

**PERMITS:** Public input sought on USFS renewals

*Continued from page 23*

or multiple permits may be obtained by submitting questions or comments to this project. Submit written comments by Monday, January 8, 2018, so they can be considered in the analysis. Any comments received will be placed in the project file and shall become a matter of the public record. Submit comments to S. Mike Bishop, Administrative & Special Uses Support, P.O. Box 249, Sisters, OR 97759; telephone 541-549-7743; FAX 541-549-7746. Email comments should be sent to: comments-pacificnorthwest-deschutes-sisters@fs.fed.us. Those submitting hand-delivered comments may do so during the regular office hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday except legal holidays.

Those submitting electronic copies must do so only to the email address listed above, must put the project name in the subject line, and must either submit comments as part of the email message or as an attachment only in one of the following three formats: Microsoft Word, rich text format (rtf) or Adobe Portable Document Format (pdf).

**Commentary...**

**When roots run deep: Trauma in a small town**

By **Audry Van Houweling, PMHNP**  
Columnist

I have an unusually strong affinity for small towns. Some people find more energy and excitement in the big city, but to me there is an undeniable allure and richness within the layers, roots, stories, and secrets of generations past that define small-town America. I am intrigued by both the triumphs and woes that give a place identity and how this influences the collective consciousness of its residents.

This collective consciousness or energy is much more palpable in a small town. Ripples of change are felt more acutely — more intimately. It is as if you would compare a pebble being tossed in a fish bowl with a pebble being tossed in a lake.

These ripples carry energy — both positive and negative.

Ripples carrying the anticipation of the local parade. The relief from the local festival boosting business. The celebration of the Friday-night football victory. The pride of this year's graduating class. The excitement of a new store or coffee shop coming to town.

Ripples also carrying the unease when business gets

slow and jobs dissipate. The grief that permeates when somebody passes on. The helplessness of addiction that can swallow communities alive. The desperation felt at Sandy Hook, Sutherland Springs, Roseburg, Blacksburg, and too many others.

Even events that may seem small and commonplace — marriage, divorce, a child's struggle, illness, financial strife, and more can have significant impacts in a small town as one individual can have so many interconnections with others.

The communities of Sisters and Silverton where I currently practice have been fortunate to enjoy recent economic prosperity, growth, and are both known as desirable destinations. Working in mental health you learn to appreciate stability, but also to look beyond the charm. You learn about grief, bullying, scandal, loss, and family dysfunction with roots dating all the way back to the Oregon Trail.

Trauma in a small town can be both collective, in that it is felt by many whether or not they directly experienced the event, and/or intergenerational in that the pain can be transferred from one

generation to the next.

The intricacies and dynamics of all these interconnections can also create a level of stigma such that asking for help can seem too risky or may make one too vulnerable. There may be fear of gossip, a breach of confidentiality, or simply being able to find someone to talk to without bias.

The beauty of small towns, however, is that in this web of interconnections, deeply rooted generations, and tight-knit community is also power. Small acts of kindness are not so small. Creating space for vulnerability and authenticity in our schools, places of worship, and social gatherings can have far-reaching impacts. Seeking common ground rather than reinforcing divisions can create a net of safety and acceptance. Valuing community instead

of self-reliance. Creating dialogue about the hard stuff — depression, anxiety, grief, addiction, trauma, suicide and shame can take someone from a place of isolation to empowerment.

Albeit perhaps for selfish reasons, my role as a mental-health provider seems to have more significance in a small town when an individual's progress seems to have more immediate impacts on their family, workplace, school, and ultimately, the community.

While the place in which we live has an impact on our identity and self-concept, it is also our actions and beliefs that help define and transform a place. In the meantime, I continue to enjoy the great privilege of being part of the small-town experience...and dropping my pebble in the fishbowl.



**Phil Arends**  
541-420-9997  
phil@blackbutte.com

**HOWELLS REALTY GROUP**



PEAK PROPERTIES PARTNERSHIP  
Black Butte Ranch, Sisters Area,  
and Central Oregon



**Dick Howells**  
541-408-6818  
rahowells@blackbutte.com

Let our 40+ years of combined experience work for you.  
Whether you are buying or selling, call us for a no-obligation consultation.

www.realestateinsisters.com | 220 S. Ash St., Sisters MLS

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS

Remind the people of Sisters to

# BUY LOCAL

for Products & Services





Studies show that when people “shop local” their money circulates at least three times in that community. Help the people of Sisters learn what’s special about you and your business or service so that they can shop local now and year ’round.

When: January 17 & 24

What: AT YOUR SERVICE  
two-week full-color ad special  
(with mini-story & photo one week)

Cost: \$245. You save more than  
50% off of regular ad rates!

Ad size 3" wide by 3.31" tall

Call Karen at The Nugget, 541-549-9941,  
and she'll help you with your ad. Professional design is free!

