

Business / Agriculture

Oregon Trails West RV Park under new ownership

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
Samantha@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Beginning April 1st, John and Michelle Dollar purchased Oregon Trails West RV Park. The Dollars previously owned the Windshield Doctor for 13 years and sold it to their son Kenny Keister.

Michelle Dollar also previously owned Sunfire Real estate. She still sells real estate and still has a Principal Brokers license. She owned the real estate for six years before selling

it to Christina Smith.

One of the changes they made to the park was getting rid of the gas pumps.

Michelle explained that they made the decision to get rid of them as they could not compete with the bigger companies in town.

"We can devote more time to our RV people," explained John. "We're getting a new propane service so it will be quicker and easier for people. We'll be able to recertify tanks that way if their tanks are just a little bit expired, they don't have to go somewhere else or all the way to

La Grande to get recertified."

They currently are working on normal maintenance at the RV Park.

They are looking into some permanent, full-time cabins and are still deciding what goals they will set for the park.

They are also planning on putting in an RV dump at the site.

Oregon Trails West RV Park has been a family business that has been open since the 1970s.

Don and Pauline Shepard were the ones who started it and the Dollars

recently purchased it from their children.

"We were looking for something that we could both do together," said Michelle.

"People are on vacation when they come through here," said John. "They're usually just happy to be traveling out. It's kind of fun to meet the people too and give them a nice place to stay, it's pretty quiet out here. And the convenience store is kind of cool; people stop by and get things. We're looking forward to getting busier."

ECP signup for wildfire damage to livestock fences

Baker and Grant County has seen several fires that were started by lightning and damaged permanent fencing on private, BLM and US Forest Service allotments in 2016.

Private landowners and permittees in these affected areas may be eligible for assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) administered by the Baker-Grant County Farm Service Agency Office if the damage:

- will be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal

assistance is or will be needed to return the land to productive agricultural use

- is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area
- affects the productive capacity of the farmland
- will impair or endanger the land

Restoring permanent livestock fences is the only practice that may be eligible.

A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost shares not to exceed 75 percent of the

cost of all eligible expenses of restoration measures. In addition, cost sharing may be adjusted based on the age of the fence per the following:

No producer is eligible to receive more than \$200,000 cost shares for this natural disaster occurrence.

To be eligible for assistance, practices must not be started until all of the following are met:

- An application for cost-share assistance has been filed

- The local FSA County Committee (COC) or its representative has conducted an onsite inspection of the damaged area

- The FSA has made a needs determination

Producers who have suffered a loss from this natural disaster may contact the Baker-Grant County FSA Office @ 541-523-7121, extension 2 and request assistance from May 1, 2017 to May 31, 2017.

Bonebrake defeats Grove for OTEC's position 2

• OTEC'S ANNUAL MEETING HELD

It was a packed house as members from across four Eastern Oregon counties traveled to attend Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative's 29th Annual Membership Meeting at the Blue Mountain Conference Center in La Grande, OR.

Board President George Galloway welcomed the membership and highlighted the clean audit OTEC received in 2017 as well as reviewed the steps the OTEC Board and Management have taken to ensure the excellent financial health of the electric cooperative.

"It pleases me to tell you that our auditors recently notified the board that they found no issues of concern and added that our financial staff are doing a very good job," said Galloway. "Our financial strength is very good and continues to gradual improvement. Our percentage of debt is one of the lowest among electric cooperatives nationally."

Galloway also noted the challenges and opportunities OTEC will face in the future from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), increased distributed generation, and new technologies while working to keep electric rates low.

"We work really hard at keeping our rates as low as possible. But, as you have heard before, half of our costs come from power purchases from Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)," said Galloway.

"This is the hardest cost for us to control."

"Every few years BPA raises their rates and we are pretty much compelled as a non-profit organization to pass those costs through to the membership," noted Galloway. "This year's BPA rate increase is not yet finalized, but it looks like we will need to raise our member's rates by 4 or 5 percent this year. This will happen in the fall and will include a small amount to cover increases in our non-power costs. This allows us to keep our rates unchanged for another two year period."

Galloway added, "I think that we do have to acknowledge that whatever they (BPA) does, it is a great bargain because it contributes to OTEC having one of the lowest rates in the country."

The challenges of the past winter, franchise taxes, safety, capital investments and the arrival of OTEC's new general manager, Les Penning, were also highlighted.

"As a board, one of our most important jobs is to recruit a skilled General Manager," said Galloway "With the retirement of Werner Buehler at the end of 2016, the critical challenge for the board this year was to find a replacement for him. I am pleased to report it appears we were highly successful." OTEC's new General Manager, Les Penning, arrived December 2016.

"Thank you for the opportunity to work for you," said Penning. "I have been around this industry for about 20 years and the



Photo Courtesy of OTEC

Mildred Fine was honored and presented with the 2017 Peggi Timm Civic Leadership Award.

strength of the cooperative, member-owner piece is one I truly believe in. The participation that you are showing here today is a testament to that."

Along with Penning providing an overview of the cooperatives financial status, a breakdown of rate comparisons and reviewing the power of the cooperative membership, the OTEC Board Election results were also announced.

George Galloway (position 1) of Union County was re-elected with 3,549 votes.

Aletha Bonebrake (position 2) of Baker County was elected with 2,049 votes, defeating Jim Grove also of Baker County who received 1,823 votes.

Robert Cargill (position 3) of Harney County was re-elected with 3,513 votes.

Harney County Historical Society Board President Mildred Fine was honored and presented with the \$25,000 Peggi Timm Civic Leadership

Award. The honor is currently awarded annually to a woman residing in OTEC's service territory who most exemplifies the cooperative founder's ceaseless spirit of volunteerism to improve life in their communities.

Fine selected the Harney County Historical Society a non-profit 501(c)3 to receive the \$25,000 award, made available through earnings on unclaimed capital credits. Plans are to take the funds and apply them to the creation of an annex for the Historical Society.

"Basically we have the building, we just need to take the stuff out that we are not going to use, clean it up and put it back together to make the annex," said Fine smiling.

Lyle Jensen of La Grande was the raffle winner of the upright freezer "OTEC Attendance Award" and Nickolas Vogel (not pictured) was drawn to win the mail-in ballot drawing for the \$500 OTEC energy credit.

— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, April 28, 2017 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady in a limited test compared to week ago prices. Most demand lays with the retail/stable hay. According to some producers, horse owners prefer lower sugar, higher protein hay. Many producers are sold out for the year.

Tons	Price Range	Wtd Avg
Alfalfa — Large Square Premium	30 130.00-130.00	130.00

Last week:

Alfalfa / Orchard Mix — Small Square Premium	6 165.00-165.00	165.00
Timothy Grass — Small Square Premium	10 275.00-275.00	275.00

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 1,206

Steer Calves

300-400# Bulk N/A	Top N/A
400-500# Bulk	163.00-184.00 Top 187.00
500-600# Bulk	151.00-167.00 Top 172.50

Heifer Calves

300-400# Bulk	149.00-161.00 Top 163.00
400-500# Bulk	141.00-161.00 Top 162.50
500-600# Bulk	127.00-149.00 Top 150.00

Yearling Steers

600-700# Bulk	139.00-164.00 Top 165.50
700-800# Bulk	132.00-145.00 Top 145.75
800-900# Bulk	121.00-131.00 Top 133.00
900-1,000# Bulk	115.00-123.00 Top 124.50

Yearling Heifers

600-700# Bulk	126.00-144.00 Top 147.50
700-800# Bulk	119.00-128.00 Top 129.50
800-900# Bulk	111.00-121.00 Top 122.00
900-1,000# Bulk	107.00-117.00 Top 119.00

Thin Shelly Cows 47.00-63.00

Butcher Cows 64.00-71.00

Butcher Bulls 71.00-84.00

Stock Cows Young 1125.00-1320.00

Hfretts 89.00-115.00

Pairs Young - 1310.00-1700.00

ProducersLivestock.com

541-473-3136

— LOG PRICE REPORT —

Prices are based on the majority of saw mills in Northeastern Oregon and Central Idaho. The prices listed below are a composite prices of various sawmills willing to visit with me about this topic.

Ponderosa Pine—small diameter class 8-11 inches diameter class \$250 per mbf. Only one sawmill was willing to buy small diameter pine at this time.

Ponderosa Pine—medium diameter class 12-17 inches diameter class \$300 to \$350 per mbf

Ponderosa Pine-large diameter class 18 plus inches diameter class \$380 to \$410 per mbf

The Pine prices are still approximately \$40 per mbf below average lumber/log market due to 2017 fire salvage

Doug Fir & Western Larch—\$380 to \$420 per mbf. Normal prices typically ranged between \$425 to \$475 per mbf.

White Fir—\$300 per mbf. Normal prices typically ranged between \$340 to \$360 per mbf.

Engelmann Spruce—\$350 at one Idaho sawmill, other sawmills including with White fir prices.

In general, the log prices still impacted from 2015 fire season and fire salvage that resulted. Sawmills are starting to get log yard inventory in line with sawmill production needs. With a new Administration as of 1/20/2017, a more normal economic environment should result and hopefully a more healthy housing situation will result in a better climate for Northeast Oregon Sawmill and private forest landowners.

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen, Andersen Forestry Consulting

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: \$1,238.50

Silver: \$16.48

Platinum: \$897.39

Palladium: \$799.79

Bloomberg.com

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$374.75/bu/USD

Wheat: \$454.00/bu/USD

Soybeans: \$975.50/bu/USD

Oats: \$238.05 bu/USD

Rough Rice: \$9.91/cwt/USD

Canola: \$522.60 CAD/mwt

Live Cattle: \$130.05/lb./USD

Feeder Cattle: \$160.10/lb./USD

Lean Hogs: \$75.55/lb./USD

Bloomberg.com