

JOSEPH

Chief Joseph Days gets nod from Western magazine

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
East Oregonian

Chief Joseph Days was included in the Top 10 Must See Rodeos of 2016 by Gavin Ehringer in the January issue of Western Horse & Gun magazine.

Harley Tucker, a Wallowa County stock contractor, started the local event. It initially attracted area ranchers who came to show their skills in riding, roping, and other contests that reflected the life of a working cowboy.

Now 71 years later, Chief Joseph Days draws top cowboys from across the country, competing in hopes of winning their way to the National Finals Rodeo.

"Chief Joseph Days may not be the biggest, but it's one of my favorite rodeos," said Ehringer. "It's in a beautiful, intimate setting, and the people of Joseph are just really cool."

For the full Chief Joseph Days experience, plan on arriving Tuesday, July 26 for the 1:30 p.m. Bucking Horse Stampede down Joseph's Main Street. The event kicks off the week's festivities.

During rodeo performances, visitors sitting on the north side of Harley Tucker Memorial Arena are treated to a breathtaking view of the Wallowa Mountains. Rodeo action runs nightly Wednesday, July 27 through Saturday, July 30 at 7 p.m. Nightly tickets range



EO Media Group file photo
Don Lamb and his mini-horse team pull a covered wagon during a past Chief Joseph Days Grand Parade. Chief Joseph Days runs July 26-31 in Joseph.

from \$14 to \$20.

The Tuckerettes, a team of six fast flying cowgirls, explode into the arena at the start of each rodeo. Also, John Harrison, named the 2015 Comedy Act of the Year, will provide entertainment with his antics in the barrel.

The Chief Joseph Days Little Buckaroo Rodeo for Special Needs Children & Adults is Wednesday at 9 a.m. Participants will engage in rodeo activities. (For more information, contact Debbie Scudder at scudderdebra@gmail.com).

Following Wednesday's family night, people are invited to a family dance, which also features free mechanical bull rides for the kids.

Thursday is Tough

Enough to Wear Pink Day, so don pink duds and help support cancer screenings. A Miles for Mammograms Walk begins with registration at 8 a.m.

During the day, visitors are encouraged to stroll down Main Street's shops and boutiques. In addition, vendors fill the streets with specialty western gear, American Indian jewelry and crafts, as well as corn dogs, curly fries and kettle corn.

On Friday morning, Main Street comes alive at 10 a.m. with the Kiddie Parade, for entrants age 12 and younger. The Chief Joseph Days Grand Parade is Saturday at 10 a.m. Also, Friday and Saturday nights feature a teen dance at 9 p.m. at the Joseph Community Center

with Full Tilt Audio. The cover charge is \$5.

The annual Friendship Feast, which is Saturday at noon in the Encampment Pavilion, has a new covered arbor structure. The upgrade replaces the use of a tarp secured to a log frame. The Encampment Pavilion also will host an American Indian dance contest Saturday at 3 p.m.

A cowboy church service finishes out the week on Sunday at 8 a.m. in the rodeo arena.

For more information, a full schedule of events or to purchase rodeo tickets, visit www.chiefjosephdays.com.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

ECHO

School tries to solve math teacher shortage

By **ALEXA LOUGEE**
East Oregonian

The Echo School District is facing a problem that's becoming common across rural Oregon schools — finding a qualified high school math teacher.

Superintendent Raymon Smith spoke about the issue at Monday's school board meeting after no candidates were found to fill an open position. The board brainstormed some ideas on how to keep students up to state standards.

The subject of math is an admitted weakness in the district. Recent state-wide testing indicated the district was falling short. Preliminary test results showed only 10 percent of Echo High School students passed state math tests last year, compared with the state average of 34 percent.

"The issue is not the kids, the issue is us," Smith said.

Officials at the Oregon Department of Education have told Smith that many small, rural schools have a hard time securing math teachers.

The board discussed the possibility of busing students to Stanfield, or using curriculum the ODE has established for small schools where an adult supervises classroom learning but does not have to be a licensed math teacher.

"It's not a lot different than home school," board member Brandy McCarty said.

Smith expressed support for supervised learning of the state's curriculum.

"I'd rather do that than have a trainwreck (of a teacher) in a classroom for a year," he said.

The district is looking for other ways to increase the dismal math test scores. It has invested in a new

assessment program called iReady and will be using it for all K-12 students.

"There's not many mandates I set down, but this is one of them," Smith said. "We have to fix this."

School testing results for 2015-16 are set to be released to the public on September 15.

The school board also learned some good news at its meeting.

Smith shared that the school bond had sold for higher than anticipated, generating an additional \$225,146 in revenue for the district.

He said right now bond rates are good and that Standard & Poor's had given the Echo School District a AA credit rating. This rating made the school's bond an attractive investment to buyers and thus the bond sold at a premium.

Some of that revenue has already gone toward paying the bonding fees. After paying those fees the school district still has a \$116,000 surplus in the school project budget. Echo residents voted for a \$4 million school bond in May to match a capital improvement grant it received from ODE.

The bond will be used to build new classrooms and a new air-conditioned gymnasium, as well as update existing infrastructure and increase security. The district is on schedule to send out for bids on some of the construction projects in January.

The school board also discussed new staff hires. Teddi Fisher has moved from the Hermiston School District to teach elementary school for Echo. Rachel Hulett has been hired as the new school counselor and Makenna Ramos will be the new assistant high school girls basketball coach.

BRIEFLY

Bloomz Coffee Bar opens downtown

HERMISTON — A quick latte or cinnamon roll is now within easy walking distance of downtown businesses after Bloomz Coffee Bar opened Tuesday.

The coffee shop, located at 140 N.E. Second St., is leasing space from Simmons Insurance Group on the former RoeMark's property next to Scrubs Life. It offers a variety of food and drinks, including coffee, lemonade, chocolates, bagels, breakfast sandwiches, scones and other pastries.

Rod Zumwalt, one of the shop's co-owners said they hope to build a relationship with regular customers from the downtown area who will stop in for a coffee and maybe some breakfast too on the way to work.

The shop is not completely furnished yet (more seating will be forthcoming in the next few days), but is open for business. Zumwalt said after the soft opening they will continue to adjust the hours and other components according to demand.

"We will start 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, but we're going to play it by ear what the customer base wants," he said.

Library offers language-learning service free

HERMISTON — The Hermiston Public Library is offering its patrons access to a computer program that can teach them a second language or prepare them for citizenship.

Pronunciator.com, which bills itself as "the world's largest language-learning service," is an online program that includes 30-minute classes with live teachers, videos, interactive quizzes and other tools to learn a new language. It offers 80 languages, including English as a second language for 50 different non-English languages.

Hermiston residents can register for free using their library card number and access the program from anywhere, including their home computer or via an app on their smartphone. Pronunciator also offers



Staff photo by Jade McDowell
A selection of pastries and candies are on display at Bloomz Coffee Bar, which opened in downtown Hermiston this week.

a service called Procitizen, which offers videos, drills and other tools to help prepare people to take the naturalization test to become a U.S. citizen.

To create an account for either service, or to check out the other subscription-only online services that Hermiston residents can access for free using their library card number, visit www.hermistonlibrary.us/os and click on the icon of the program you want to use.

Parks department sets movie nights

HERMISTON — An oversized inflatable movie screen will be erected for Movies in the Park in Hermiston.

The public is invited to view "Norm of the North" for free Friday at dusk at

McKenzie Park, 320 S. First St. People are encouraged to bring blankets, chairs and snacks and enjoy the show. An animated adventure comedy, the film is about a polar bear whose Arctic home is invaded by real estate development.

The July 29 show features "The Good Dinosaur" and the Aug. 5 movie is "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

For more information, call Hermiston Parks & Recreation at 541-667-5018.

Listening sessions planned for female veterans

A pair of listening sessions are set for women who have served in the military.

Elizabeth Estabrooks, the women's veterans

coordinator from Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, is interested in feedback regarding improvement of services, problems with filing claims and how the office can provide assistance. She will be available:

•Tuesday, July 26 from 2:30-4 p.m. at the Bartholomew Building, 110 N. Court St., Heppner.

•Wednesday, July 27 from 3-4:30 p.m. at the Port of Morrow, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman.

For more information or to share your story if unable to attend, contact Estabrooks at 971-720-9116 or elizabeth.estabrooks@state.or.us.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

Lightning sparks small wildfires in northeast Oregon

East Oregonian

Recent lightning storms have kept firefighters on their toes in northeast Oregon, sparking several small wildfires on both public and private forests.

Three fires were reported in the Oregon Department of Forestry's Northeast Oregon District, and five more in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The largest fire reached 18 acres, burning 16 miles southwest of La Grande near Spool Cart Camp-

ground. It was contained on Monday.

All other fires were held at less than half an acre. More fires could be on the horizon with isolated thunderstorms and increasing winds expected over the next few days.

The ODF Northeast Oregon District officially entered fire season June 28. More information on incidents and weather conditions can be found at www.bmidc.org, or www.bluemountainfireinfo.blogspot.com.

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In Loving Memory of Mary Cole

The Joe Cole family would like to extend their sincere gratitude to all of our friends in the Pendleton and the surrounding area for their generosity and kindness to Mary during her last year.

Thank you to Ron, Valori and Pam at Pendleton Pioneer Chapel for their guidance through a difficult time. Also thank you to Rev. Harwerth, his staff at the Presbyterian Church and Kathy Nooy.

A very special thank you to all the employees at Juniper House and to Dr. Dan Marier for their outstanding care.