

# THE OBSERVER

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INSIDE

JENNY DON'T AND THE SPURS PLAY CHURCHILL — GO!



## Ag producers brace for OT fallout

Most Wallowa County farmers, ranchers won't be seriously affected by ag overtime bill

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Farmers and ranchers in Wallowa County won't be seriously affected by the Legislature's recent elimination of the overtime exemption for agricultural workers, but they see it as another example of the urban-rural divide in Oregon.

"I've been following it all along. The thing people don't understand is it's different out here," said Mike Coppin, who raises cattle and hay near Joseph. "People in the city don't understand it. We're going to have to hire more help. It's going to hurt the worker, not us so much. It's more government regulations."

House Bill 4002, passed by the Democrat-controlled House on March 1 and the Senate March 3, reduces incrementally over a five-year period the number of hours a farmworker can work without being paid time-and-a-half for overtime. In 2023-24, the cap on hours is 55, dropping to 48 hours per week for 2025-26 and then 40 hours per week beginning in 2027.

The bill awaits the signature of Democrat Gov. Kate Brown.

### Few ag workers here

The reason the bill doesn't affect many producers in Wallowa County is simple: Not many here have a lot of employees on their farms and ranches.

Coppin said during the summer, he has three to four employees. This time of year, he has one full-time worker along with his son.

"You wonder what their motive is. The workers are going to suffer because they're going to get cut back on their hours. It comes down to hiring more people," Coppin said.

Kevin Melville, who partners with his father, Tim, and brother, Kurt, in Cornerstone Farms Joint Venture, said the change likely won't affect Cornerstone this year.

"It probably won't affect us this year because of the 55-hour threshold," he said, adding that they will be monitoring employee hours.

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Two Go Wild: American Adventures guests jump into an alpine lake in the Wallowas during the summer of 2021. The business, which is based in Baker City, creates curated outdoor experiences in Eastern Oregon.

# ADVENTURES gone wild

Local business curates one-of-a-kind tourism opportunities in Eastern Oregon

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**  
The Observer

**B**AKER CITY — A local business is shining a light on the natural gems of Eastern Oregon.

Go Wild: American Adventures, a tourism business based in Baker City, focuses on local tourism, environmental education, community partnerships and international outreach. Through custom-curated outdoors adventures, owner Dan Sizer aims to share his love of the outdoors with others.

"From the beginning, the rural Oregon part was something I really wanted to help people connect to," Sizer said.

The business is in its fifth year, but has faced several hurdles related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the warm season approaches, Sizer and his crew are gearing up for a slate of adventures in Eastern Oregon this summer.

Sizer, who graduated from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, went to high



A high-end outdoor snack is served to Go Wild: American Adventures participants. The Baker City-based business showcases natural gems of Eastern Oregon and creates custom outdoor experiences.

school in Baker and began the business after working for the Forest Service for six seasons. The inspiration for Go Wild: American Adventures started in Sizer's college days, when he took a group of international students back home to Eastern Oregon. Sizer and his friends went backpacking, hiking, canoeing and participated in other outdoor activities that the group had never done before.

It was at this point that Sizer saw a potential business opportunity, inviting individuals from out of the area to expe-

rience what Eastern Oregon has to offer. The business now provides guides, personal chefs, gourmet outdoor meals, lessons and more at destinations across the region.

"It was always amazing for me to see the awe and wonder, realizing how many folks haven't been out in this kind of country," Sizer said.

Go Wild's main clientele come from larger cities such as Portland, Seattle

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## Union golf course aims to raise the bar

Buffalo Peak set to reopen for 2022 season after being named facility of the year

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**  
The Observer

UNION — Coming off a considerable accolade, the Buffalo Peak Golf Course in Union is aiming to keep raising the bar in the 2022 season.

Built in 2000, the Buffalo Peak Golf Course faced a number of hurdles

along the way in relation to construction costs and building a positive reputation in the golf community. Dana Londin's appointment as general manager early in 2020 helped spur the course's revitalization, earning the facility of the year award by the Oregon Golf Association in 2021. The course opened its

doors for play this week, marking the start of the 2022 season.

"The phone is literally ringing off the hook," Londin said. "I think we're going to have another great year."

Heading into the spring season, Londin and the team at Buffalo Peak are looking to keep up the positive momentum and continue building the course's

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Dana Londin, general manager of Buffalo Peak Golf Course, poses for a photo near the greens on Tuesday, March 15, 2022.

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### WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section		
	<b>Tonight</b> 34 LOW Rain and drizzle	
		<b>Friday</b> 55/39 Cloudy

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