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In today's paper
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Tri-City Herald

SUNDAY

Record \$3.25M donation will launch Tri-Cities STEM center

BY ANNETTE CARY
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RICHLAND, WASH.

Thanks to the largest local donation in the history of Battelle, the Tri-Cities will have a community center to spark student interest in careers in science and technology.

Battelle, a nonprofit based in Ohio, is celebrating its 60th year operating Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland for the Department of Energy by donating \$3.25 million to Columbia Basin College in Pasco.

"It really came down to a chance to make a big impact and celebrate the anniversary," Lou Von Thaer, Battelle president and chief executive officer, said at Wednesday's ceremony in Richland "... And we don't have enough engineers in this country. We are not doing enough to create that spark for our kids."

The center will build on CBC's family engagement policy to empower students, families and educators and make them aware of opportunities for careers in science, technology, education and math, including at PNNL, he said.

The money will pay for CBC to establish the Community STEM Learning Center in a largely unused building in the northwest corner of its Pasco campus, forming a triangle with the CBC planetarium and observatory.

A hands-on, immersive learning center is planned in the 4,500-square-foot building that a decade ago housed the New Horizons High School and since the high school moved across campus, it has been used for temporary programs and storage.

SEE DONATION, 4A

RISING FROM THE ASHES

A fire charred this research forest. What happened next dazzled.



KAREN DUCEY / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Mark Harmon, a forest decomposition expert and professor emeritus at Oregon State University, surveys the Cold Creek site, the most extensively burned area in the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest, southeast of Eugene.

BY LYNDA V. MAPES
Seattle Times environmental reporter

ATOP LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN,
H.J. ANDREWS EXPERIMENTAL FOREST

This summit face was the coldest part of the mountain, shaded in thick old-growth forest. But nearly two years ago - after a roasting-hot run of dry summer weather - a lightning strike set the mountain on fire.

The Lookout fire burned three-quarters of this unique place, one of the nation's premier research forests, southeast of Eugene, Ore. Now what's unfolding in the aftermath could inform the future of other forests burned as wildfire becomes fiercer and more frequent with climate change.

The fire did at least \$800,000 in damage, burning up tags, wiring, sensors and other scientific instruments, while firefighting equipment tore up roads. Federal funds and insurance only partly cover the damage Andrews administrators are still assessing. Many researchers, including graduate students, also had their work upended when their study sites burned.



KAREN DUCEY / THE SEATTLE TIMES

An Oregon polemonium stretches skyward in the HJ Andrews Experimental Forest last month.

But the fire also ignited a whole new research agenda. Because there is such a wealth of long-term data collected in this research forest founded in 1948, scientists have a unique baseline from which to understand what it means when a forest burns - and starts over. Already, there are surprising discoveries.

There is new and greater diversity, and a bigger population of birds in the forest than before the fire, as species never recorded here before cruise into burned areas.

Towering totems of charred old-growth trees and blackened snags are

revealing secrets and surprises about how fire behaves. There are changes in the chemistry of soils and streams, shifts in daily maximum air temperatures where the fire burned hottest, creating a newly open canopy. Sediment in streams, shifts in aquatic species - salamander populations crashed - and so much more to understand.


We have grown in appreciation for fire, there is a balance of fearing and respecting it," said Brooke Penaluna, the lead scientist at the Andrews.

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