



S.F. Tool/Chieftain

From left: Wallowa Memorial Hospital Cardiac Sonographer Rebecca Patton, Imaging Director Sarah Johnson and Respiratory Therapist Loring Lamb with echocardiogram upgrade in the background.

## Hospital's ultrasound upgrade reduces need for patient travel

By S.F. Tool

Wallowa County Chieftain

A stress echocardiogram upgrade to the ultrasound system at Wallowa Memorial Hospital allows patients to take cardiac stress tests locally rather than driving to La Grande or Walla Walla. The upgrade comes from a gift of nearly \$15,000 after WMH Imaging Director Sarah Johnson made a presentation to the Circle 100 Club of 2013, a local charity comprised solely of women.

Johnson said the hospital started utilizing the upgrade on Nov. 1. "Patients run on a treadmill and we monitor their EKG (electrocardiogram) and then we do an echocardiogram in conjunction with that. It's an ultrasound of the heart," Johnson said.

The imaging staff run the tests both pre- and post-exercise to monitor any changes. If results to this point don't indicate the presence of a healthy heart, the next step involves sending patients to the Catheterization Lab for further testing. "This has great prognostic value," Johnson said.

She added that previous to the upgrade, patients either received only the stress test or the hospital sent the patients to a facility that possessed the echocardiogram equipment.

Johnson emphasized that the hospital preferred the idea of treating the patients locally rather than sending someone with a possible heart condition for a long drive. "It's nice to keep people here. We have four doctors who do these tests with us because the presence of a doctor is required," Johnson said. She added that before the upgrade, the hospital sent out at least 200 patients per year to other facilities.

The hospital also recently added a new technologist, Rebecca Patton, to aid with ultrasound and the new upgrade. "Our new technologist is a relief technologist who has already been trained, and specializes in echocardiography. She's really great," Johnson said.

Johnson added that the transition to using the upgrade went very smoothly with a minimum of retraining involved.

# Five JCS students tackle city playground's upgrade

By S.F. Tool  
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Five eighth-grade boys from teacher Laurie Altringer's community service class decided to take on the adult-sized job of raising money for renovation of Joseph City Park's playground as part of a Family, Careers and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) project.

First stop: present the idea to the Joseph City Council for permission to undertake the project. Joseph Charter School students Steven Beckman, T.J. Grote, Tyler Homan, Kade Kilgore and Trey Wandschneider made the presentation while Altringer watched in approval at the Joseph City Council's Feb. 5 meeting.

After reading a brief introduction to the project, each boy took turns narrating a Powerpoint presentation.

The presentation included stating the amount, \$4,000, that was needed just to start the project. Reasons cited for the renovation included safety concerns, and the observation that the playground equipment's current state of disrepair had a negative impact on tourists with children. The group also mentioned that even some Joseph citizens resorted to taking their children to Enterprise for park play, possibly causing Joseph merchants a loss of revenue.

The students said the project could result in healthier, happier children and it was an opportunity to unite the community in a common cause.

The boys told the council they've already selected a top-notch playground designer, Play By Design, which intends to garner input from JCS classes with the aim of designing the playground in accordance with the desires of local children, yet also to integrate Joseph culture into the design.

The group mentioned the bulk of the project entailed fundraising because the project's total estimated cost is \$20,000. The boys intend to raise funds through a number of methods includ-



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Young men on a mission to upgrade the Joseph park's playground. FCCLA members, from left, T.J. Grote, Steven Beckman, Kade Kilgore, Tyler Homan, and Trey Wandschneider.

ing donations — reaching out to the community via the Chieftain, Facebook, KWVR, and distribution of fliers — and grant-seeking.

The presentation concluded with photos of possible playground designs. The council complimented the boys on their presentation. Mayor Dennis Sands asked the group what the time-line would be for the project if the council approved it. Altringer answered that with a concentrated funding effort, the project could be completed before summer.

Other council members suggested grant avenues such as Cycle Oregon, Bronze Blues and Brews and Wildhorse Casino. The council also elicited a promise that the boys continue on with the project into next year if funding proved elusive. The council

followed with a unanimous vote to allow the boys to proceed with the project, after which the entire audience rewarded the boys with a healthy round of applause. Altringer later said the

next step included seeking a Safeway Foundation Grant, which has an average award of about \$10,000, and following with applying to Cycle Oregon for grants in the \$3,000-\$4,000 range.

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## Young musicians invited to compete; apply by Feb. 27

Inland Northwest Musicians is accepting applications for participation in the 15th annual Young Artists Competition scheduled for March 8 at Hermiston High School. The competition is open to instrumentalists and vocalists up to age 25 in four age divisions: elementary, junior high/middle school, high school and young adult.

Division winners receive cash awards, with some participants being selected to perform in concert with the Inland Northwest Orchestra in May. Information and application forms are available online at [www.inland-northwestmusicians.com](http://www.inland-northwestmusicians.com). Application deadline is Feb. 27. For more information

contact Alice Massey at [amassey@wtechlink.us](mailto:amassey@wtechlink.us) or call 541-379-5564.

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## Elks Lodge Crab Feed

Feb. 21

Clover Leaf Hall  
Doors Open at 4pm  
Tickets at the door

*3 dinner options*

- All You Can Eat Crab
- Prime Rib Dinner
- Combo - 1 bowl of crab and prime rib

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