

EVENTS

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The free span structure will be reminiscent of the many hay barns in the county, Oberhelman said.

Oberhelman pointed out that there was vigorous volunteer support for the project.

The building under consideration has an estimated total cost of \$460,500. The ice rink committee intends to ask the state to kick in \$345,000. In-kind donations to meet the 20 percent requirement have already been pledged up to \$110,500. Another \$5,000 could be raised through advertising at the rink, which could pay for upkeep each year.

The council will render its decision at a later date, but comments were positive. Mayor Stacey Karvoski reminded the council that an ice rink had been part of the city plan for eight years.

But it wasn't the only event that asked for funding.

The 14th annual Mountain High Broncs and Bulls Rodeo, scheduled for June 17, was represented by MHBB president Wup Winn. Winn asked for \$2,000 to assist with the popular event. Board of Directors member and official rodeo announcer Lee Daggett reminded the council that MHBB organizers were not newcomers to the process and had proved their value year after year.

Candy Bunn represented the Main Street Show and Shine car show. Bunn asked for the full amount as well and advised the council that some clubs have promised to double the number of cars they bring. Last year the show down Main Street featured 113 registered entries.

Janice Carper represented two events, asking for the full amount for each. Carper represents both the Juniper Jam and the continuing courthouse concert series.

The Juniper Jam is Sept. 2 and all performance spots are filled already, Carper said.

"I turned down lots of really quality music to keep it down to one day," Carper said.

The event costs about \$22,000 to put on and \$10,000 of that is covered by business sponsorships.

Carper is also executive director of the Wallowa Valley Music Alliance, which sponsors the courthouse concert series. That event is held in the gazebo on the courthouse lawn every Thursday from June 2 through Aug. 25.

The public continues to enjoy the free music, bringing out blankets and lawn chairs, and many local businesses arrange pre-events on the Friday preceding the concert, making it doubly valuable to the community, Carper reported.

The Greater Enterprise Merchants Society asked for \$2,000 to continue the flower project that places large baskets of flowers throughout the downtown area.

Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness work programs have found individuals to keep the baskets and flowers in good health.

"The workers have done a very good job for us," said representative Wendy Stewart. "But they won't be available this year."

The watering and fertilizing service cost \$1,700 per year.

GEMS hopes to use motel tax funds to pay for an employee to maintain the baskets and buy more baskets to expand further downtown.

GEMS also requested the full grant for the Eighth Annual Bowlby Bash. The



Kathleen Elynn/Chieftain

Fun at the opening ceremony of Oregon's Alpenfest in the gazebo on the Wallowa County Courthouse lawn in 2016.



Courtesy photo

The Wallowa County Ice Rink would be similar to this free-span, steel construction ice rink in Mahoney State Park in Nebraska.

name of the event, which is held the second week in July, will be changed in 2017 to Summer Fest.

It was originally named after a the Bowlby family who homesteaded near Enterprise in the 1890s.

"Visitors found the Bowlby Bash name

confusing and difficult to understand," Stewart said.

Oregon's Alpenfest is also a going concern for another year with new events to be held in Enterprise, in addition to the festival at the head of Wallowa Lake.

Alpenmeister Chuck Anderson represented the festival and reported that 800 individuals bought tickets for Oregon's Alpenfest in 2016, 750 took home souvenir beer mugs, and 450 patronized the bratwagon that is set up on the Main Street in Enterprise on Sept. 28.

Other Enterprise-specific events include the Alpenfest Parade and official Alpenfest opening, which is held in the gazebo on the courthouse lawn. The kick-off event at Terminal Gravity, which features accordion music, will feature Alicia Baker this year.

To further expand the Enterprise focus this year, the popular glass steins will again be given away again in 2017 and will feature a sticker encouraging tourism in Enterprise.

A new bratwagon is being built with a Swiss chalet design, Anderson said.

City council will decide which events to fund at the April council meeting.

WOLVES

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"We want to develop a more effective system to ensure that Wildlife Services' staff working in areas with wolves know what ODFW knows about wolf activity."

OR-48, a 100-pound male from the Shamrock Pack, died Feb. 26 after it bit an M-44 device, which fires cyanide powder into a predator's mouth when it tugs on a baited or scented capsule holder. Wildlife Services set the trap on private land in an attempt to kill coyotes. Williams would not give any more detail about where in Wallowa County the incident took place, but did say they had the landowner's blessing to place M-44s on the property.

Wildlife Services, a federal agency, kills predators or other wildlife that damage or pose a threat to property, livestock or humans. The agency describes M-44s as an "effective and environmentally sound wildlife damage management tool," but the wildlife activist group Predator Defense calls them notoriously dangerous.

The devices are designed to kill canids such as coyotes and foxes. The cyanide powder reacts with saliva in an animal's mouth, forming a poisonous gas that kills the animal within one to five minutes.

Brooks Fahy, executive director of Predator Defense, said M-44s indiscriminately kill dogs attracted by the scent and are a hazard to children or others who might come across them in rural areas.

According to the Associated Press, just last week an M-44 killed a family dog and injured a boy near Pocatello, Idaho.

The Wallowa County incident is complicated by Oregon's management and protection of gray wolves over the past decade after they entered the state from Idaho and formed packs, quickly grew in population and spread geographically.

Previously, Wildlife Services did not use M-44s in what the state designated as areas of known wolf activity. After wolves were taken off the state endangered species list in 2015, it was ODFW's understanding that Wildlife Services would continue to avoid using M-44s in such areas.

"We discussed our concerns specifically regarding M-44s," ODFW spokesman Rick Hargrave said last week. "We didn't intend to kill — in 1.3 percent of cases, he said. He said the agency twice unintentionally caught Oregon wolves in foothold traps, which nonetheless allowed ODFW to put tracking collars on them before releasing them unharmed."

"We believed it was clear what our concerns were," Hargrave said.

Williams, the Wildlife Services state director, said he wants to focus on preventing another wolf death rather than "who messed up here."

He said the Wallowa County case was the first time the agency has killed a wolf in Oregon. Overall, the agency has recorded "lethal take" of "non-targeted" animals — ones it didn't intend to kill — in 1.3 percent of cases, he said. He said the agency twice unintentionally caught Oregon wolves in foothold traps, which nonetheless allowed ODFW to put tracking collars on them before releasing them unharmed.

"Some of our tools are more forgiving than others," Williams said.

He said Wildlife Services is discussing with other state and federal agencies about the future of M-44s in a state that continues to see wolves expand in population and geographic area.

"We'll see where we can draw some lines in the various counties where we can agree that we don't want to set M-44s," said Williams, noting that there may still be places where the poison can be the right tool.

Yet Williams said lethal methods are not their preferred solution, and that Wildlife Services puts on workshops to help ranchers protect livestock with non-lethal methods. In one case two summers ago, agency personnel spent 260 hours over four weeks helping protect a sheep flock from Umatilla Pack wolves, he said. The work allowed ODFW to avoid having to kill wolves due to depredations, he said.

Meanwhile, the Oregon Cattlemen's Association views the Wallowa County incident as a matter of agency-to-agency interaction and is "staying on the sidelines," said Todd Nash, Wallowa County Commissioner and rancher, who is the group's wolf policy chair.

Livestock producers, of course, have a keen interest in the state's wolf management policies and outcomes.

"It's never a good time politically to have a dead wolf," Nash said.

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