

# Business



## Construction firms earn EarthWISE certification

# Building for a greener future

**Beth Casper** Special to Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

Three construction companies in Marion County have been doing their part to conserve natural resources and reduce waste.

Pence Northwest Construction, Dalke Construction and White Oak Construction have proven their commitment to the environment by becoming EarthWISE certified. The EarthWISE program is a free business environmental assistance program of Marion County. EarthWISE staff helps businesses recycle, save energy, reduce waste and much more. There are more than 160 EarthWISE businesses, agencies and nonprofits in Marion County.

Pence Northwest Construction — which does commercial and residential work — has been certified since 2012. The company works with clients to try to incorporate green elements into their project.

The company's managers recommend LED lighting, low-flow toilets, chemical-free paints and finishes and recycled materials for flooring, exposed beams or cabinets.

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**“EarthWISE has been a great way to show the community we care.”**

**Kat Pence**  
Pence Northwest  
Construction project  
coordinator

ALEX GREGORY/USA  
TODAY NETWORK,  
AND GETTY IMAGES

# Time to show your customers some love

## Valentine's tips to entice business

**Rhonda Abrams**  
Special to USA TODAY

It's nearly Valentine's Day — so it's definitely time to show your small-business customers some love.

And it's also time to remind yourself that you should be doing this on a regular basis. In other words, you should be letting your customers know that you appreciate them every day of the year, not just Valentine's Day.

You face stiff competition for your customers. After all, they have more options today than ever. With a mere swipe of their phone, they can find someone new to do business with, and,

*whoosh*, just like that, you're history. Just like competing for that special gal or guy in your life, you've got to make yourself attractive and then keep working at your relationship.

How do you attract and court that special someone — in this case, a potentially long-term loyal customer?

First, you have to get noticed. You've got to be seen and look good. Perhaps it's time to try to do some “online dating.” How about posting some attracting pics of your business and your products on Instagram? Or Facebook? And, go on, add a few enticing well-written captions that show off your personality. But don't stop there. Tell them exactly what you'd like to do to them — and have them do to you: In other words, include special offers and a call to action, such as “buy now,” and a link to your shop or the product you're selling.

Maybe these would-be customers are tempted to take the plunge but hesitate. Perhaps they were burned in the past by a small business in your industry (even customers have a “type”). Try these five strategies for converting prospects into customers:

■ **Introductory offers.** These are short-term, deep discounts or services for a limited time. If you own a hair salon, you could offer discount coupons for first haircut. If you have an e-commerce site, you could offer free overnight shipping for the first month.

■ **Loss leaders or teaser rates.** You may actually lose money on these exceptionally low prices on a product or service. Supermarkets do this at the holidays by offering Thanksgiving turkeys at a loss in the hopes that customers will do all of their shopping with

them.

■ **Sampling.** Freebies give prospects a chance to try your product or service at no charge. Your bakery could give free cookie samples. If you develop an app, offer a free 30-day trial.

■ **Beta testing.** Many of your prospective customers will jump at the chance to provide feedback about your products before release or sale to the general public. Technology companies use beta testing extensively but this strategy can work in a range of industries, such as sporting goods.

■ **Positive reviews by influencers.** Customers go where others have already been. Ask influencers — people others look to for purchasing advice, such as bloggers, journalists, experts, well-known industry insiders and even

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## WHAT'S THAT?



Construction work at the site of the McDonald's restaurant at 1011 Lancaster Drive NE in Salem on Jan. 31. LEE CLARKSON/STATESMAN JOURNAL

## What happened to the McDonald's by the mall?

**Project:** McDonald's redevelopment

**Location:** 1011 Lancaster Drive NE

**Description:** The McDonald's at the corner of Lancaster Drive and D Street NE was demolished and will be rebuilt on an expanded site.

Go to [StatesmanJournal.com/WhatsThat](http://StatesmanJournal.com/WhatsThat) to see more projects in development and to submit a tip.

**Estimated size:** Restaurant, 5,044 square feet; property, 1.66 acres

**Contractors:** McDonald's Corporation, Rich Duncan Construction Inc.

**Source:** City of Salem

### BUSINESS BRIEFS

#### Debbie Jensen joins Columbia Trust Company in Salem

Columbia Trust Company has hired Debbie Jensen to serve as vice president and trust team lead. Jensen will coach and manage the trust administration team based in Salem as well as supporting client growth and retention.

Jensen previously served as a senior trust officer at Bank of America/U.S. Trust for five years and a trust officer with Wells Fargo for 12 years. She is also a member of the Salem Rotary Club and the Willamette Valley Estate Planning Council.

Columbia Trust Company provides trust and investment management services and operates five offices in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. For more information, visit [www.columbiatrustcompany.com](http://www.columbiatrustcompany.com).

#### Finishing Touch Auto Detailing opens Salem shop

Finishing Touch Auto Detailing has opened a new shop located at 3130 Portland Road NE in Salem.

The new location is the second for Finishing Touch Auto Detailing. The company was originally established in Stayton.

This new large shop is perfect for high-end, exterior services, FTA said in a release.

"Our new location is more convenient for our clients in Salem, has indoor wash bays, and is climate controlled so we can provide top-notch, quality work year-round," owner Ryan Hendricks said. "Salem has been very welcoming and clients are happy to have a high-end detail shop in Salem."

For quotes or an appointment, call the Salem shop at 971-599-3823. For more information, visit [www.ftadetailingsalem.com](http://www.ftadetailingsalem.com).

#### Sam Labbe earns worldwide Coldwell Banker award

Sam Labbe has earned the Interna-

tional President's Premier designation award from Coldwell Banker Real Estate, the company announced.

The award is given to just one percent of Coldwell Banker sales associate worldwide, according to a release.

Labbe was also recognized for being the top listing and sales associate at Coldwell Banker Mountain West Real Estate in 2017.

"(Labbe) has demonstrated the highest professional standards and a dedication to satisfying the needs of his clients by providing them with the highest level of support available," Coldwell Banker Mountain West Real Estate president Peter Rogers said.

Coldwell Banker Mountain West Real Estate, Inc., located at 235 Union St. NE, can be found online at [ColdwellBankerMountainWest.com](http://ColdwellBankerMountainWest.com).

#### Willamette Valley Community Health adds new CMO

Willamette Valley Community Health announced that Jeanne Savage, MD, will join the organization as Chief Medical Officer.

Savage previously served at the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic. She will continue as a Family Practice and Obstetrical care provider and as a Legacy Silverton Health Medical Executive Committee Member, according to a release.

"It's an honor to welcome Dr. Savage to the WVCH team," Chief Executive Officer Rob Johnson said. "Through her career-long commitment to serving Medicaid members and vulnerable populations, she understands their needs and has creative and progressive approaches to providing high-quality care."

Savage has been a family physician for 15 years, working in Woodburn and surrounding areas in Marion and Polk counties.

For more information about Willamette Valley Community Health, go to [www.wvchealth.org](http://www.wvchealth.org).

## Customers

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celebrities — to use and review your product or service.

Now that your prospects have gone on the "first date," how do you deepen the relationship? Communication is key.

■ **Stay in touch with current and past customers regularly.** Customers want to hear from you. Just be sure not to be a pest. As a general rule of thumb, on social media, post on once a day, sales no more than once a week, and email newsletters once or twice a month.

■ **Let them choose how they'll hear from you.** Different customers have different preferences — emails, newsletters, texts, or social media. Just get their permission to contact them first.

Keep track of your customers and prospects with a good customer relationship manager program. Get in the habit of tracking every customer interaction — not just orders — and their specific needs and concerns. Then you can personalize your offers, emails and rewards. Examples of those to choose from are SalesforceCRM and SugarCRM. If you're just starting out, a free CRM solution like Insightly or Apptivo might suit you.

■ **Deal with customer complaints.** Unhappy customers can spread bad reviews of your small business like a virus. Respond to their call, email or social media post quickly. Admit your errors, apologize, and solve the problem.

Rhonda Abrams is the author of 19 books including "Entrepreneurship: A Real-World Approach," just released in its second edition. Connect with her on Facebook and Twitter: @RhondaAbrams. Register for her free business tips newsletter at [PlanningShop.com](http://PlanningShop.com).

## Electric cars have benefits, but likely won't save you money

Dee-Ann Durbin  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT — Electric cars have a lot of perks: zero emissions, a quiet ride and instant acceleration.

But can they save you money? Probably not.

Electric car prices are falling, but they still cost more than equivalent gas models because of their expensive batteries.

A \$7,500 federal tax credit — which survived the recent tax overhaul — helps erase that gap, but not entirely.

After that, the math gets more complicated.

Some states and utilities offer incentives for electric vehicle owners. Plugging in an electric car is generally cheaper than filling up a gas-powered one, but that depends on the local price of gas and electricity. Some people can charge their electric cars at work, but others need to add a charging station to their garage.

For Ronald Montoya, a consumer advice editor with the car shopping

site Edmunds.com, the bottom line is price.

With gas prices averaging \$2.56 per gallon, it's hard to make up the price premium of an electric vehicle — which can easily top \$10,000 — within a three-year lease period, he says.

Electric car drivers are more likely to lease than gas car buyers; for example, 57 percent of Nissan Leaf electric cars are leased, compared with 30 percent of cars overall, Edmunds says.

(Edmunds regularly provides content, including automotive tips and reviews, for distribution by The Associated Press.)

Still, electrics have benefits, both tangible — like lower maintenance costs — and intangible.

Owners can drive them in high-occupancy vehicle lanes, for example, or simply feel good that they're causing less pollution.

"We are still a car culture, and some of our personal identity is tied up in our cars," said David Friedman, director of cars for Consumers Union, the policy division of Consumer Reports.



Separating out construction materials at work sites is part of Dalke Construction's waste reduction efforts. SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

## EarthWISE

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"We also do remodeling projects," said Kat Pence, the company's project coordinator. "This is a growing market — people are looking for ways to help the environment and see savings on their utility bills in the future."

Pence Northwest has worked with clients to make existing residential walls better insulated, improve heating and cooling systems and change the window style to prevent energy loss. In one project, they included a gym with recycled rubber flooring inside an office space. The results have been dramatic — aesthetically, financially and environmentally.

The company's eco-friendly practices don't end with the buildings they construct or remodel. Pence Northwest always recycles materials at its construction sites. Metal is set aside for recycling at Cherry City Metals, for example.

When the company remodeled its own office nine years ago, it followed its own advice and created an eco-friendly space. There is recycled bamboo flooring and the entire space is cleaned with organic cleaning agents.

"We have always been very focused on our community and environment to make sure we are taking care of both of those things," Pence said. "EarthWISE has been a great way to show the community we care."

Dalke Construction — EarthWISE certified since 2008 — also encourages all of its clients to incorporate green elements in their building. The most dramatic example is seen in Dalke's remodel of Northwest Distribution & Storage's office space and cold storage for wine, an old cannery building at 1745 Oxford St. SE.

Dalke kept the entire ceiling system — all of the joists and trusses — in place despite being tasked with creating an insulated environment to keep wine cool.

"We installed a denser insulation so it didn't take up as much space and we built around the beams so as to leave a portion of the beams exposed," said Jim Schiess, project manager at Dalke. "Covering it up would have been way easier, but this way is more aesthetic and shows the building's history."

For the office areas, Dalke workers left much of the natural wood, wood paneling, the original fir floors and a beautiful wide staircase. The old schoolhouse light fixtures remain, but Dalke employees fitted them with LED lights to save energy.

"It is less expensive and it makes more sense to leave elements of the building intact if they are viable," said Schiess.

When it isn't possible to preserve parts of an old building, Dalke recommends the most energy-efficient design. In the cannery building, energy-efficient windows replaced the old ones that would have leaked and cost the

business a lot in lost energy.

Dalke's home offices at 2180 16th St. NE also reflect its commitment to the environment.

In the shop where the heavy equipment is maintained, all of the bulk motor oil is recycled. Fuel and other products are purchased in bulk to save on packaging and in the budget.

"We have two blue recycle bins and one garbage can," said Tracie Farnsworth, the head of Dalke's green team. "We don't always fill up our garbage can each week."

In addition to its garbage bill, the company's electric bill is minimal. Skylights in the shop allow for enough daylight that electric lights are often turned off. Motion sensors in the break room, conference room and other public spaces mean that lights aren't left on when no one is using them. And the set of windows at the front of the office allows for daylight to provide the bulk of the lighting in front offices.

"Our practices are green because we believe in preserving the environment for the next generation," Farnsworth said.

Mark Fox, owner of White Oak Construction, also wants to protect the earth for the next generation — partly because he has seen environmental degradation and its effects.

"I was born and raised in Salem and, as a kid, I remember being at the Willamette River and it smelling bad and not wanting to go in it," he said.

"And now the river has been cleaned up so much. You can see the difference that environmental practices have made. Now the river is a great resource running through town."

That's why Fox's company, started in 1997 and EarthWISE certified in 2014, is committed to sustainable, durable buildings. White Oak chooses highly energy-efficient heating and cooling systems and thick insulation for all its buildings. Their buildings are designed with the direction of the sun in mind to harness the sun's heating power, but also to keep buildings cooler in the summer. Landscaping around buildings is always drought resistant to conserve water and keep water bills down.

"The benefits of upgrading for the future aren't as expensive as people think," Fox said. "People often think, 'I have to build as cheap as possible.' But spending money up front on insulation or energy-efficient glass runs down energy costs and pays out for years and years to come."

Fox knows because he's seen thousands of utility bills. White Oak not only constructs buildings but manages them as well.

"We manage multiple buildings," Fox said. "We see the bills for energy costs and we know the significant benefits of efficient heating and cooling designs."

More information about Pence Northwest Construction at [www.pencenw.com](http://www.pencenw.com); Dalke Construction at [www.dalkeconstruction.com](http://www.dalkeconstruction.com); and White Oak Construction at [whiteoakconstruction.net](http://whiteoakconstruction.net). To learn more about the EarthWISE program, go to [www.mcEarthWISE.net](http://www.mcEarthWISE.net) or call 503-365-3188.