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Effectual Acquires Five Talent



(L-R) ERIC RUDAN, PRESTON CALLICOTT AND TIM SELHORST AT FIVE TALENT'S OPEN HOUSE AND RIBBON CUTTING ON FEBRUARY 27, 2020 | PHOTO BY NATALIE NIEMAN

CBN Staff Report

Five Talent, a technology consultancy and custom software modernization and development firm headquartered in Bend, has announced that it is now an Effectual company — an innovative, cloud-first managed and professional services provider based in Hoboken, New Jersey.

The acquisition provides a powerful opportunity for both companies to combine expertise and deliver a full suite of services to customers on their IT modernization journey. "We've had many people approach us to acquire Five Talent over the years, but it was never a good fit. Lots of people wanted to buy us, but for the wrong reasons," said Preston Callicott, CEO of Five Talent. "Effectual really recognized the value we have built and the reputation we have for excellent application builds."

The two companies began working together as Five Talent clients needed help in maintaining the applications that were built by Callicott and his team. "As application developers, we have people who want us to manage their cloud infrastructure for them. We did it, but we were reluctant, because we are not a data center group," he said. "I started reaching out to several managed services providers (MSPs), including Effectual, to assist clients with this. Effectual's team came from well-known, first-class MSPs, so we started giving them small clients, and they did a great job. Then we started giving them bigger clients. We found that their cultures, morals and ethics matched ours perfectly." He added, "They are just good people. Working together over the past year, it is clear that the cultural similarities of our organizations and our complementary services provide customers with a complete solution for delivering successful business outcomes."

Callicott said the companies started discussing a deeper relationship last July,

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Idyllic Small Town Bands Together in Good Times & Bad

Prineville Spotlight — Pages 8-13

by RONNI WILDE — CBN Reporter



PRINEVILLE IS LOVELY AT SUNSET | PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PRINEVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

With all the chaos happening in 2020, there is a lot to be said for small-town life and living. As many people in large cities are discovering, when a crisis happens, it can feel much bigger when you live in an urban area.

While Central Oregon has certainly not escaped the COVID pandemic or the sting of the current protesting and racial tension, locals can safely attest that it feels safer and a little quieter here than in our country's larger counterparts, and

Prineville is a stellar example of what can go right in a small town when everything around us feels so wrong.

"This is a small community where we support each other. It's very different from the big cities, even Bend," said Kim Daniels, director of the Prineville Chamber of Commerce. "Although in the past there has been a feeling like Prineville may have been looked down upon by the larger neighboring towns, we have found that during this crisis, the way our community and local partners have come together to quickly support small

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Employment & Human Resources Pros Reflect on COVID-19 Workforce Landscape

by RONNI WILDE — CBN Reporter

In navigating the ebbs and flows of life during a pandemic, every industry has had to shift its way of doing business. Needs have changed, and in order to keep moving forward, businesses and employees have had to adapt very quickly to new requirements and demands.

Professionals working in the employment and human resources industry have had a bird's-eye view of the ever-changing workforce landscape. As those who keep tabs on who's hiring and who's not and fluctuating trends in the workplace, these pros have had to stay in the know throughout the entire shutdown, and now in the current phases of reopening.

"When COVID hit, it affected us just like everyone else. Being in the hiring and human resources business, we took a big revenue hit over the last couple of months," said Sam Lambert, vice president of Mid Oregon Personnel Services, Inc. "Most of our clientele had to lay people off, and when that happens, they generally start with their newest staff members. The people we have working for our



(L-R) MEMBERS OF THE COIC ADULT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM STAFF: DANA DUNLAP, JENNY PORFELY, TAMMY BANEY, MELISSA RODRIGUEZ AND DEANNA FENDER | PHOTO COURTESY OF COIC

clients on a temporary or temp-to-hire basis are oftentimes the first to go." He continued, "Many of our payroll and leasing clients had to shut their doors for a while. At the same time though, we have been very busy in different ways. We do more than just help our clients with hiring: We

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SPECIAL SECTION

Idyllic Small Town

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businesses has resulted in hearing words of praise and a sense of jealousy from Central Oregon and statewide leaders towards what we have been able to accomplish here in Crook County." She added, "We are a tight group. Having that cohesion really helped us to jump into go mode and get things done."

In Prineville, "go mode" involved the local business owners stepping in and quickly procuring the needed items — such as Plexiglas panels and hand sanitizer — to stay operational from day one of the COVID closures, Daniels said. "A lot of the retailers stayed open under the guidelines, except of course for the ones that were ordered to close like restaurants and gyms."

"It's been tough in Prineville, like most of the region, but all in all, it seems like we have a rebounding happening," said City Manager Steve Forrester. "The strong relationship that exists between the public and private entities here is very helpful. One of the things that is really remarkable is the success of the local downtown business association task force and the speed at which they got a survey out in order to understand the needs of small businesses in Crook County." A grant program was developed and deployed very quickly, he said, and businesses had money within a week of the closure to help stay afloat. "We had a bridge to help people immediately, before they were able to receive assistance from the national government." Daniels said that the task force, which was composed of the chamber, the downtown business association, EDCO and other agencies, was able to gather \$240,000 in funding to help the local businesses that first week of the shutdown.

Forrester, whose wife owns Subway franchises, said they use her business to gauge how the economy is doing in general. "We saw a 70 to 75 percent decrease in sales over this same time last year, but now we are back at 75 to 80 percent of where we were last year at this time," he said. The ongoing expansion of the local data centers in Crook County, which represents more than 1,000 construction jobs, took a pause during the shutdown, Forrester said. But the building has resumed, the workers are returning and traffic in the region has picked back up again. "We work hard in Prineville to develop



Kim Daniels



Steve Forrester



PRINEVILLE IS THE GATEWAY TO THE OCHOCO NATIONAL FOREST

a diverse set of family-wage jobs. We are very aware to not be too focused on any one industry," he said. "We are much more diverse now. There is a nice, balanced job base." He added, "This is key to staying healthy during a crisis. We weathered it much better than if we'd just been tied to one industry. The resilience of the community was great."

To further enhance business enterprises during the COVID closures, Daniels said the chamber hosted a virtual shopping event right before Mother's Day that was hugely successful. "Our local floral shop actually sold out. There was not a single flower left," she said. The chamber also continued its Friday morning "Perk" gatherings, switching to an online version of the popular weekly event. "We had a waiting list of hosts for Perk. When we went virtual, the staff selected businesses that were pertinent to the situation to host, like Parks & Rec, the Health Department and a mortgage company. We had just as many people attending as before, and we even had some new people join in."

Over the past three months, Daniels said chamber membership in Prineville has not slowed down one bit; in fact, membership has grown. "We've gotten new members throughout the whole thing. COVID did not slow down our goal of three new memberships per month." Business remained so stable in Prineville that Daniels said she knows of only one that closed its doors solely due to COVID. "A few closed because they had underlying issues anyway, and with COVID decided it was just time. But we have a new shoe store, a new bakery coming and a new pipeline tech company all opening. Building is still happening like crazy here," she said. "There's lots of development and industrial building."

Prineville Men's Wear, a 70-year generational business that specializes in western wear, closed its doors for six weeks during the shutdown, but has since reopened with distancing and cleaning requirements in place. "Business is picking up, and people are coming back into the store. It's back to normal," said Jim Lane, manager, whose grandfather started the business back in 1950. During the closure, Lane said he came to the store every day to tend to the freight, and offered email orders and curbside pickup to customers. Prineville Men's Wear has ten employees, and although they had to be laid off during the closure, all are back now except for one, who moved on to become a firefighter. "It's been a crazy and hectic time. Thank you to our customers who worked with us during this time. We hope you all stay safe."

Daniels and Forrester both said the real estate industry has remained strong in Prineville as well. "Homes are flying off the market," said Daniels. "There is not a huge supply here in the \$250,000-\$300,000 range, so they go fast." Forrester added, "There has been no downturn in activity, of either existing building or permit activity. All have stayed stable; even in the first month of shutdown, we continued to see activity. We



SPLASH PAD IS A POPULAR MULTI-EVENT RACE IN PRINEVILLE | PHOTO BY OLIVE AND BLUE PHOTOGRAPHY

have lots of job-generating development happening right now."

Both city leaders are quick to praise Facebook as a "phenomenal" community partner in Crook County, saying that the company rose to the occasion in a big way to help out when the crisis hit. "A huge bonus to living here is Facebook. They have poured money into the school district," said Daniels. "I believe we were one of the first school districts to reopen online. It was like the kids got a two-week spring break, and then were back at it from home." Daniels said Facebook provided a \$200,000 grant and provided every student in the district with an electronic device. "Our partners at Facebook stepped up hugely," added Forrester. "They helped facilitate wifi in every neighborhood."

Moving forward, the city and chamber are looking for creative ways to reinstate events that have had to be cancelled or delayed, and to cautiously resume tourism in the region. "I think there will be creative ways to replace the signature events," said Forrester. "The rodeo is just not possible this year, but we are looking at some sort of community celebration in the fall before the weather gets cold." The popular annual rodeo is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, but due to the necessary cancellation, next year's rodeo has already been titled "Re-Ride 75." Because the county fair has also been cancelled, Forrester said Prineville leadership is looking at ways to work with the 4-H kids who've been preparing their animals for months.

Daniels said the July Fourth fireworks will happen as usual, and that she contacted nearly every agency in town to make sure she had the green light before signing the contract with the pyrotechnic company. "You can pretty much see and enjoy the fireworks from anywhere in town," she said. "There will be no mass gatherings, but in most cases, you can see them from the backyard." The annual Splash-N-Dash, a race for individuals and teams that combines swimming, cycling, kayaking and running throughout the city, will also take place in a modified form, she said.

"The hard thing is that you really can't plan ahead now, not even for tomorrow," said Daniels. "I am getting lots of calls regarding events; people want to plan. I tell them to pick a drop-dead date, and if we don't have an answer by then, to cancel the event." Since the chamber also serves as the local visitor's center, Daniels said the challenge she and her colleagues face is knowing where the fine line between safety and tourism should be drawn. "The chamber is in a gray area. Everything we do is sort of on shutdown. But our job is to promote business and tourism," she said. "My biggest challenge is how I walk the line of what is safe and right and still support and promote business and tourism. I don't want to rock the boat or upset anybody, but I don't want to see business and tourism go away either."

Like its sister cities in Central Oregon, Prineville is known for its abundant recreational offerings. With a population of about 9,000, Prineville is the gateway to the Ochoco National Forest, and has the unofficial title of Rockhound Capital of the U.S. thanks to the variety of precious gemstones found in this part of Oregon. The Prineville Reservoir is a popular local attraction, and golfing, boating, camping, biking and hiking are outstanding in Prineville and surrounds. Nestled in an idyllic setting on the Crooked River at the mouth of Ochoco Creek, the town also has a rich history, being named after Frances Barney Prine, the town's first merchant, who reportedly built a house, store, blacksmith shop, hotel and saloon there in 1868. Part of its charm is the distinct essence of the wild west that permeates the region.

Daniels said she and others were encouraged by the return of tourists to Prineville on Memorial Day weekend, and that people from outlying areas seem to be heading out that way to enjoy the wide-open spaces and peacefulness to be found there. "Hotels are down, but not as much as the state level. At their worst, we had 30 percent occupancy for a week. But over Memorial Day weekend, we were at 90 percent occupancy. Our Tasty Treat was packed; we had a line out the door." To help people recreate in the area, the chamber is allowing overnight parking in its parking lot. For those who want to bike or hike overnight, they can complete paperwork in the chamber office and then leave their cars in the chamber lot. "A lot of people are coming out here to camp. Even though the campgrounds haven't been open, people are dry camping in the forest. If you go into the Ochocos, you see tons of campers."

Forrester said he is relieved that Crook County, Central Oregon and the nation in general went into the COVID crisis during a strong economy. "This would have been much worse if we hadn't," he said. "The continuity of government, the coordination of local governments with the governor's office and the sharing and deciphering of information from Salem was huge. I was very impressed. Whether you agree with the rulings or not, being able to ask questions was remarkable." Forrester also said that St. Charles Medical Center has played a huge role in helping the region stay together during this time. "Being able to listen to people in the trenches and on the frontlines was so helpful. PPE (personal protective equipment) was a big deal, and we all banded together to get what we needed very quickly. This was a huge triumph for all of us in Central Oregon, not just Prineville."

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PRINEVILLE CITY HALL PLAZA AND COURTHOUSE | PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PRINEVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE