

Celebrating 75 years through collaboration

By Emme Shoup & Janel Ruehl
Guest Columnists

The Sisters Country Vision is a community-led vision project, first created with extensive community engagement in 2018, which continues to incorporate new community-led projects. At the heart of implementing this community vision is supporting and celebrating inter-community collaboration. As Sisters turns 75 this year, though we can't have a big celebration due to COVID-19 regulations, local organizations continue to find creative ways to highlight Sisters' unique history and enduring small-town atmosphere.

In partnership with the Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce, Three Sisters Historical Society, The Nugget Newspaper and other partners, the City of Sisters is coordinating projects and events that commemorate its 75th Anniversary. The City's event posters are popping up in businesses' windows, and the blue banners throughout downtown highlight significant historical moments, landmarks, and people.

If you'd like to learn the story behind those iconic photos, there will be many opportunities to dig into Sisters' history and Celebrate 75!

Explore the history of Sisters downtown by following the self-guided walking tour brochure and the historic plaques on buildings, which serves as an abbreviated version of the Sisters History Museum's guided tours. The Three Sisters Historical Society (TSHS) and the City's RARE AmeriCorps volunteer, Emme Shoup, developed the brochure to highlight 18 historic locations. A community partner grant from the Vision Implementation Team (VIT) helped TSHS add 13 new historical plaques this year. You can find the brochure at the Museum, or digitally on the City of Sisters' history webpage.

As you enjoy the historic walking tour, you may soon notice a new mural popping up later this June.

On the west wall of the Sisters Habitat for Humanity Thrift Store, the mural will highlight imagery from the beginnings of Sisters through current times," shares Dennis Schmidling of the Sisters Art Association (SAA).

This project has been a significant collaborative effort, with TSHS

providing the visual narrative of Sisters history, and the SAA working with the anonymous donor and the artist, Steve DeLaitsch, to gift the mural to Habitat for Humanity.

Coming later this spring, TSHS with C4C (Citizens4Community) will be hosting a Murder Mystery Virtual Event to tell the story of a gold-hungry murderer, A. J. Weston, of Sisters in 1920. The Historical Actors Guild of Sisters will be re-enacting and directing the story, which is set to be filmed on the second floor of the Sisters Saloon Restaurant by the talented Sisters Middle School student and videographer, Jack Turpen. More event details will be announced later this spring!

As a Tree City, Sisters celebrates Arbor Day every year at the end of April. This year, the City of Sisters is getting 75 ponderosa pine seedlings from the USFS nursery and gifting them to the Sisters Middle School "ECoS" outdoor education class. Each student will be given seedlings to plant in the Sisters area!

The Vision Implementation Team is also excited to sponsor the 2021 Community Champion Awards in May. Community members can nominate any individual, business, or organization as a Community Champion. A total of eight winners will be announced in early June, and each will receive gift certificates and/or products from local restaurants and businesses of Sisters Country. Each individual prize is approximately a \$100 value, and each business/organization prize is approximately a \$200 value. Your nominations help to support our local businesses who have been impacted by the pandemic and related stressors in the past 12 months, as all gifts are purchased by the VIT (not donated). Nominations open May 1: visit www.sistersvision.org to learn more and nominate your Community Champion.

Whether you're a tourist, a newcomer, or a long-time Sisters resident, one thing that can bring us together is the history of the place we all love. As the city and region grows, the Sisters Country Vision strives to create a more Connected Sisters by embracing its "Small-Town Atmosphere" through increasing opportunities for face-to-face contacts, and visitors-to-locals connections and commerce.

Event focuses on wolf interaction

The Wolf Welcome Committee will continue its discussion of wolf and human interaction in the region with Rick McIntyre and Kira Cassidy in partnership with Paulina Springs Books on Wednesday, April 28 at 6:30 p.m.

They will follow that public event with a discussion of the newly published book, "Yellowstone Wolves: Science and Discovery in the World's First National Park," which both McIntyre and Cassidy contributed to, on Wednesday, May 12 at 6:30 p.m.

To bring the discussion to home territory, the committee invited John Stevenson, Wolf Specialist for Oregon with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, to discuss wolves in the local region and their possible future here. That discussion will take place on May 26 at 6:30 p.m.

"As human animals, we can learn a lot from wolves' cooperation, and can live in balance with other humans and species," said Wolf Welcome Committee co-founder Susan Prince. "As wolves re-populate Central



PHOTO PROVIDED

Wolves are returning to a role in the natural landscape across the West.

Oregon, now is the time to reevaluate how we choose to coexist on our beautiful planet. Not only are humans harming each other, at a horrifying rate, but other species as well. Since 1970, wildlife populations have declined by two-thirds (68 percent), according to World Wildlife Fund's 2020 report.

Specifically, humans continue to persecute wolves, the committee argues. Now, without protections previously afforded by the Endangered Species Act, it is much harder to enforce conservation guidelines.

In February, five wolves mysteriously died in northeastern Oregon."

"This is very unsettling

news for a species that is only just beginning to recover in Oregon," Kathleen Gobush, Northwest program director at Defenders of Wildlife said in a news release. "Predators, particularly wolves, are often the target of ruthless persecution, and the killing of one wolf, not to mention five, appears to follow a growing pattern of grave concern."

In the same month, in the space of 60 hours, hunters in Wisconsin killed 216 wolves, about a quarter of that state's estimated wolf population, exceeding the state's legal hunt quota of 119 animals.

To register for any or all of the events, email wolfwelcomecommittee@gmail.com.



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