

OUR VIEW

Learning valuable lessons from history

Typically, Americans don't spend a lot of time looking backward but we must know our own history so we can navigate the future.

That's why projects like the one in Wallowa by the Wallowa History Center is notable. The center seeks to create a four-building home for a sort of historical compound that will include an interpretive center and a research library on 1st and Madison streets.

The project has a ways to go but the fact that such an idea is gaining steam in the community is good news.

There is a lot of history in Eastern Oregon and sometimes we all take it for granted. We shouldn't.

That's because knowing our own heritage helps us form opinions and develop ideas for the future. As Americans, we spend a lot of time moving into the future as fast as possible and fail to stop and reflect on our history.

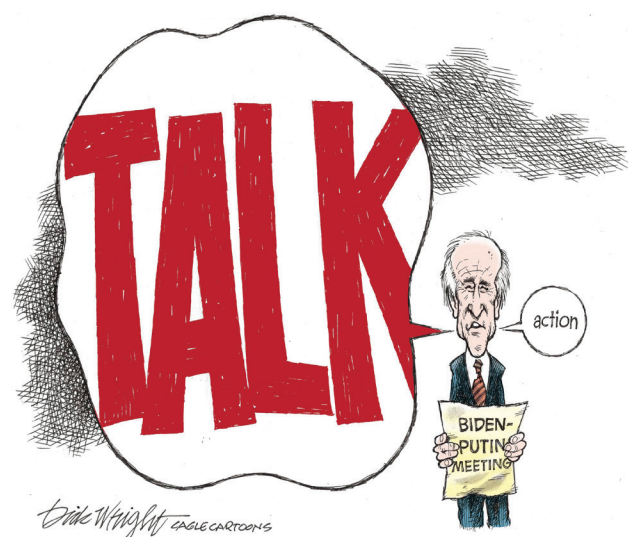
Projects like the one in Wallowa and existing facilities — such as the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center near Baker City — can provide citizens with a new, or even different, perspective regarding their ancestors. We need more history, not less, and calm contemplation about what it means for the future.

We don't learn lessons well. The Vietnam War taught a host of lessons but we didn't seem able to apply those experiences effectively in Iraq or Afghanistan.

There is the old adage that those who fail to learn from the mistakes of the past are destined to repeat them. While the saying is often misused it should resonate for us all.

Learning about how and why those who came before us acted the way they did or what decision they made under certain circumstances can help us troubleshoot challenges that arise in the future.

Our history in Eastern Oregon is packed with triumphs and tragedies and loss and redemption. Every one of those stories holds a lesson. Let's make sure those lessons don't fade away.



Make a plan now to be prepared for a wildfire evacuation



MARY WISTER
EYE TO THE SKY

Picture this: You're sitting at home, enjoying dinner with your family, when you look outside and see smoke billowing from a short distance away. You walk outside and join your neighbors, who are curious about the source of the smoke. The wind has picked up and the sky quickly turns to an ominous gray.

Where's the fire? Fire engines quickly pass by, but it's obvious the firefighters have no time to stop and answer questions. You grab your phone to call 911 when your neighbor states there is a Level 3 Evacuation, and everyone needs to evacuate immediately. A wildfire is heading toward your neighborhood. Are you ready?

The National Weather Service, Emergency Management and first responders frequently discuss the importance of creating emergency kits. You can find graphics on social media with a list of items necessary for an emergency. In

fact, you can probably list at least several of these essential items yourself — flashlights, batteries, cellphone chargers, important documents and prescription drugs. You also may state that you know exactly where to find these items.

The prescription drugs always are sitting on the bedside table. All the important documents are in the safe along with your valuable items. The flashlight and batteries are stored together in the laundry room. The phone charging station is on the kitchen counter, and there's always food and water in the pantry.

That's great to be organized and know where your belongings are, but can you gather these items in a matter of minutes? On your next weekend off from work or school, devote that weekend to something so simple but so important that you will wonder why you never did it in the first place. Prepare for a wildfire evacuation.

There are excellent resources available for wildfire preparedness. By simply typing ready.gov into your favorite browser, you can find detailed information for evacuation plans due to a wildfire. Using these

instructions, commit yourself to make a plan and stick to it.

First and foremost, you and your loved ones are on the top of that list. Make sure everyone knows that nothing in that house is more important than their own safety. If they have to leave immediately, then leave.

It shouldn't take more than two full days to prepare your home and family in case of an evacuation. Put this on the top of your list of things to do on your weekend, and you'll be glad you did. That fishing or camping weekend can wait for another time. Does the car really need to be washed on your next day off? Those weeds will just return as fast as you pull them, so why bother? I think you get the point.

Don't put this on the back burner any longer. Make a plan.

Mary Wister is a meteorologist and fire weather program manager at the National Weather Service in Pendleton. Wister serves as an incident meteorologist when large wildfires or other natural hazards necessitate an Incident Management Team's quick response to protect life and property.

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