

WINTER: Not all businesses slow down

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Being a teleflorist coupled with having an e-commerce website where customers can view floral arrangements online and either order there or place phone calls to Enterprise greatly reduces problems associated with wintry driving conditions. The staff of Enterprise Flower Shop delivers 85 percent of all orders destined to in-county recipients.

Another business in Enterprise, a Mexican restaurant named El Bajio at the corner of Highway 82 and River Street, is open nearly 12 hours seven days per week throughout the year and experiences no seasonal ups or downs in customer traffic, says owner Leo Arenas.

With a seating capacity of 44 diners, El Bajio has been serving the public for 11 years and employs three people in addition to Arenas and wife Audra.

Still, the majority of businesses in Wallowa County either slow down operations or close altogether for the winter months.

The harshness of the county's winter business climate became apparent to new business owners Kathy and David Nelson, who opened Pit Stop BBQ in Wallowa Memorial Day weekend of 2014 and had planned to stay open year-around. Admittedly stubborn and reluctant to renege on statements she'd made to loyal customers about that plan to keep operating through winter, Kathy Nelson finally closed the drive-thru eatery Dec. 8.



Rocky Wilson/Chieftain
Unlike the norm in Wallowa County, El Bajio Mexican Restaurant owner Leo Arenas says his business in Enterprise suffers no seasonal fluctuations throughout the year.

"It got slower and slower," she said. "I'd stand there nine hours and get four to six customers."

The peak of Pit Stop BBQ's business came during the business's opening Memorial Day weekend, was strong during Wallowa's 4th of July celebration, but was slower than anticipated during Tamkaliks when there were competing food sales at that Native Ameri-

can ceremonial site. She estimates that maybe 20 percent of available lodging accommodations within the county are filled in the months of January, February and March, compared to possibly 80 percent during the months of July, August and September.



Rocky Wilson/Chieftain
Speaking from a business standpoint, Enterprise Flower Shop owner Darlene Johnson says winter, because of Valentine's Day and Christmas, is her busiest time of the year.

Statements made by both Ron Woodin, owner of Flying Arrow Resort, at Wallowa Lake, and David Hurley, co-owner along with

wife Susanna of both Eagle Cap Chalet, also at the lake, and Eagle's View Inn & Suites, west of Enterprise, substantiate Searles' observations.

Of the total 37 cabins Flying Arrow Resort either owns or manages, only nine are open year-around and winter occupancy in those units, according to owner Ron Woodin, primarily is limited to weekends and holidays. Up to 90 percent of that business operation's revenue is generated between Memorial Day and October, says Woodin, and in the winter months a summer work crew of eight to 10 persons is whittled down to two.

Hurley, who rents a total of 87 rooms at his two businesses, reduces his rates 25 percent in the winter, yet says, "There's not enough activity to tempt people from outside the area to come in during the winter."

Garrett Mahon, owner of Goebel's LLC, in Wallowa, says gasoline sales at his station are cut in half during the slow winter months. Acknowledging that he doesn't even try to break down how many gasoline sales are made to local customers as differentiated from non-local customers, Mahon suggests that gasoline prices do not impact gasoline sales. "I'm not selling any more gasoline now (at under \$3 per gallon) than I was when the price was four dollars. Gasoline is a necessity."

At Goebel's, says Mahon, top business days of the year come at the opening of deer hunting season.

ornaments) is time-consuming, but it went very well," said Ryeanson.

A total of 144 Christmas Baskets were delivered without charge on Dec. 20, 2014, to families living in all corners of Wallowa County.

DUNN: NRAC chair doesn't care if his words sound harsh

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The first note under "Meeting purposes and desired outcomes" on that agenda reads, "To convene a cross-section of partners from various stakeholder groups to discuss process options for additional engagement for the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision."

Says Dunn, "I don't engage people in a plan that sucks."

The meeting will be held at the Supervisor's Office of the Umatilla National Forest, at 72510 Coyote Road in Pendleton, and Dunn, although not invited, plans to be present at a meeting starting at 9 a.m. County commissioners from Wallowa County have been invited, and Dunn has offered to chauffeur Commissioner Susan Roberts to the meeting, she still being unable to drive because of a broken ankle.

Dunn's anxious for one particular question to be posed at the meeting: *Who present actually has read the entire 1,400-page document?* He said he doesn't care if the question comes from his mouth or from Roberts'. The point Dunn said he wishes to stress here is how illogical it is to engage people on how best to promote a document so few have read.

Opposition to the plan that bears on future forest management in Northeast Oregon has emerged from varying quarters,

including the Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA), an 11-county organization of which 10 member counties touch at least one of the three national forests in question.

John Williams, local OSU Extension agent who is another longtime NRAC member, stated earlier that the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision "is basically almost exclusive restrictions" and could become a "permit nightmare."

Dunn and Williams, primary authors of a 108-page official rebuttal submitted by Wallowa County in August 2014 in opposition to the Forest Service's proposed document, concur that the science used by the Forest Service is outdated. Said Dunn to the Board of Commissioners Monday, "Their science is from the 1990s."

Roberts said Monday that she has read the 1,400-page management plan in question, yet admitted there were large sections of technical writing where reading and understanding what she had read parted ways.

When submitting the county's official rebuttal in August, the board of commissioners attached a county resolution accusing the Forest Service of departing from Land and Management Plan Practices because of changing political theories, not changes in forest conditions.

BASKETS: Christmas custom stays alive with help from county

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These, coupled with smaller cash donations, made possible the purchase of turkeys, chickens, and some presents at no expense to the Elks Lodge, which had long been carrying the financial load to keep the

program afloat.

More than 60 volunteers stepped forward to assist in the Christmas basket half of the program while many others, under the leadership of Enterprise city office employees Michele Young and Lacey McQuead, took the Tree of Giving program

from scratch and turned it into a total success.

"That Tree of Giving effort (where homemade ornaments are placed on one tree, then taken by residents wishing to supply specified gifts to children whose information is attached to the

ornaments) is time-consuming, but it went very well," said Ryeanson.

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