Youth art submissions sought for Eagle Watch

The 22nd annual Eagle Watch celebration will be February 25-26 at Round Butte Overlook Park. The celebration honors eagles and other raptors that live in the Lake Billy Chinook area. Hosted by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), Portland General Electric (PGE), Crooked River Grassland, and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS), the event features activities to explore the natural and cultural significance of the birds.

The two-day celebration runs 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, February 25 and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, February 26. Festivities will be in "Eagle Village" at Round Butte Overlook Park's visitor center, 10 miles west of Madras.

"This is a fun, free weekend event perfect for the entire family," said event coordinator and OPRD Park Ranger Erin Bennett. "Visitors will have the opportunity to glimpse our resident bald eagles and golden eagles, as well as learn about the significance of the eagle to tribal culture and traditions."

Central Oregon students in 4th-12th grade can enter an eagle art contest through 3 p.m. February 17. Winners will be announced at lunch on February 25, and their artwork will be on display during the celebration. Artwork can be dropped off at the Cove Palisades State Park or at your school's office. Contest rules are posted at covepalisades.wordpress.com.

Event attendees can meet Aquila, a rehabilitated golden eagle, as well as a great horned owl that lives at the Sunriver Nature Center. Saturday at noon, children can meet JR Beaver, Smokey Bear and Larry the Lightbulb. Children are also invited to participate in the eagle race (on Saturday) or make a bird feeder (on Sunday). Madras Garden Center will demonstrate how to create a backyard refuge to enjoy birdwatching year-round at your own home.

Wild eagle viewing will take place each day at Round Butte Overlook Park and two overlooks on Mountain View Road. Wildlife biologists have recorded 11 bald eagle pairs and nine golden eagle pairs living in the area year-round, and migrant bald eagles join the resident birds from January through March.

PHOTO BY SUE ANDERSON

Central Oregonians come out in numbers to view eagles.

For those who want more, on Sunday at 4:30 p.m. attendees can go to Smith Rock State Park for an hour-long guided tour with Oregon Eagle Foundation volunteer David Vick.

The Quartz Creek Drummers and Dancers will provide a special presentation of tribal drumming and dancing sponsored by Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises at 2 p.m. on Sunday.

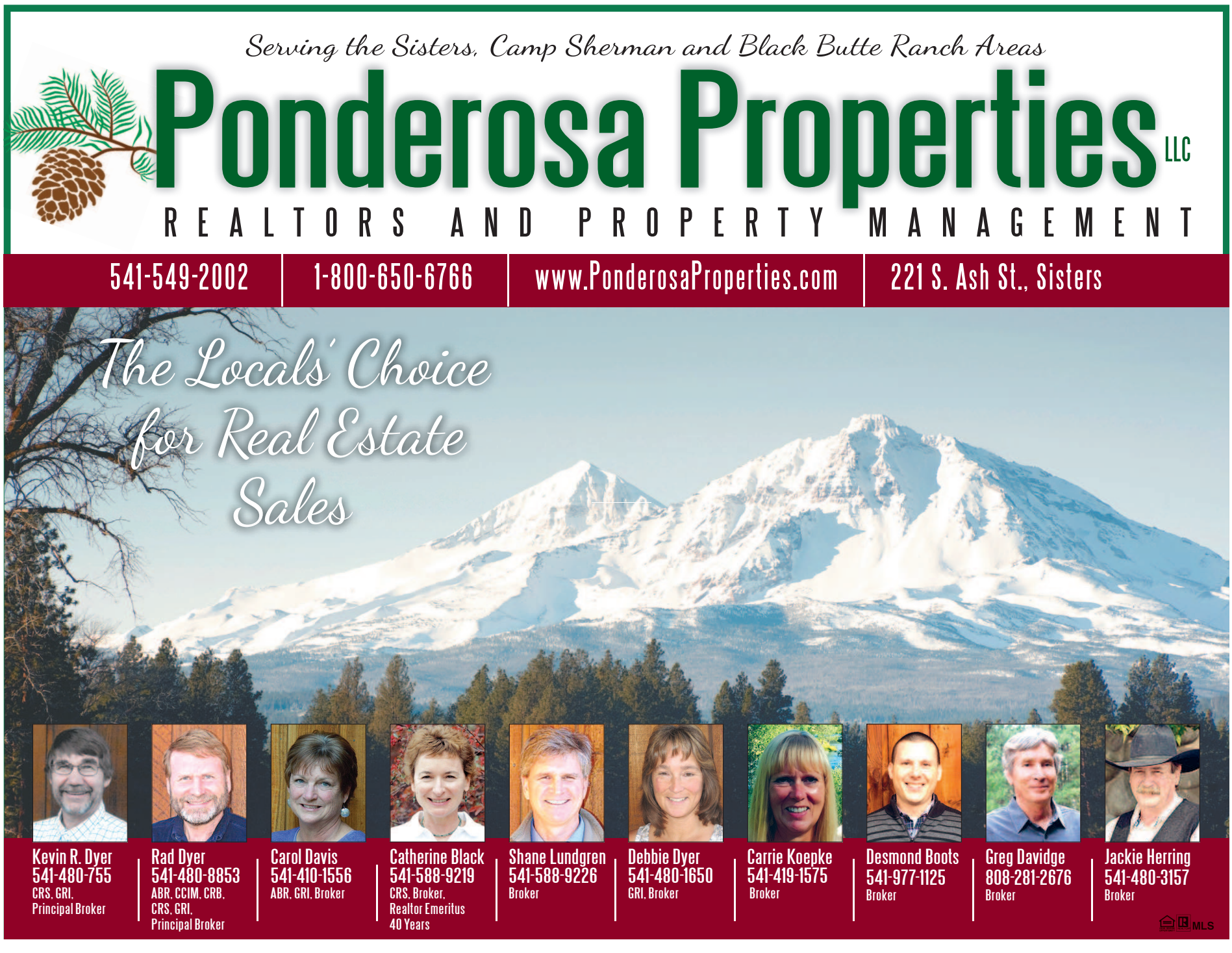
Admission and parking at PGE's Round Butte Overlook Park is free. Attendees can purchase souvenirs and participate in a daily silent auction, with proceeds benefiting the Oregon Eagle Foundation. Indian fry bread proceeds will support sending local kids to the rodeo, and donations for lunch support Culver Middle School's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) program. Only cash and checks will be accepted; no ATM is on site.

Call Oregon State Parks Information at 800-551-6949 or The Cove Palisades State Park at 541-546-3412 for information, or visit www.oregonstateparks.org, the Cove Palisades blog, The Cove Rattler, at covepalisades.wordpress.com or Facebook.

Ex-Klamath sheriff denied grand jury notes ahead of trial

KLAMATH FALLS (AP) — Former Klamath County Sheriff Frank Skrah has been denied access to notes from his grand jury indictment just weeks before he is set to go to trial for misdemeanor charges.

The Herald and News reported Wednesday that a judge ruled that Skrah can't see the grand jury notes, despite an argument by his attorneys that they may contain exculpatory information.

In Oregon, grand jury notes are considered confidential but may be unclassified in some circumstances.

Skrah was indicted in September 2015 on nine misdemeanor counts related to three instances of alleged excessive use of force and one instance of alleged neglect of property owner's rights related to his role as sheriff. He is scheduled to stand trial February 8.