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Intel in Your Community Oregon


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Intel Lands in Oregon

In 1974, when the minimum wage was \$1.60 and Portland Saturday Market was just starting up, The Oregonian reported "a major electronics manufacturer has taken options on a site in Washington County for a plant," following several months of negotiations. That company was Intel.

Oregon had landed on Intel's radar when a member of the Tektronix* board, interested in expanding Oregon's high technology universe, called Intel's co-founder, Gordon Moore. "You should consider Portland. It's got a good quality of life and a good labor pool," Keith Thomson, a former Intel Oregon Site Manager, recalls. "We were looking for a place within an hour or two by airplane from San Jose, which opened up Seattle, Salt Lake and Phoenix," said Thomson.

Intel bought property in Aloha, where it planned to build its first Oregon facility, a manufacturing building to be designated Fab 4. Because of economic uncertainties, Intel postponed opening Fab 4 until 1976, when a few hundred employees reported to work. In the interim, in 1976 Hewlett-Packard* opened a facility in Corvallis.

Intel initially saw itself as such a minimal, low profile presence in Oregon that Fab 4 lacked even an Intel name on the building. The company remained low-visibility in Aloha and Oregon well into the next decade. In 1978, Intel built its second Aloha fab, Fab 5.

By the end of the decade, Intel's Oregon employment had grown to 2,800, but it was still a big player in Washington County's and Oregon's economy.

In 1979, Intel spread out, buying property for a Hawthorn Farm Campus in the rural village of Hillsboro. Intel opened the first campus building, Hawthorn Farm 1 (HF1) that same year. In the late 1950s, Hillsboro's principal industry was a Bird's Eye* cannery, processing products from the area's farms. By the 1970s, the cannery was empty, farming and forest products industries were shrinking and Hillsboro was looking for new economic stimulus. Sensing a potent potential in high technology, the city pursued high-tech companies with special vigor.

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