

Methodists turn Wallowa church back to tribe

Nez Perce Tribe receives title to former Wallowa Methodist Church

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — The Nez Perce Tribe took another step toward reestablishing itself in its traditional Wallowa County homeland on Thursday, April 29, when the tribe received the title to the now-former Wallowa Methodist Church.

The ceremony on the lawn behind the church included about 60 people, most of whom were Nez Perce tribal members from the Lapwai, Idaho-based reservation. Also in attendance were members of the United Methodist Church's Oregon-Idaho Conference, which has held title to the land and building since it closed on June 30, 2020.

"It's the transfer of deeds so this church is going back to the Nez Perce Tribe. We're very honored to be able to be here today for this," said Casey Mitchell, vice chairman of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee. "Any land that comes back to the tribe is a blessing for us, considering this is originally our homeland that we were



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

The Wallowa United Methodist Church, built in 1910, was handed over to the Nez Perce Tribe, the original inhabitants of the land, on Thursday, April 29, 2021, during a ceremony between church officials and the tribe.

pushed out of." Mary Jane Miles, a NPTEC member who was tabbed at the last moment to host the event, spoke of the gratitude the Nimiipuu — Nez Perce in their own language meaning "the people" — for receiving the land. "The bishop of the

Oregon-Idaho annual conference of the United Methodist Church has indicated this is an opportunity to join in a partnership with the tribe," she said. At this, Miles looked to the sunny sky and seemed to acknowledge the fulfillment of prophecy. "The Nimiipuu — the

people — are tied to this land," she said. "I heard one of the ladies say this morning, 'We are here forever.' It just seemed to warm my heart with what is happening today, how favored we are to be getting this land back to our homeland. And the Nimiipuu are here to stay and I thank you for your drums

that just bring in the spirit of the Nimiipuu as to how this all played out. The Creator is certainly going before us and doing things for our favor. Most indigenous groups are 'the people' and we are the people."

The final pastor of the church, Kaye Garver, also was on hand. She said that when the church closed, the congregation consisted of but five people, down from its peak of about 200 in the 1960s and 1970s.

"We didn't have the money to do the needed repairs and pay the insurance," she said. "It was a sad but necessary thing. The younger people wanted to move out of the county. They wanted to go to the city and everybody else aged."

But she thinks it's fitting the property goes to the tribe. "It's a joy that, although we had to leave that building when it closed, that it's now going to the Nez Perce," she said.

Laurie Day, director of connectional ministries for the Oregon-Idaho Conference UMC, confirmed the desire of the church to cement its relationship with the Nez Perce in turning over ownership of the property.

"The church has a relationship with the Nez Perce Tribe and we checked with

them to see if they would like to have the building and the property because they were the original inhabitants of this land," Day said. "Today is the ceremony where we are returning the property to the Nez Perce."

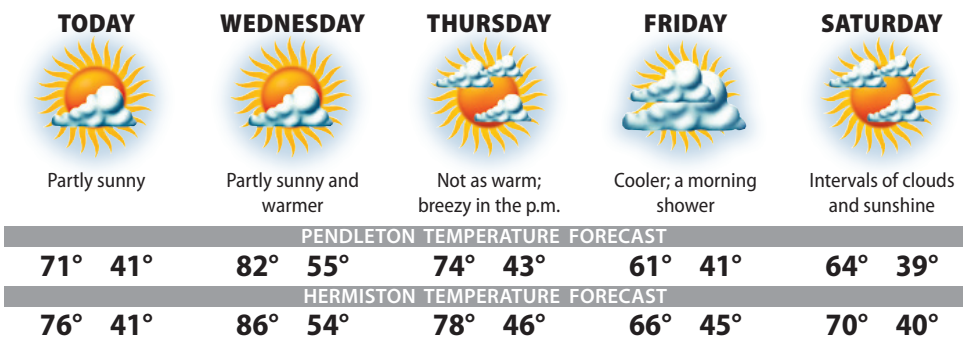
She said the cash value of the property didn't even come into play.

"It was not part of our conversation in returning the property," she said. "It was out of friendship and it was the right thing to do. It was not about the financial. It wasn't part of our decision, so it didn't factor into it."

NPTEC Chairman Shannon Wheeler, who headed the tribal delegation in accepting the property, and Mitchell agreed that there are no certain plans as to how the property will be used. They said the NPTEC is expected to meet to make such plans.

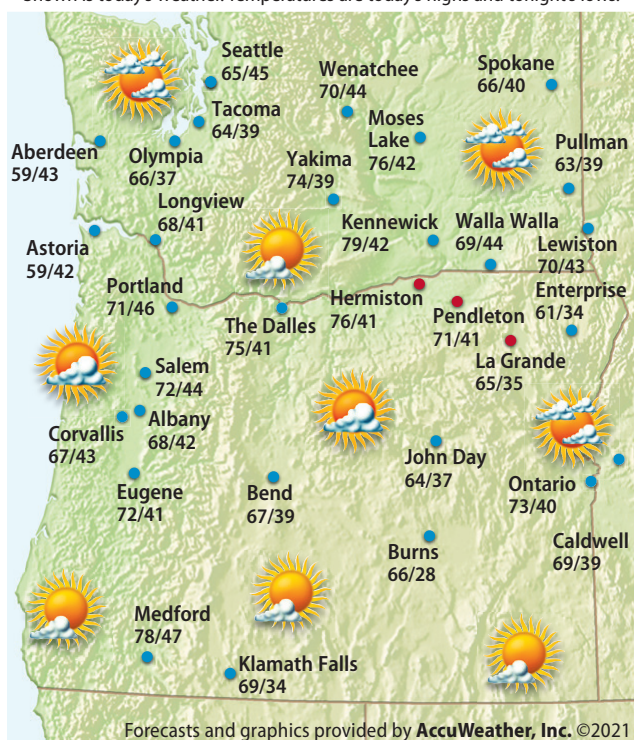
"The building's old, so we're not sure if we're going to keep it," Mitchell said of the 1910 structure. "The idea is everything's sky-high right now, as far as property goes. We do have a powwow in July here so we may use this as a camping ground and let the folks use the showers and the bathrooms when the powwow's going on. We usually have it at the Tamkalis (the Homeland Project in Wallowa)."

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



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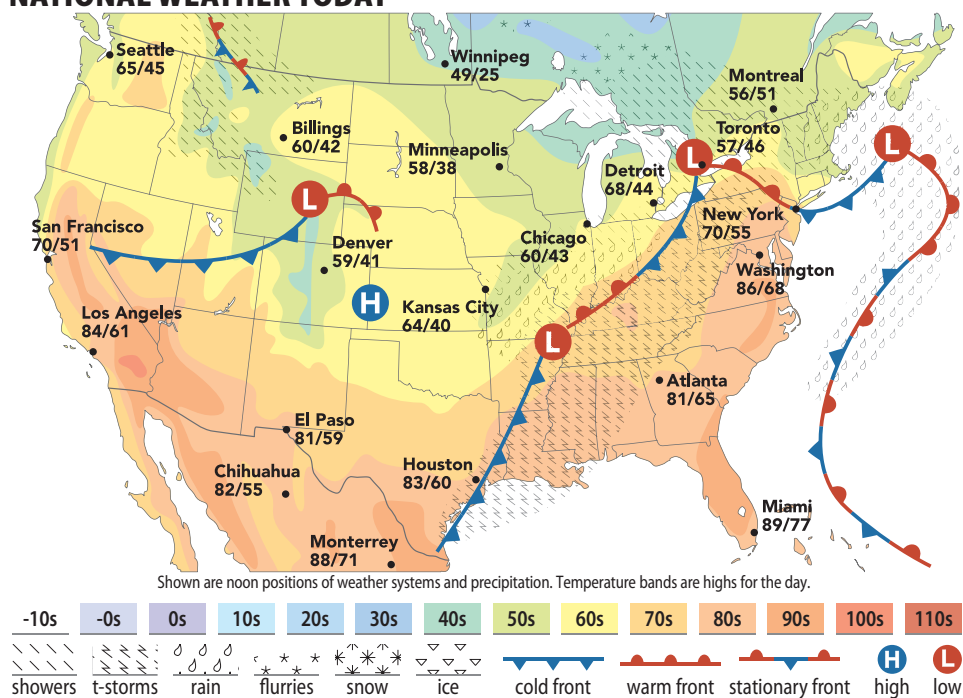
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	69°	40°
Normals	67°	43°
Records	94° (1900)	25° (1897)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.25"	
Normal month to date	0.10"	
Year to date	3.81"	
Last year to date	5.30"	
Normal year to date	5.21"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	73°	44°
Normals	70°	43°
Records	92° (2016)	28° (1928)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.18"	
Normal month to date	0.12"	
Year to date	1.46"	
Last year to date	0.56"	
Normal year to date	4.11"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	WSW 4-8	Wed. NE 6-12
Pendleton	W 7-14	ESE 6-12
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	5:38 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	8:06 p.m.	
Moonrise today	3:11 a.m.	
Moonset today	12:52 p.m.	

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 109° in Zapata, Texas Low 18° in Utica, Mont.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Surging corn prices, high demand push wheat close to \$8 a bushel

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

SALEM — Wheat hovered near \$8 per bushel on the Portland market last week, and experts say they aren't sure how high prices will go, or for how long.

The increase is partly a reaction to higher corn prices and a tighter wheat supply, said Dan Steiner, grain merchandiser at Morrow County Grain Growers in Boardman.

Soft white wheat prices on Friday, April 30, ranged from \$6.65 to \$7.90 per bushel on the Portland market.

Farmers generally consider prices above \$6 per bushel to be profitable, according to the Washington Grain Commission.

"This market freewheels and so you see tons of volatility," Steiner said. "Fifteen minutes in this market might mean you get an extra nickel or you lose an extra nickel. It moves that fast."

At one point, wheat was

cheaper as a feed grain than corn. "When you see China buying U.S. wheat to feed to pigs, you know there's something going on," he said.

Steiner suspects prices still don't reflect the full value of the soft white wheat crop.

"I think soft white stocks are tighter than USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) thinks that they are, but we'll see what happens with this coming harvest," he said.

The corn market rally is the main reason for the higher wheat prices, but old crop wheat stocks are as tight as they've ever been, said Byron Behne, senior marketing manager at Northwest Grain Growers in Walla Walla, Washington.

Farmers might still be holding onto old crop because they either don't need the money or are waiting to hit a "home run" and see if prices go "absolutely crazy," above \$10 per bushel, Behne said.

He thinks the price range will be \$6 to \$10 per bushel.

"I think the only thing that

could undo this bullish market would be a wide outbreak of African swine flu in China that cuts their livestock herds down, so they don't need to buy all this grain to feed the animals," he said.

The market is inverted, with nearby contracts higher than deferred contracts. That indicates the market is concerned about new crop supply and demand, said Darin Newsom, an Omaha, Nebraska, market analyst.

"This comes down to acres, production, weather — it takes everything into account, plus there is an expectation we could still see better demand," Newsom said.

The higher prices will continue as long as supply and demand is bullish, he said. The market hasn't hit the tipping point yet, where prices get so high that demand shuts down, Newsom said.

"I don't think we're there yet, but it's a real risk when we start talking about prices we haven't seen in a decade," he said.

IN BRIEF

Baker City police say fentanyl-laced pills connected to fatal overdoses

BAKER CITY — Three fatal drug overdoses in Baker City in the past six months were tied to counterfeit opioid pills laced with fentanyl, a powerful painkiller, law enforcement officials said in a press release.

The joint release was from the Baker County Narcotics Enforcement Team and New Directions Northwest Mental Health and Crisis Response Partners.

The pills are sometimes called "blues" or M30s," according to the press release.

Similar to other communities across the nation, Baker City emergency responders have confirmed three recent fatal overdoses tied to counterfeit opioid pills.

"While we recognize there are a variety of reasons for drug use we want to remind the public that we will actively pursue and prosecute individuals and/or organizations that continue to distribute dangerous narcotics to community members," said Lt. Ty Duby of the Baker City Police Department. "We also want to remind

folks that one can be held criminally liable for a death if they were the supplier of that substance.

"Our team currently sees methamphetamine and heroin, laced with fentanyl, as the number one drug problem in the Baker City area," Duby said. "We do see pill use in the form of Oxycodone pills. We also have seen locally the blue pills that are most likely manufactured in Mexico made to look like oxy 30s and they also have some fentanyl mixed in."

Although Baker City police officers and Baker City Fire Department paramedics carry Narcan, which can prevent overdoses, during the past year one person who was saved by Narcan was found dead two days later from another overdose, according to the press release.

"We want individuals who use heroin or oxy 30 pills to know what's truly in it," Duby said. "Information on the street and lab tests are showing that more often than not the heroin also contains a certain amount of fentanyl. In the last six months Baker City Police have responded to three known overdose deaths involving suspected heroin containing fentanyl. We are seeing certain individuals repeatedly overdosing."

—EO Media Group

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