



Sign in to OregonLive.com »  
Not a member? Register Now »

Site Search

Search Local Business Listings

Search by keyword, town name, Web ID and more...

Go

- Home
- News
- Opinion
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Living
- Interact
- Jobs
- Autos
- Real Estate
- Classifieds
- Shop
- Place An Ad

- News
- Business
- Education
- Environment
- Metro
- Obits
- Photos
- Politics
- Special Coverage
- US & World
- Weather
- more News

Local News & Conversation: [City of Portland](#) | [Gresham](#) | [Lake Oswego](#) | [Tigard](#) | [Tualatin](#) | [West Linn](#)



## CLACKAMAS COUNTY NEWS

Oregon local news from Happy Valley, Lake Oswego, Milwaukie, Oregon City, Tualatin and West Linn

CLACKAMAS COUNTY  
with **The Oregonian**

- [Clackamas County News](#)
- [Weather](#) | [Traffic](#)
- [School Closures & Delays](#)
- [U.S. 205 Traffic Cams](#) 📹
- [Submit news and photos](#)
- [Oregonian Newspaper](#)

Browse by month:

Select a date

GO ▶

### LAKE OSWEGO FOCUS

#### Neighborhood news

- [Boys basketball playoffs: Odds and ends, facts and highlights](#)
- [On view: Melody Owen and Paula Rebsom at Marylhurst's Art Gym](#)
- [Investors flock to West Coast Bancorp](#)
- [Things to do today in Lake Oswego: Kids soccer sessions](#)

[MORE NEWS >>](#)

### Lake Oswego Forum

Have your say on local hot topics.

### WEST LINN FOCUS

#### Neighborhood news

- [State investigating West Linn Mayor Patti Galle over Voters' Pamphlet statement](#)
- [6A boys: Tenth-ranked Central Catholic beats West Linn in marathon](#)
- [Oregon City: Arch Bridge work rescheduled for 2011](#)
- [Things to do today in West Linn: Walking](#)

[Breaking News](#), [Business](#), [Clackamas County](#), [Economy](#), [Milwaukie >>](#)

## Founder of Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods transfers business to employees

By **Dana Tims, The Oregonian**  
February 16, 2010, 8:28PM



DOUG BEGTEL

Bob Moore overlooks his landmark Bob's Red Mill Natural Food store in Milwaukie. The 81-year-old just unveiled a program giving his 209 employees full ownership of the business. The company produces and markets a line of more than 400 whole-grain flours, cereals and bread mixes.

MILWAUKIE – Scores of employees gathered to help Bob Moore celebrate his 81st birthday this week at the company that bears his name, Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods.

Moore, whose mutual loves of healthy eating and old-world technologies spawned an internationally distributed line of products, responded with a gift of his own -- the whole company. The Employee Stock Ownership Plan Moore unveiled means that his 209 employees now own the place and its 400 offerings of stone-ground flours, cereals and bread mixes.

"This is Bob taking care of us," said Lori Sobelson, who helps run the business' retail operation. "He expects a lot out of us, but really gives us the world in return." Moore declined to say how much he thinks the company is worth. In 2004, however, one business publication estimated that year's revenues at more than \$24 million. A company news release issued this week stated that Bob's Red Mill has chalked up an annual growth rate of between 20 percent to 30 percent every year since.

"In some ways I had a choice," Moore said of what he could have done with

### Real-time News headlines

- [Trouble in paradise? Oregon coast community of Yachats suffering hard downturn](#)
- [Thieves take \\$350,000 worth of toys out of Portland home from Frank Kidd, owner of Kidd's Toy Museum](#)
- [Sea lions have left Oregon's Sea Lions Caves and reappearing at San Francisco's Pier 39](#)
- [Longview man gets 54 years for shooting ex-girlfriend's parents](#)

[More: Real-Time News >>](#)

Follow OregonLive.com News



Twitter



Facebook



TREAT FREQUENT HEARTBURN FOR A FULL 24 HOURS

SAVE \$2 NOW ▶

May take 1-4 days for full effect

©2009

Post Free Classifieds  
in print or on OregonLive.com

### YOUR CURRENT LOCAL CONDITIONS

Portland, OR [change location](#)



45°

Cloudy

[OREGON WEATHER FORECASTS & RADAR >>](#)

### READER ZONE

- [Contribute a news item or event](#)
- [Ask a question of an editor or reporter](#)

[group](#)

[MORE NEWS >>](#)

[West Linn Forum](#)

Have your say on local hot topics.

SAVE 15%  
ON INTERVIEW  
& RESUME  
SERVICES\*

USE PROMO  
CODE PDQ15

Get started now

\*Promo code expires 3/7/10.  
Half hour sessions are excluded.



360JobInterview.com

OregonLive.com



FRESHEN  
YOUR  
RESUME  
FOR 2010

360° JobInterview.com  
will help  
get you noticed

the company he founded with his wife, Charlee, in 1978. "But in my heart, I didn't. These people are far too good at their jobs for me to just sell it."

It's not that the offers aren't there. Hardly a day goes by that Nancy Garner, Moore's executive assistant, doesn't field a call or letter from someone wanting to buy the privately held company or take it public.

"I had four messages waiting when I returned from a recent vacation," she said. "Three of them were buy-out offers."

Garner said she and other employees are floored by Moore's plan, under which any worker with at least three years tenure is now fully vested. "We're still learning all of the details," Garner said, "but it's very humbling to be part of a company that cares this much about its employees."

An employee stock ownership plan, or ESOP, is a retirement plan in which the company contributes its stock to the plan to be held in trust for the benefit of its employees. The stock is never bought or held directly.

Vested employees are sent annual reports detailing their respective stakes in the company. When those employees quit or retire, they receive in cash whatever amount they -- and the company, through increased revenues, new sales and controlled costs -- are due.

"Eventual payouts could be substantial," said John Wagner, the company's chief financial officer and, along with Moore, one of four partners.

Moore said he began thinking about succession about nine years ago. He'd heard about employee stock option programs and got much more serious about the idea three years ago.

That Moore has now pulled off what few other company owners would even dream about comes as no surprise to longtime acquaintances, such as Glenn Dahl, owner of NatureBake bakery in Milwaukie.

"Bob's a force of nature," said Dahl, whose family's Gresham-area bakery was Moore's first wholesale customer in the 1970s. "He's always been that way. He gets an idea and just makes sure it happens, one way or the other."

Moore's own background is in electrical and mechanical engineering, but he fell in love with the mechanics of stone grinding in the 1960s after reading about old stone-grinding flour mills.

At about the same time, Charlee began sharing with him her delvings into the nutritional benefits of eating whole grain foods. The couple put their passions to work by starting, with their three sons, their first milling operation in Redding, Calif.

In 1978, the couple moved to Portland to retire. Moore's idea at the time, reflecting his long-held sense of spirituality, was to learn the Bible in its original languages. A chance walk past a closed mill site near Oregon City, changed everything.

"I call it my emotional epiphany," Moore said. "Whatever excuse I care to give, I was just sucked into it like a vortex."

A 1988 arson destroyed the mill, when Moore was 60. Undeterred, he rebuilt the operation, moved once due to space needs and now occupies a 15-acre production facility and a two-acre headquarters and retail outlet along Oregon 224 in Milwaukie.

Three production shifts, running six days a week, turn out a line of goods distributed throughout North America, Asia and the Middle East.

The company earned an extra splash of international recognition when a team



DOUG BEGHTEL

Bob Moore, clad as always in his distinctive red jacket, chats Tuesday with customers Sarah Gannholm, her husband, Martin Gannholm, and their children, Siri, 9, Leo, 2, and Alistair, 7.

**FORUMS**

Talk about the latest news and events in Clackamas County.

- [Read, respond or start new topics](#)
- [Lake Oswego](#)
- [West Linn](#)
- [Wilsonville](#)

[ALL OREGON FORUMS >>](#)

**Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods**

**Founded:** 1978 by Bob and Charlee Moore

**Where:** Two Milwaukie locations

**Employees:** 209

**Growth:** 20-30 percent each of the past five years

**Key now:** Transitioning to an employee-owned company



traveled to Scotland and, apparently feeling their oats, won the world's porridge-making championship.

Employees, who are just now grasping the meaning of Moore's birthday gift.

"It just shows how much faith and trust Bob has in us," said Bo Thomas, the company's maintenance superintendent, who has put his four children through college during his two decades there. "For all of us, it's more than just a job. Obviously, it's the same way for Bob, too."

For Moore, meanwhile, nothing about the new arrangement will change a thing. He plans to do for the foreseeable future what he has done every day for decades.

"I may have given them the company," he said, chuckling, "but the boss part is still mine."

-- Dana Tims

ADVERTISEMENT

• [Meet with an HR expert in your field for Live 1-on-1 career coaching](#)

**employee stock options**

Understand The Value Of Stock Options- Call Christopher K. Winn. [www.AmeripriseAdvisors.com](http://www.AmeripriseAdvisors.com)

**Bank of America® Mortgage**

Take Advantage Of Low Refi Rates For Home Loans Up To \$3 Million. [www.bankofamerica.com](http://www.bankofamerica.com)

**Super Cheap Car Insurance**

Get Super Cheap Auto Insurance Quotes - You Won't Believe the Rates! [www.usinsuranceonline.com](http://www.usinsuranceonline.com)

Sponsored Links

**Recommend (0)**

**Print this**   **Email this**

**Share this:**

**Previous story: Before his own burst of violence, Clackamas deputy worked in trauma intervention**

**Next story: West Linn gets the jump on No. 9 Clackamas**

**Story tags:** [bob moore](#) | [bob's red mill natural foods](#) | [employee owned stock ownership](#)

**Comments** (25 total) **RSS** **Post a comment**

**Oldest comments are shown first. [Show newest comments first](#)**

**1 | 2**   **[Next comments »](#)**

Posted by **whitebuffalo**  
February 16, 2010, 8:53PM

Bless you Bob.

[Inappropriate comment? Alert us.](#)

**[Reply to this comment](#) | [Post a new comment](#)**

Posted by **Slickk**  
February 16, 2010, 9:04PM

Sure. They have to pay the back taxes now...thanks to 66/67.

[Inappropriate comment? Alert us.](#)

**[Reply to this comment](#) | [Post a new comment](#)**