

Port of Morrow aims to recruit \$100 million plant

Published: Friday, June 24, 2011, 6:07 PM Updated: Friday, June 24, 2011, 6:14 PM



By **The Oregonian**

The Oregon Legislature kept alive a corporate tax break that it had intended to allow to expire in hopes of landing a new business that is considering opening a \$100 million facility at the **Port of Morrow** in Boardman.

The identity of the company and how many jobs it might offer remained a mystery Friday afternoon. Gary Neal, general manager at the Port of Morrow, confirmed that a business is considering the Port and a site in another state. He would not name the company, nor would he say how many jobs it would provide, or even the industry in which it does business.

"It's a decent amount of jobs," Neal said. "It's not in the hundreds. It would bring good diversity to our mix."

The Oregon Investment Advantage tax break was among those scheduled to sunset this year. A special joint committee at the Legislature that was working on an overhaul of state tax credits had decided to let it expire, said **Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner**. Smith intervened when heard about the potential new tenant at the Port of Morrow and that the company hoped to take use the Investment Advantage tax break. Smith asked the committee chairs to extend the sunset date five years.

In a compromise, the committee approved the extension, but amended the program to require that a business pay income taxes for the first two years before it can become eligible for the 10-year state income tax "holiday."

"It allows the company to show its commitment to operating in Oregon," Smith said. That version of the tax credit bill passed both chambers and is headed to the governor for his signature. Smith called the extended tax break "a great win for rural Oregon."

Neal said the Port of Morrow has a large industrial park that is home to food processing, industrial and energy companies. About 2,000 people are employed on port land. Cargo handled by the port includes refrigerated vegetable products, frozen food products that are exported and ethanol barged downriver to blending stations.

Oregon Business Development Department spokesman Marc Zolton said his department had no

information about the company.

Oregonian staffers Harry Esteve, Richard Read and Jeff Manning contributed to this report.

© 2011 OregonLive.com. All rights reserved.