of agriculture, tourism, and rural economic development.

The featured speakers are:

- Alice Morrison, Friends of Family Farmers
- Audrey Comerford, OSU Extension Agritourism Program Coordinator
- Mike Thelin, consultant for Travel Oregon
- Rhianna Simes, Verdant Phoenix Farm
- Johanna Talley, Drunken Goat Vegan Supper Club
- Erica Idso-Weisz, Itty Bitty Acres
- Clover Leonard of Leonard Orchards

The cost to attend the summit is $15, with online registration at https://beav.es/iDb.

For more information, contact Powell at maud.powell@oregonstate.edu or 541-776-7371.

**CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH CAREERS.** Rogue Community College's Business Department is launching Inside Business, a new series designed to connect students with local industry professionals to explore career opportunities, workplace skills and industry trends.

The first session in the series, exploring accounting careers, takes place today at 3 p.m. in Room 129 of the Higher Education Center on RCC's Riverside Campus in Medford. It's free and open to the public.

This inaugural event brings together professionals from Rogue Solutions Accounting & Bookkeeping Services, Behymer, Sorenson & Price, Ashland Partners and RCC's Business Office.

Panelists will share their career journeys and perspectives on a range of accounting fields, including bookkeeping, tax preparation, public accounting, auditing and governmental accounting.

Those attending will be able to ask questions, learn about career pathways and credentials, explore the technical and workplace skills employers value and hear how technology and automation are reshaping the accounting profession.

At least two follow-up panels are planned, one for marketing careers and another for business management, said Julie Toledo, RCC's workforce innovation specialist in community and workforce training. One panel will be held during the winter term and one in the spring, though dates have not been determined yet.

**OPEN HOUSE FOR OPEN SPACE.** Regus, a new space providing private offices, coworking spaces and day offices for people traveling on business, celebrates its official grand opening with a ribbon cutting and open house on Thursday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

It's at 3559 National Drive in Medford. The gathering will include tours, food vendors and raffle baskets.

**WE HAVE THE MEATS.** Top End Meat Co., at 1489 Rogue River Highway in Grants Pass, is holding a ribbon cutting at 1 p.m. Friday to mark the official launch of its humane on-farm mobile livestock harvesting rig.

The event, hosted by business owners Charles and Erica Hooperlee, will include a small ceremony and an explanation of the company's services. The event is being held at the site of the future home of the Top End Meat Butcher Shop and the nonprofit Southern Oregon Meat School, which will provide training to a new generation of butchers and meat cutters.

Snacks and refreshments will be provided.

**NEW MEDICAL OFFICE UNDERWAY.** A ceremonial ground-breaking for a medical office building under construction in downtown Phoenix will take place Friday at 3 p.m.

Construction on the Wright Dermatology building, located at 105 E. Fourth St., is anticipated to be complete by May.

The ceremony will be followed by a casual meet-and-greet with owner, developer and local dermatologist Dr. Kevin Wright, at Moxie Brew, 106 E. First St.

**EXPANDING SERVICES.** Continuum Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (formerly On Track Rogue Valley) is hosting an open house at its new Family Treatment Campus in Medford.

From 2-5 p.m. Saturday, visitors will be able to learn about the facility's programs and services for individuals and families, enjoy light refreshments and enter a raffle drawing.

The treatment center is at 1249 N. Riverside Ave. in Medford.

**INDEPENDENT BOOK STORE.** A new book store, Otter's Tale Books, has moved into 301 E. Main St. in downtown Medford, with plans to open in early 2027.

Otter's Tale is a "queer-owned, queer-centered" independent book store that will offer an inclusive selection of queer books and other historically under-represented voices. Store owners also plan to carry books that may otherwise be withheld or removed from libraries, schools and mainstream book stores.

Additionally, plans are for the store to serve as a community hub for book club meetups, author signings, writing groups, and other events.

Visit otbooks.com or find them on Facebook.

**THREE DECADES OF SERVICE.** Redwood Terrace Assisted Living, at 3111 Canal Ave. in Grants Pass, celebrated its 30th anniversary last week.

The senior living facility supports its residents with daily routines, such as dressing and medication management, and also offers a variety of events and programs.

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*Reach reporter Kathleen Alaks at 541-474-3815 or kalaks@thedailycourier.com.*

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