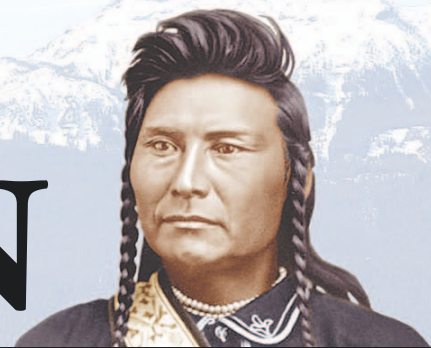




Dad and daughter complete Wallowa Lake Triathlon

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WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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Cycle Oregon visit scrapped by fire

By Steve Tool

Wallowa County Chieftain

The fast-growing Dry Gulch fire burning just 7 miles from Richland caused officials of Cycle Oregon to re-route the bike ride, completely bypassing the Wallows and erasing a potential

boon for area merchants and non-profit groups.

Cycle Oregon, with its 2,400 bike riders and support staff, was scheduled to spend more than a day at Wallowa Lake before moving on to La Grande.

The fire started on the afternoon of Sept. 12 and quickly spread through dry brush

“THE IMPACT ON THE VILLAGE AT THE LAKE IS A LOT, THAT’S ALL I’VE GOT TO SAY.”

Michael Lockhart, owner of the Wallowa Lake Tramway

and timber, consuming thousands of acres and causing area evacuation notices and forcing the closure of High-

way 86, part of the Cycle Oregon route. While the highway is reopened, heavy fire traffic and logistical difficulties in

the area caused ride officials to re-route this tour segment.

The fire is 20 percent contained, and its cause is still

under investigation.

It’s hard to calculate the economic impact of something that didn’t happen, but businesses in Wallowa County had geared up to serve more than a thousand potential customers.

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POT OF GOLD MARIJUANA LAW OPENS MONEYSMAKING DOORS

New store offers smoking accessories

By Steve Tool

Wallowa County Chieftain

With the passing of Ballot Measure 91, which allows for the recreational use of marijuana, new business opportunities have emerged for those with an entrepreneurial frame of mind. The Peace

Pipe recently opened its doors at 9b S. Main St. in Joseph, offering a wide variety of smoking accessories aimed at, but not limited to, marijuana smokers.

The store is owned by partners Sean Flanagan and Michelle Kramer. Flanagan has lived in the county for about a dozen years. Prior to opening the store, he worked for the Wallowa Lake Resort, where he continues to serve in a limited capacity.

The couple initially looked at a number of area business opportunities, including purchasing Mt. Emily Brewery in La Grande, before settling on the idea that a smoking accessories store would be a great draw for Joseph.

“We brainstormed it, found a building and distributors, started buying display cases and we just opened the doors. We knew there was a market here because our nearest competitor is well over an hour from here,” Flanagan said. “We always knew we’d be in some kind of business together,” Kramer added.

Despite Joseph City Council’s use of zoning laws to effectively eliminate the possibility of a marijuana dispensary of any kind within the city limits, Flanagan and Kramer said Joseph City Hall was very supportive of their business endeavors. Somewhat surprisingly, the couple is supportive of the city dispensary ban because of the small returns the city would get after the state takes its slice of the tax pie.

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Steve Tool/Chieftain

The Peace Pipe co-owners Michelle Kramer and Sean Flanagan pose next to just a few of their offerings, including their amazing hookah.

County ponders ‘opt-out’

By Kathleen Ellyn and Elliott Seyler

Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County Commissioners had a brief discussion of whether or not to opt out of the marijuana issue at the regular commissioners meeting Sept. 8. The direct opt-out opportunity (HB3400) was allowed for counties with at least 60 percent voter opposition to Measure 91. Wallowa County recorded a 61 percent opposition.

The discussion was brief because information on the benefits and problems of allowing the sale of marijuana is still coming in.

“We can, by a stroke of a pen, opt out,” said Commissioner Mike Hayward. “Maybe that’s exactly how we want to do that, maybe not.”

The problem is that it is impossible to tell, at this time, how much money Wallowa County could ink into the “benefits” column if commissioners don’t opt out.

The state will keep 90 percent of its collected tax and license revenue for specified programs including (in order of percentage): the common school fund, mental health alcoholism and drug services, State Police, city and county law enforcement, Oregon Health Authority for Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

Until July 2017, the 10 percent that the state shares will go to cities based on population distribution — the larger the population of a city, the more money it will get.

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Potential police chiefs coming to Enterprise

By Kathleen Ellyn

Wallowa County Chieftain

The top four candidates for Enterprise police chief have been asked to be ready to come to town and bring their wives, according to the police chief evaluation committee set up by Enterprise city councilors.

“Some are coming a long way and all are excited to come out here,” said city ad-

ministrator Michele Young.

The evaluation committee included members of the public and was advised on terminology and credentials by Wallowa County Sheriff Steve Rogers.

The city received eight applications and has narrowed their selection to four top picks.

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Chambers merger proposed

By Kathleen Ellyn

Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County Commissioners heard a presentation Sept. 8, by Joseph Chamber of Commerce President Becky Rushton proposing a relocation of the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce offices to Joseph and potentially renaming it the Joseph-Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce.

Both actions, Rushton said, would take advantage of the well-known draw of Joseph without disrupting the broader mission of promoting the entire county.

See MERGER, Page A7



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Mike Maslach helps a photographer plan a route that will take him near places featured in the published work of local photographer David Jensen.

Got your tix?



Oregon's Alpenfest

Sept. 24-27 in Enterprise, Joseph and Wallowa Lake

Details in our insert in today's paper or oregonalpenfest.com



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