

# Smooth transition at B,N&B

## Titles change, but the service continues

■ By Rodger Nichols  
*The Chronicle*

Byers, Neumayer & Bradford, the longtime local accounting firm, made a major change at the first of the year. Nathan Reagan and Carol Friend purchased the company from their partners, Ben Neumayer and Gary Bradford.

Chances are, clients won't notice any difference.

That's because continuity and stability are two key goals of the firm.

"John [Byers] retired in 2003, but he still is working here, and his name is still on the firm," noted Gary Bradford.

Nathan Reagan agreed. "Carol has been here 12 years and is starting her fourth year as partner," he said. "I've been here 14 years and starting my third year as partner. It's a very smooth transition."

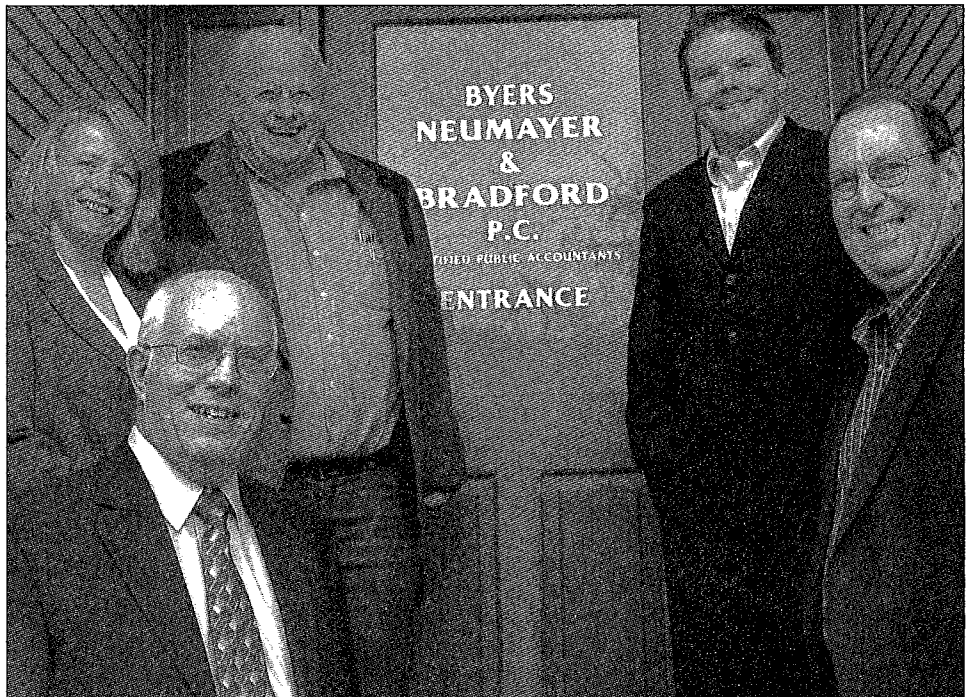
As part of the seamless move, he said, Neumayer and Bradford will remain as employees, working full-time during the busy tax season, but with more freedom to take off blocks of time with family during the rest of the year.

Reagan, Friend, Neumayer, Bradford and Byers met with *The Chronicle* in late January to discuss the change, and to honor Byers, who this year is working on his 60th tax season. (See related story below).

Reagan said the best piece of advice he'd received in college was to seek out a firm with multiple partners, rather than a solo practice.

That's served him well, he said.

"There's so much available in terms of different thought process and background," he said. "You have access to all that expertise and institutional



BYERS, NEUMAYER & BRADFORD partners and former partners gather for a photo Jan. 29. Clockwise from upper left: John Byers, Nathan Reagan, Gary Bradford, Ben Neumayer and Carol Friend. Rodger Nichols photo

memory."

It's a practice the firm has followed since it was founded by Leonard D. (Dude) Bailey in 1946.

Originally, he was a partner with John Will, but Will later left.

John Byers and Ron Clark joined the firm in 1955, and later became partners. It was known as Bailey, Clark and Byers for many years.

"When Dude [Bailey] hired me," Neumayer said, "he said, 'You may get to be a partner some day, but we're not going to even talk about it for five years.'"

Neumayer joined in 1976 and became a partner in 1982. Gary Bradford joined in 1979 and became a partner in 1984.

"I don't think it's appropriate to buy and sell accounting practices with strangers," said Neumayer. "That doesn't happen here. We bring people up through the ranks."

Gary Bradford agreed. "Our clients depend on us to be here all the time," he said.

And Neumayer pointed out, personalities have to click. "You spend more

time down here than you do at home," he said, drawing nods from all present.

With five Certified Public Accountants available, B,N&B is busy far beyond tax season.

The firm handles full-cycle bookkeeping, payrolls, quarterly reports, interest statements, issuing W-2 forms and performing audits.

"We do municipal audits and nonprofit audits," said Friend, "Somewhere around 20 of them."

That includes work for Wasco County, Sherman County, Columbia Gorge Community College, the Port of The Dalles, and various service districts.

"We somewhat pride ourselves at being experts in the agriculture field," Byers added. "We work with farmers in Wasco, Hood River, Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler and Jefferson counties. There are a lot of special rules for farmers."

But the big push is during tax season. We asked them what's the most important thing taxpayers can do.

"Keep track of everything," said Carol Friend

instantly. "Keep good records."

Ben Neumayer added his own: "I always tell people, tax planning is a year-round process. You don't wait until the week between Christmas and New Year's. You need to be conscious of it all the time. When you go to the Salvation Army with a donation, get that slip and put it away where you can find it at tax time."

Do many people ask for advice?

"Many people don't want to pay for advice," said Neumayer, "but we try to do a tax return that's a notch or two or three above what you have in some of these other places. If you've got two people working, with just their W-2s, you probably don't need us to do your taxes. You can do it yourself."

"But some people like to have a CPA doing their tax return instead of a preparer," said Bradford. "It's an extra level of comfort."

The Byers, Neumayer & Bradford office is located at 305 East 5th in The Dalles. Their phone number is (541) 296-2000.