Nearly a century ago, a young couple started a modest cherry orchard in the rolling hills above The Dalles. Because the orchard had just two varieties, the harvest season was only three weeks long. From picking to packing, everything was done by hand and for the most part, the fruits of their labor did not travel very far.

But Walter and Mable Bailey scratched out a living, harvesting 18 tons of cherries in their first season. They made it through the Great Depression and were able to pass the business on to their children.

Now, 91 years later, the fourth-generation operation has blossomed into one of the largest economic drivers in Wasco County. Orchard View Farms consists of 95 full-time employees and adds another 700 workers from mid-June through mid-August. Farm operations sprawl some 2,000-acres and into three neighboring counties – Hood River, Sherman and Klickitat (in Washington). At times, machines are humming 18 hours a day to keep up with 10,000 tons of fresh fruit.

One of those machines is a hydrocooler that helps keep the produce under 40 degrees while being moved around the processing facility. A cool cherry stays fresher longer and can better withstand the bumps in its journey into a box. And the boxes at Orchard View Farms travel the globe – many of which end up in Taiwan, China, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Hydrocooler enables farm to nearly double capacity

Orchard View Farms added the hydrocooler to its packing line in 2008, thanks to the help of Oregon’s Business Energy Tax Credit program. The cooler, along with associated controls, cost about $100,000. That was the first phase of an expansion process alongside an older hydrocooler already in place. In 2009 the farm installed additional fruit-sizing and packing equipment.
“We had to do it to grow.”

nearby. In just two years, the business was able to almost double its production capacity for nearly a dozen varieties.

Not only did the newer hydrocooler add to the farm’s capacity, but by keeping the cherries a little cooler throughout its journey, it has improved the overall quality of the fruit.

“We weren’t able to obtain the proper temperature that we wanted to,” said Mike Carter, Facilities/Plant Manager for Orchard View Farms. “The second cooler enables us to get the water colder and keep the cherries cold prior to shipping.”

“If it’s a firmer cherry, it’s less apt to have issues.”

The expansion also allowed Orchard View to hire an extra 75 people during the peak season.

To remain a leader in the industry, Orchard View Farms continually reinvests in its operation. In 2012, the farm upgraded water piping associated with the hydrocooler. One year later, they added a self-closing “speed door” to one of its refrigeration units to ensure the cold air didn’t leak out due to someone forgetting to close it.

The recent upgrades have enabled Carter and others running the farm’s operations to focus on the future, once again.

“I think the cooler has paid for itself now because of the volume we’ve put through it,” said Carter. “We had to do it to grow.”

The upcoming generation of the Bailey family – the fifth – is now set up to start on the next 100 years.

About ODOE’s Business Energy Tax Credit Program
The Business Energy Tax Credit Program began in 1979 to help Oregonians invest in energy conservation, renewable energy resources, rental weatherization and cleaner transportation fuels. In the 35 years of the program’s existence, BETC certified about 25,000 projects that helped save, displace or generate more than $1.6 billion in energy savings or new energy sources. The Oregon Department of Energy now administers business tax credits and grants through the replacement Energy Incentives Program. For more information, please visit www.Oregon.gov/Energy/Business/Incentives