

Welcome sign project underway

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Enterprise is that much closer to letting folks know it has an identity of its own.

After years of design discussion and fundraising, the Greater Enterprise Main Street (GEMS) Committee has announced that the Enterprise city sign project is finally ready to break ground.

The one-of-a-kind, substantial and colorful sign will be placed near the Baptist Church on the west end of Enterprise on a small patch of Oregon

Department of Transportation (ODOT) right-of-way off Highway 82.

From the beginning the GEMS group wanted to create a welcome sign that was "along with the courthouse, an architectural gem that can't be duplicated," said design committee member Adrian Harquess. To that end, the final design is an 11-foot wooden sign bracketed by six-foot-tall Bowlby stone towers. The entire footprint of the installation, which will include other decorative stone features, is six feet by 24 feet.

"We think this will carry

through the vision that we provide something to last generations," said committeeman Darrell Brann.

"No one is going to think we're some kind of subdivision of Joseph," agreed committeewoman Mary Swanson.

The massive, seven-foot by 11-foot, larch wood sign is being carved by local artist Steve Arment.

"I think folks will be interested to see the scale of this sign," Arment said. "It took six people to tip it over so I could begin to carve it. We didn't try to lift it, we just tipped it over."

Jim Zacharias of Joseph provided the four-inch-thick planks and Brann will construct the Bowlby stone pillars.

"It's going to be large and it's going to be colorful," Arment said. "I think it will make a good impression."

The engineering plans were drawn up pro bono by Ralph Swinehart of Wallowa Mountain Engineering, the ODOT sign permit was completed, the City of Enterprise conditional permit has been obtained, a building permit has been issued, and many local businesses and individuals added their

donations to money gained from grants and fundraisers.

Premier contributors included the Bank of Wallowa County, the Cultural Trust, Pacific Power, Wallowa County and the City of Enterprise. "There were many private donors, too," said Swanson. "From donations of a dollar to donations of a thousand dollars."

The sign project bank account now stands at \$30,000. Approximately \$15,000 more is needed to complete the project, but that's "mostly labor," according to Brann. Brann, who owns Darrell Brann Con-

struction, Inc., has no doubt the project will be completed this year.

"I, for one, will be making sure the project is completed," he said. "We're hoping to break ground soon."

A few more fundraisers are planned, possibly in conjunction with Bowlby Bash in Enterprise.

Tax-deductible contributions can be made to GEMS for this and many other beautification plans for the city by dropping a check off at City Hall.

REPRIEVE: Senior Living rescinds 30-day notices

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The families of the residents had filed an appeal of the notices with the State of Oregon. At an informal conference June 17 on the WVSL premises, families of the three residents discussed their concerns individually with WVSL staff, and via phone with both a long-term care ombudsman and an official from the Oregon Department of Human Services, which regulates long-term care facilities.

Annette Lathrop, whose

father is one of the three residents, said that her mother received a call the following morning from Jennifer Olson, executive director of WVSL, saying that Artegan, the company that manages WVSL, had decided to rescind the notices.

Lathrop expressed relief at the decision. "We're very thankful and grateful these orders were rescinded. I still plan to speak at the (June 22) health care board meeting about the process these families have gone through the last three weeks, the issues there

for Wallowa County seniors and the disconnect between the health care board and the voters who passed the levy," she said.

Lathrop said she sought to work through the process as a problem-solver. "I believe that by working together, some of these challenges can be met, but when we divide into groups we use up all our energy and don't accomplish much. However, my personal level of trust with what's happened over the last three weeks has eroded, and it will take some effort to

rebuild it."

WVSL's Olson said, "We are thrilled that these three gentlemen are going to be able to stay in their home and that the state is willing to work with us. It has been clearly recognized that communities in rural areas face different challenges to be in compliance with the Oregon Administrative Rules than those in urban locations."

At the June 22 Wallowa County Health Care District Board meeting, Lathrop and several other community members read letters to the

board expressing a number of concerns, including the administration of WVSL as well as the facility's problems in retaining qualified care employ-

ees.

Warren Page, co-owner of Artegan, said he and his staff were working to resolve staff and care issues.



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FISH: Deaths mysterious

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He also said he measured some very high pH levels in the weedy areas where bullhead prefer to spawn. Bratcher has taken water samples from the lake and also took hatchery fish up to the lake and put them in water cages on Monday for 25 hours, and all were still alive. He also observed a number of live bullhead and trout. "It's fishable; there's nothing major going on up there," Bratcher said.

"This didn't have anything to do with us poisoning the lake. That's not happening until next fall," Bratcher said.

LIBRARY: Fundraiser meets goal

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The city had estimated it would need \$250,000 including a contingency fund.

"We have people, who when that lift comes in, will be riding up and down all day," Rautenstrauch said. "It's just important."

Local fundraising for the project had already brought in \$11,690, with \$6,500 of that coming as a result of the donated Nature Conservancy deer tag raffle. The City of Enterprise had also pledged \$7,000.

"We knew this big expense was coming," Rautenstrauch said, and so she and the city had been squirreling away the

money for years. "Grantors need to see we're trying," she said.

The grantors were impressed. Meyer Memorial Trust added \$75,000 to the seed money, the Collins Foundation committed \$50,000, the Oregon Community Foundation combined money from three separate funds and trusts to give a total of \$25,000, the Wheeler Foundation sent \$5,000 and The Ford Family Foundation called on Tuesday to announce they had decided to bring that total up to over \$244,000. They are sending \$71,000.

"We set a goal of raising \$10,000 ourselves and we met

that goal," Rautenstrauch said. "But, you don't stop fundraising, because you never know what you might need."

The needs of patrons with knee and hip replacements, balance issues, heart or stroke issues and many more limitations will soon be met, Rautenstrauch said.

"We could go out for bids in four weeks' time and should be able to break ground in August," she said.

The elevator will be placed at the back of the building, accessible via the sidewalk, and will deliver patrons to the main floor.





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