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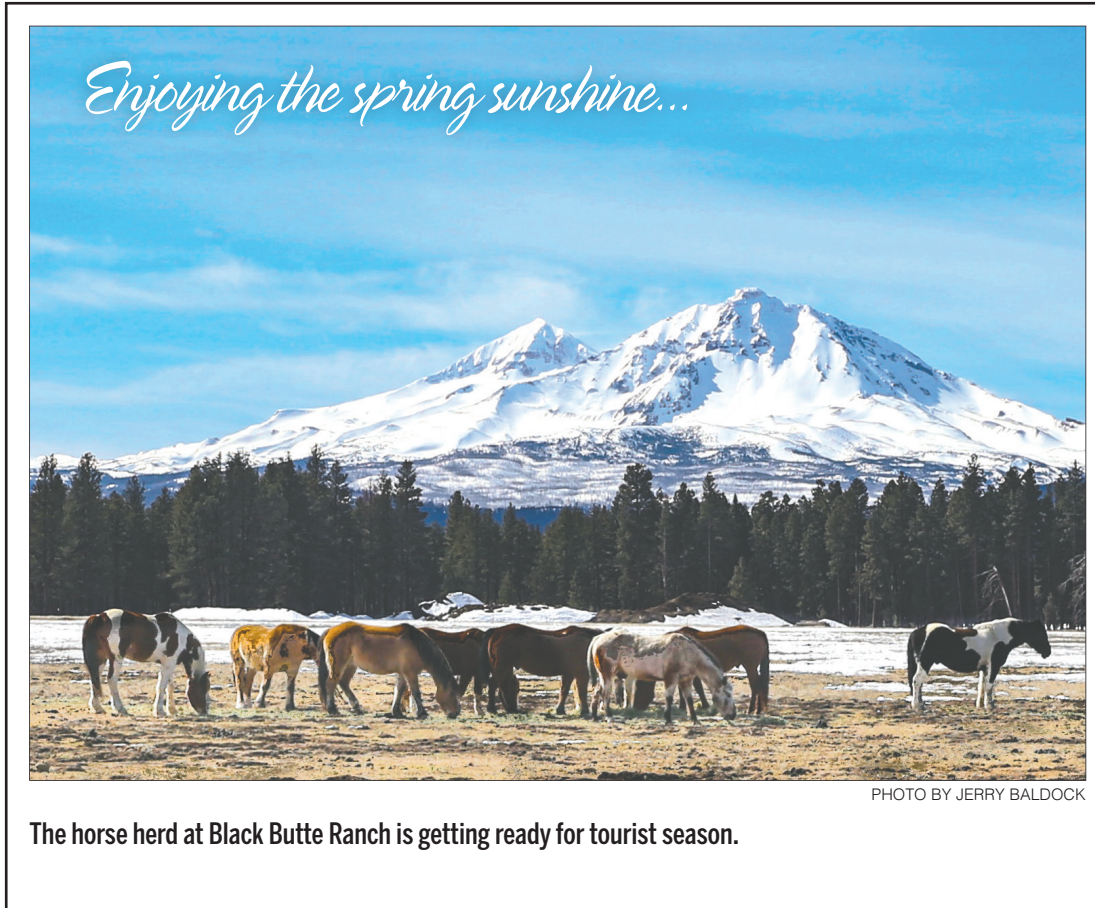
Burglars hit Sisters Rental

A crew of burglars struck Sisters Rental at about 9 p.m. on Wednesday night, March 24, and made off with an estimated \$13,000 in Stihl saws.

According to the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, deputies were dispatched at 6:47 a.m. on Thursday, March 25, to Sisters Rental on the corner of Pine Street and West Barclay Drive on the report of a burglary.

An investigation determined at approximately 8:57 p.m. on Wednesday, March 24, two suspects broke through a glass door and

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The horse herd at Black Butte Ranch is getting ready for tourist season.

PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Space debris put on show

Sisters Country residents were treated to a spectacular display of lights blazing across the night sky at about 9 p.m. last Thursday night. According to the National Weather Service, the fiery objects were space debris.

The agency reported that, "The widely reported bright objects in the sky were debris from a Falcon 9 rocket's second stage that did not successfully have a deorbit burn."

The *Seattle Times* reported that the rocket delivered Starlink satellites, built in Redmond, Washington, into

See **SPACE DEBRIS** on page 22

Outlaws equestrians are back in the saddle

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

The Sisters Outlaws equestrian team had its first competitive outing of the season March 18-21 at the Redmond Fairgrounds, overcoming the many challenges of COVID-19 protocols in the process.

Head Coach Annie Winter explained that restrictions meant that overnight stalls were not available. The team had to "haul in" every day and stagger sessions over the three days, since only 100 people could be on site at any given time.

"But it's all worth it in order to give these kids, and especially the seniors, a season since we lost being able to complete one last year," said Winter.

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— Annie Winter

Seniors on the team include Hailee Kennedy, Madi Larabee, and Shea Robertson.

Teams from La Pine, Mountain View, Bend, Summit, Ridgeview, Redmond, Lakeview, Hermiston, Dufur, Crook County, and Madras joined Sisters for the event.

Comprehensive team scores were not available, but Sisters notched some top marks among dozens of competitors.

Shea Robertson took top honors in both dressage and trail and also placed third in western horsemanship and fourth in hunt seat. Additionally Robertson teamed up with Ava Siler, Lucy Siler, and Sidney Sillers to take second place in the in-hand obstacle relay.

In the drill competition, the team of Madi Larabee, Brooklyn Lugo, Ava Siler and Lucy Siler took first place.

Sisters had four top placers in the keyhole event as Larabee, Josie Berg, Hailee Kennedy, and Chloe Winter took third, fourth, sixth and 11th among 27 competitors.

See **EQUESTRIANS** on page 22

Wilderness permit system to launch

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

As thousands more people come to Sisters Country each year looking for untrammelled wilderness experiences, the Forest Service is initiating a long-delayed permit system for some local trails.

Reservations for the permits open at 7 a.m. on Tuesday, April 6, at www.Recreation.gov. Enter "Central Cascades Wilderness." Users are encouraged to go to the site before Tuesday and open an account.

The limited-entry permit system for day and overnight use applies at 19 of the 79 trailheads across the Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington, and Three Sisters wilderness areas from the Friday before Memorial Day through the last Friday in September.

Some permits will be available for the full season; others will be available on a rolling seven-day basis (see sidebar on page 23).

"For those folks who want to be spontaneous, there will be permits (on an ongoing basis) and for those who want to plan ahead, permits will be available on April 6," said Forest Service Spokesperson Jean Nelson-Dean.



PHOTO PROVIDED

The Forest Service's limited-entry permitting system launches April 6. It is designed to protect areas like Shale Lake near Mount Jefferson.

"Not every trailhead will be the same," she noted. "When it opens on April 6, they'll see the actual number of permits available for each trailhead."

All campfires will be banned above 5,700 feet in Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Washington, and Three Sisters Wildernesses, as well as in some lower areas.

The permit system was slated to go into effect last spring, but was pushed back due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The pandemic actually seems to have accelerated the trend that caused the Forest Service to inaugurate the program in the first place: more and more people hitting trails

in the Cascades.

Certain trails have seen 15-20 percent increases in use each year, and the impacts — from simple wear and tear to garbage and waste left behind — have begun to materially affect the health of the forest and the quality of the wilderness experience.

Nelson-Dean told *The Nugget* that the Tam McArthur Rim Trail has seen a 300-percent increase in use over the past five years, 20,000 trekking into the Three Sisters Wilderness from that trailhead annually.

"Tam McArthur had been a sleeper sort of trail that

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