

Apply for Beth Gibans Memorial Grant up to \$5,000

Food producers urged to apply

Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Slow Food Wallowas is looking for the next winner of a grant to provide financial assistance open to anyone who grows, raises or makes local food products.

“Small-scale food producers are the movers and shakers of Wallowa County,” Lynne Curry, of Slow Food Wallowas, said in a press release.

This is the fifth year of the grant project, which is now named to honor Beth Gibans, the founder of the Wallowa County Farmers Market and owner of Backyard Gardens, who died from cancer in June. The grant award is for \$5,000, a significant jump from previous years, the release stated.

“This is a great opportunity to highlight our unsung heroes, celebrate a pillar of the local food community and address why local food production matters to rural areas,” Curry said.

The grant award winners will be announced at an online celebration on Gibans’ birthday, Jan. 22.

The grant is open to small-scale food growers and community innovators in Northeastern Oregon for projects that serve the food community in Wallowa County. Project proposals

HOW TO DONATE

Slow Food Wallowas welcomes end-of-year gifts to the program to build Gibans’ vision for a thriving local food community. Make donations online through gofundme.com or by check payable to Slow Food Wallowas, P.O. Box 78, Joseph 97846.

for up to \$5,000 are due by midnight Friday, Dec. 31. View the online application at <https://tinyurl.com/Beth-Gibans-grant> for complete details on eligibility, evaluation and timeline.

Over the past five years, Slow Food Wallowas has awarded grants to fund a low tunnel system to extend the growing season, a new tiller to improve gardening efficiency, a special hood for propagating commercial mushrooms and equipment for a bakery with a focus on utilizing heritage grains.

This new grant opportunity builds on Gibans’ legacy — a belief that local food production is essential to our health, our well-being and our community. It is designed to provide direct support for new and existing food producers and entrepreneurs to increase their capacity to provide food for the local community. Slow Food Wallowas encourages first-time applicants, those with limited access to resources, people of color and others advancing sustainable agricultural practices to apply.

Joseph council back up to full strength

Nancy Parmenter will fill vacant seat

By BILL BRADSHAW

Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — The Joseph City Council is back up to full strength, having unanimously voted to appoint Nancy Parmenter to fill the last vacant at-large seat at the council’s meeting Thursday, Dec. 2.

Parmenter and Ryan Swindlehurst had submitted applications for the seat, but Swindlehurst withdrew his application Nov. 29.

The council developed vacancies when Councilor Lisa Collier was appointed mayor upon the resignation of Belinda Buswell when she moved out of town and former Councilor Kathy Bingham resigned this summer after being censured.

The council still needs to fill some committee assignments, which were on Thursday’s agenda as an optional item, but no action was mentioned in an email from interim city Administrator Brock Eckstein.

In another matter, the council decided on a new way to handle the city’s annual Christmas lights competition. The two top prize winners will be able to select a local nonprofit or school organization to receive a donation from the city. The first-place winner will receive a \$200 donation and second place will receive \$100. The individual winners also will receive a credit to their water/sewer bills. The win-

ners will be announced before Christmas to allow residents to view the homes while the lights are still on display.

The council also directed Eckstein to develop two new ordinances.

One ordinance will establish clearer water/sewer rates for all zones in the city with a basic rate applied to each zone irrespective of meter size and make a more accurate charge based on usage.

The other ordinance will prevent a business owner with multiple units in one building from being charged a master account. Currently, if a business has two shops located in one building, they are charged three total services: one for each parcel and a “master” charge. The individual shops would be responsible for their bills.

Eckstein said in his email that both ordinances are being developed in an effort to provide fairness to residents and businesses. He hopes to have both ordinances ready for passage at the council’s Jan. 7, 2022, meeting. At that time, the public will have the opportunity for comment.

Union lands federal grant

Community awarded \$2.2M grant for backup power system

By DICK MASON

The Observer

UNION — The city of Union will enter 2022 with a brighter future.

The federal government has notified the city that it has been awarded \$2.2 million from its federal Community Development Block Grant Program to cover the cost of installing a backup power generation system.

“This is very good. It will be even better when the project is completed,” said Union City Administrator Doug Wiggins.

Electricity created by the backup generator will be used during outages to operate the city’s water system, allowing Union residents to continue receiving water if their power ever goes out for an



Dick Mason/The Observer, File

One of Union’s two water storage tanks stands out against the skyline on the eastern side of town on Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021. The city has been awarded a \$2.2 million grant to allow backup electricity to operate the city’s water system during outages.

extended period.

Wiggins said that without a backup generator the city is reliant completely on the water in its reservoir when there is a power outage because electricity is needed to pump water from its two wells to its reservoir. Once the water is in its reservoir, which is in an enclosed tank near the

top of a hill on the eastern edge of Union, it can be delivered to residents using gravity. The reservoir has a capacity of close to 1 million gallons.

If there were an extended power outage, Union’s water supply could last up to four days, depending upon the time of year and how much water was in

its tank at the time of the outage, Wiggins said.

The city worked closely with the Community Development Block Grant Program throughout the application process. For example, it prepared a design for the backup generation system with the help of a \$200,000 planning grant from the program. The design work was prepared by Anderson Perry and Associates, a La Grande-based engineering firm.

The city will receive the grant through the Oregon Business Development Department, a state agency also known as Business Oregon, Wiggins said. The state agency will help Union meet the financial requirements of the Community Development Block Grant Program.

The city’s next step is to take bids from companies for the project in the winter. After awarding a bid, installation of the backup power system could begin in late spring or early summer of 2022.

Storm raises hopes for ski season start

By JAYSON JACOBY

Baker City Herald

NORTH POWDER — Winter remains more of a rumor than reality, but a weekend storm fulfilled its forecast in the mountains.

And although city dwellers will have to wait to construct the season’s first snowman, skiers and snowboarders are getting close to making their first runs at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort.

The potent storm was a perfect illustration of the rain shadow phenomenon, although in this case the

precipitation was generally frozen rather than liquid.

With winds in the upper atmosphere coming from the southwest, the mountains, notably the Elkhorns, intercepted most of the moisture, according to the National Weather Service.

Snow showers fell periodically in La Grande over the weekend, with minor amounts of accumulation. And higher in the mountains, much more snow piled up.

Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort reported 13 inches of new snow during

the weekend, with a snow base of 18 inches on Dec. 13.

If the weather forecast for the rest of this week proves close to accurate, with snow likely most days, there’s a “very, very good chance” that the ski area will open for the season on Saturday, Dec. 18, said Chelsea Judy, Anthony Lakes marketing director.

“We’re very optimistic,” Judy said.

An automated snow-measuring station near Bourne, about 6 miles north of Sumpter, reported 15 inches of new snow, with 16 inches on the ground.

Another station, at Eilertson Meadow along Rock Creek on the east side of the Elkhorns, reported about 14 inches of snow fell during the weekend. There was only one inch of snow there before the storm.

At Schneider Meadows, in the southern Wallowas north of Halfway, about 22 inches of snow fell during the weekend, bringing the total to 31 inches.

The National Weather Service predicts snow to continue in the mountains, with a foot or more during the week in the Anthony Lakes area.

NEWS BRIEFS

Single vehicle crash kills one on Highway 203

PONDOSA — A Pondosa man died in a single vehicle crash on snow-covered Highway 203 northeast of Baker City on Friday, Dec. 10.

Gwyn Monroe Adams, 68, was found in his overturned 1991 Dodge Neon, according to Oregon State Police.

A passing driver saw the car at about 6:50 a.m. near Milepost 31, about 8 miles east of Interstate 84.

Pondosa is an unincorporated town along Highway 203 near Medical Springs, near the border between Baker and Union counties.

The crash happened about 8 miles south of Pondosa.

No rules in Enterprise Elementary’s Christmas tree contest

ENTERPRISE — It was a “no-rules contest” last week at Enterprise Elementary School when two groups of students pitted their creativity — and a trick — in a Christmas tree contest.

Fourth- and fifth-graders decorated the “North Pole Tree” — complete with Grinch — set up at the north end of the main hallway at the school. Second- and sixth-graders countered

at the opposite end of the hallway with the “Santa’s Workshop Tree.”

“The ‘North Pole Tree’ is winning because we handed out candy,” said Kelly Brown, school reading specialist who helped. “We’re winning by a landslide, but it was a no-rules contest.”

She said the trees were donated by parents.

“The kids worked hard and made all their own ornaments,” Brown said. She said the judges were to be the kindergarten through third-graders. The formal announcement of the winner would come today, Wednesday, Dec. 15, during the school’s Christmas assembly.

—The Observer

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