



ON THE ROAD

Vehicle reviews, car design, bicycle polo and more

FALL WHEELS, INSIDE

GETTING THE BUZZ

Oregon Bee Project has two events scheduled in Grants Pass next week

LOCAL, 5A

ON TO STATE

GP football sews up 6A playoff berth after beating N. Medford

SPORTS, 1B



WEEKEND
OCTOBER 15, 2017

\$1.00
GRANTS PASS, ORE.

Daily Courier



SOTAR



Dutch Bros. Coffee



Rogue Valley Door



Marijuana



Playcraft system

MADE IN GRANTS PASS

A quick look into a few products that are not only 'Made in America,' but produced in our own backyard

By Lisa Whiting
of the Daily Courier

What comes to mind, when one thinks of Grants Pass? Jet-boats. Fishing. Whitewater rafting. Wineries. Brewpubs. The Oregon Caves. Boatnik. Coffee.

The climate. And now marijuana. The town definitely has a strong service-based economy. That includes the region's biggest employer, Asante, which runs Three Rivers Medical Center.

But what about manufacturing, and the long list of business success

stories right here in our backyard? Here's a look at five homegrown companies and products. All are well known. Next weekend: Five more awesome things you might not have heard of.

SOTAR If you spend any time on the Rogue River, you've seen rafts made by local company SOTAR.

If you've spent any time on famous whitewater rivers anywhere else in the world, you've probably seen SOTAR rafts there, too.

Started in a garage in 1980 by Glenn Lewman and a group of

friends, today SOTAR employs a crew of 18 and makes close to 700 boats per year, purchased by whitewater enthusiasts worldwide. SOTAR stands for State of the Art Rafts, and they are that and then some.

SOTAR makes rafts, catarafts, and kayaks. It offers three standard models of each, which customers typically have customized to fit their needs.

"Our boats are on every continent except Antarctica, said Jeremiah Lewman, Glenn's son and the company's chief operating officer.

The company is credited with cre-

ating the world's first self-bailing raft, and a technique to electronically weld raft material together instead of gluing it.

SOTAR's products are not cheap. Customers include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard.

The company's boats have made it to the waters of countries such as Fiji, Zimbabwe and Argentina. Recently SOTAR made 20 sea kayaks for an outfitter in Thailand that takes people on tours of sea caves.

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'Kicker' is in: Average refund per tax return is \$227

By Christian Wihotl
Eugene Register-Guard

The state on Friday said it has officially confirmed Oregonians will receive more than \$463 million in income tax "kicker" refunds that they can claim starting in January.

Unlike in the past, there will be no checks issued. Instead, the sur-

plus will be returned through credits on 2017 state personal income taxes.

The amount translates into a median refund of about \$89. The median has an equal number of refunds above and below that amount. The average refund per tax return will be about \$227. That figure reflects that upper-income Oregon-

ians pay most of the state's income taxes and thus receive the bulk of kicker refunds.

Individual refunds are calculated as a percentage of the state income taxes residents pay.

The state in August had tentatively determined the total kicker would amount to \$463 million. The kicker is triggered when state income tax col-

lections exceed earlier official projections by at least 2 percent. Oregon's burgeoning economy has swelled state income tax receipts.

The state will pay the kicker to taxpayers through a credit on their 2017 state personal income tax returns, which they will file in 2018.

Turn to KICKER, Page 5A

Gusty winds fan California wildfires day after crews reported progress

Blazes have killed 35, displaced 100,000 and destroyed 5,700 structures

By Janie Har and Andrew Dalton
Associated Press

SONOMA, Calif. — Rising winds fanned the California wildfires again Saturday, forcing hundreds more people to flee from their homes in the state's fabled wine country and testing the efforts of crews who have spent days trying to corral the flames behind fire-breaks.

Just a day after firefighters reported making significant progress, the winds kicked up several hours before dawn and pushed flames into the hills on the edge of Sonoma, a town of 11,000. About 400

homes were evacuated as the fires threaten Sonoma and a portion of Santa Rosa that included a retirement community that evacuated earlier this week, authorities said.

Dean Vincent Bordigioni, winemaker and proprietor at the Annadel Estate Winery awoke at 3 a.m. with flames erupting on the ridge above his property. "Things went to hell last night," he said. "They've got a good fight going on."

Nearly a week after the blazes began, the fire zone had swollen to an area as long as 100 miles on a side. The flames have left at least 35 people dead and destroyed at

least 5,700 homes and businesses, making them the deadliest and most destructive group of wildfires California has ever seen.

On Saturday, an unknown number of additional structures burned down in a rural area, said Daniel Berlant, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Judy Guttridge, who was evacuating for the second time this week, said her daughter saw flames advancing over the side of a hill around the same time Bordigioni did and told the family to get out.

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MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/Associated Press

Firefighters set a containment line with a backburn as they battle a wildfire on Friday in Glen Ellen, Calif.



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