

Wallowa Senior Center vital at 20

By Rocky Wilson

Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — On Friday, April 3, an Open House with cake, punch, drawings, and even an Easter dinner will be offered to all comers to celebrate the 20 years of service the Wallowa Senior Center has provided to that city.

Opened in 1995 thanks in part to a \$279,000 grant from the Oregon Communities Development Grant Program, plus a cohesive local fundraising effort, the 4,400-square-foot structure governed by an eight-person advisory group quickly became the City of Wallowa's social hub when it opened 20 years ago and exhibits no signs of relinquishing that role.

The Wallowa Senior Center is owned by the City of Wallowa which leases the facility to Community Connection at a nominal rate, giving Community Connection freedom to coordinate functions in the popular space.

Most known among the many services provided there is the senior meals program where an average of 150 hot meals at suggested donation prices are served every week.



Wallowa City Councilor Joe Town, left, a longtime member of the Wallowa Senior Center advisory board, stands next to Tammy Odegaard, who has cooked for the center since April of 1993.

Steve Tool/Chieftain

Participants of all ages are encouraged to attend meals served at noon on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Also, because of the social importance of the gathering space, coffee and other drinks are made available to

persons who arrive early on meal days. On those same three days, says Community Connection Manager Connie Guentert, meals cooked in the same kitchen at the same time are delivered to as many as 25 residents in the Wallowa/

Lostine area as part of that location's Meals-on-Wheels outreach.

Joe Town, a member of the advisory group, has actively played a role in the Senior Center's 20-year history. He says Wallowa County is the

only county in Oregon that has two active senior centers, the other located in Enterprise.

He says the senior meals program in Wallowa has been ongoing since 1972, most of those years serving meals at what was known as the IOOF Hall, but was able to expand its uses to the city once the Wallowa Senior Center was constructed by Mike Becker General Contractor Inc., of La Grande, in 1995 at a total cost of about \$408,000.

In essence, says Guentert, there are three ways to secure use of the Wallowa Senior Center facility. At the discretion of Community Connection in harmony with the center's advisory board, use can be granted without charge. Other users either pay rent, or arrange an exchange of their time volunteering at the meal site or delivering meals.

Among the three categories, those that utilize the facility for free far exceed numbers of those who volunteer in lieu of paying rent or those who actually pay rent.

Community Connection itself offers some free classes in subjects such as Tai Chi and Living Well With Chronic

Conditions, yet the many other groups that meet regularly, or even occasionally there include quilting groups, church groups, the city library for book sales, cemetery groups, and seasonal Christmas bazaars. Exercise groups currently volunteer time instead of renting the premises while those who periodically rent the space include the Grande Ronde Model Watershed for regular meetings, and groups with special occasion events such as class reunions and memorial services.

Town believes an important upgrade to the center as a whole came via an endowment fund that began in 2001 and now contains about \$90,000.

Late in 2006, the sprinkler system in the building went awry without warning and left most of the space sitting in four inches of water, says Town. At that time, the facility was closed for six weeks to make necessary repairs.

Members of the Wallowa Senior Center Advisory Group are Joe Town, Maxine Town, Diana Sealey, Marilyn Hulse, Peggy Gentle, Ken Carlson, Karolyne Doss, and Anne Farmer.

City signs CJD's request for grant

By Steve Tool

Wallowa County Chieftain

The Chief Joseph Days Rodeo Committee petitioned the Joseph City Council for help in applying for a Wildhorse Foundation grant in the amount of \$15,000 for improvements to the rodeo grounds, in this case, an arbor for the Native American encampment.

Terry MacArtor, president of the rodeo committee's board of directors, grant writer Lynn Craig, and board member John Hillock made the presentation to the council. The council also heard the arbor project is part of a larger project to eventually turn the rodeo grounds into the centerpiece of Joseph.

The committee told the council that because the rodeo already received a Wildhorse grant for expansion of the Thunder Room at the grounds, they needed the city's name on a separate grant application for the arbor funds. The committee assured the council it needed no financial assistance from the city's coffers for the grant application. The council unanimously approved the use of the Joseph name

as petitioner on the grant application.

McArtor later said the committee is looking at several different projects over the next couple of years, but the immediate concern is the arbor. "What we've had for an arbor is a tarp stretched over some poles. They go in there and have their welcome feast and that sort of stuff. It's right there on the east end of the rodeo grounds," McArtor said.

It normally takes 15-20 men to stretch the tarp over the poles. "What we're looking for is to put in a permanent structure that will serve their (Native Americans') needs during the Chief Joseph Days week," McArtor said. He added that CJD planned to make the arbor accessible to the rest of the community to use for gatherings during the rest of the year.

McArtor said the committee already secured \$20,000 in grants, and commitments from three men involved in the CJD committee to donate approximately \$7,500 in equipment, labor and other amenities. "We're just looking for another grant or two to help us with the arbor," McArtor said. The project-

ed cost of the arbor is about \$60,000.

The arbor project has an expected completion date of sometime this spring, well before the rodeo starts in the last week of July. "When the rodeo comes up and the Indians move their encampment in, it'll be in place for them. That's our goal," MacArtor said.

MacArtor likes the idea of the mutually beneficial relationship between the City of Joseph and the rodeo. "I think the week we have the show is one of the biggest moneymaking weeks of the year for Joseph. We're trying to build something that will support the community," MacArtor said.



Steve Tool/Chieftain

The current arbor framework at the Chief Joseph Days rodeo grounds requires extensive labor to cover it with a tarp before use. It's due to be replaced soon by a structure that doesn't require tarping.

The committee is always looking for more sponsors and volunteers. Phone 541-432-1015 for further information.



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Thank You

The family wishes to thank all of you that contributed friendship, sympathy and food at Don Lorentz' funeral.

Also thank you to Dr. Boyd and the nurses for taking care of him at the end of his life at Wallowa Memorial Hospital. He was special and I will miss him.

Kathy Johnson

Easter Bunny plans for Wallowa County egg hunts

In case any curious school children are wondering, the Easter Bunny is planning several Easter egg hunts around Wallowa County this year, and making an appearance at the Wallowa hunt.

In the town of Wallowa, the hunt takes place at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 4, at Lions Park, on the truck route. The hunt features five age groups: 0-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10-11, with a grand prize awarded for each age group. Again, the Easter Bunny plans to attend.

The Enterprise Easter Egg Hunt, sponsored by the Elks Lodge, also takes place April 4 at 10 a.m. It'll be at the Jensen ballfields behind Safeway. Enterprise's egg hunters

are grouped as follows: ages 0-3, 4-7, and 8-12.

Joseph features a monster 4,000-egg hunt at the city park at 10 a.m. sharp on April 4. The hunt has three age groups: 0-4 with parent help allowed, 5-8, and 8 and older.

The Troy community meanwhile plans its traditional Easter Picnic, a potluck, for Easter Sunday, April 5, starting at noon at Troy School.

Also this year, Christian worshipers may be interested in an "all-church" Community Good Friday Service slated for the OK Theatre from 6 to 7 p.m., Friday, April 3, sponsored by the Wallowa County Ministerial Association.

Where to write

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Gov. Kate Brown, D — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Web site: www.governor.state.or.us/governor.html.

Oregon Legislature — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Web site: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

State Rep. Bob Jenson, R-Pendleton (District: 58), Room H-481, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR

97301. Phone: 503-986-1458. E-mail: Rep.BobJenson@state.or.us. Web site: www.oregonlegislature.gov/jenson

State Sen. Bill Hansell R — (District 29) Room S-423, State Capitol, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1729. E-mail: Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us. Web site: www.oregonlegislature.gov/hansell.

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