

# State health officials visit medical clinic

By Steve Tool  
Wallowa County Chieftain

A recent three-star state rating for Winding Waters Clinic in Enterprise -- placing it among the state's top medical clinics -- prompted a visit from members of the Oregon Health Policy Board and Oregon Health Authority earlier this month. State health officials gathered at the clinic on Oct. 4 to hear about the staff's experience in "on-the-ground" health system transformation. It was the OHPB's first eastern Oregon visit.

The clinic received the state's first 3-star rating as a Patient Centered Primary Home Care Program (PCPCH) from the OHA, which is under the oversight of the OHPB. A PCPCH designation means the state recognizes the clinic for its commitment to patient-centered care.

"They approached us with the idea of this visit and asked if we would be willing to host and give them a tour of our clinic," WWC Executive Director Dr. Liz Powers said. "OHA director Lynn Saxton has a particular interest in rural health and Winding Waters was the first 3-star PCPCH certified in the state. They were thrilled that this



Courtesy of Megan Bowen

**Dr. Liz Powers of Winding Waters Clinic (second from right) poses with community partner members and members of the Oregon Health Policy Board and the Oregon Health Authority on Oct. 4. The state agencies visited the award-winning clinic to better understand how rural clinics integrate with the communities they serve.**

distinction came to a frontier clinic and wanted to hear how we made that happen and see firsthand the great things we do here."

WWC Chief Operations Officer Keli Christman said the clinic's community partnerships are one of the reasons for its success and 3-star rating. Christman said it's im-

portant for the clinic to partner with other service providers and community groups for the health of all community members. Although the clinic has a number of partners, both Building Healthy Families and The Wallowa County Center for Wellness are the current primary partners.

"We have different visions,

but we see the same people," Christman said. "Building Healthy Families saw the need for more developmental screening so they come here and do their screening. The same with the Center for Wellness. They have a behavioral coach right here in the clinic."

Other community partnerships include Wallowa Valley

Network of Care, Local Community Advisory Council, Wallowa Memorial Hospital and Enterprise School District.

During the visit Powers shared a brief history of the clinic and representatives from community partners discussed the history and progression of their collaborations with

the clinic. Afterward, Powers gave a WWC tour with the clinic staff each sharing their part in their team-based health care model.

"I think they were impressed," Powers said, adding that she hoped the visit would inform state health policy moving forward, as red tape still hinders the clinic's transformation process. "The OHPB has some leverage to make needed policy changes that can support what we do here," she said.

Megan Bowen, site visitor for the PCPCH program, said the group was impressed with the clinic and added that Power's observations did not fall on deaf ears. "The Oregon Health Policy Board members and OHA leadership walked away from the visit to Winding Waters with a newfound understanding of the challenges that providers, patients and clinics face in rural areas.

"This visit will help to improve channels of communication between OHA, OHPB and rural Oregon in order to achieve continued transformation of the health system, share success stories and improve opportunities for new partnerships going forward."

## Wallowa opts out on retail pot

By Kathleen Ellyn  
Wallowa County Chieftain

The City of Wallowa has been busy this fall, bringing their policies and procedures up to standard.

As of the Oct. 20 regular City Council meeting, the city has officially opted out of considering licenses for marijuana sale or growth within city limits.

Opting out does not change the law with regard to personal growing and use. As of July 1, adults may grow up to four plants and eight ounces per residence. Use of medical marijuana is also allowed in a city or county that has opted out.

The decision was made after a town hall meeting indicated residents mostly favored opting out.

Councilors also were updated on the results of their advertisement for a new city attorney. Attorney Roland Johnson, who recently acted as the city's attorney during the \$3 million-plus improvement of the water district, has been used by the city for various projects as an independent contractor. The city has since decided to hire a permanent legal representative.

An advertisement was published and the city has received three applications.

"We told (applicants) we only wanted someone to do occasional work, given how small a city we are," said City Recorder Carol Long.

Next on the agenda for the council is the long-awaited action of going out for bids for an auditor. The CPA firm of Seydel, Lewis, Poe, Moeller & Gunderson LLC, from La Grande, has served as the city's auditor for decades. That contract was regularly extended in three-year increments and signed by the mayor.

Both the wisdom of having such a long-term association without going out for bids and the issue of validity of a mayor-approved agreement came up in early 2014, when then-councilor Kevin Silvera argued that such an arrangement was neither wise nor valid because the council had not been consulted.

Silvera's introduction of the issue led to considerable discussion and investigation but little action until this year.

The city is prepared to move forward with a call for bids.

"I hope we keep the same people," Long said. "It's nice when you get familiar with someone. But the League of Oregon Cities thinks you should go out for bids every few years and I've been here nine years and we've never done it, so I guess it's time."

# Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision meetings continue

By Kathleen Ellyn  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Discussions about the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision have been scheduled for other counties in the first two weeks of November.

The content and presentation of these discussions will be the same as the discussion held in Wallowa County on July 20.

The Forest Service is simply picking up where it left off during the summer, said Maura Laverty, Range Program Manager for the Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla Zone.

"Fire season interrupted our outreach," Laverty said. "We're picking it up again to try and reach Union and Baker counties now. The information we gathered in Wallowa County has not been acted on yet. We will wait until we have finished gathering all of the information from other counties."

Tom Montoya, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest supervisor, Sabrina Stabler, team leader for the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision, and Laverty met with more than two dozen Wallowa County grazing permittees July 20 in Enterprise.

That meeting also was attended by Oregon House

District 58 Rep. Greg Barreto, county commissioners Susan Roberts and Mike Hayward, and members of the county's National Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC).

At that meeting Laverty assured Wallowa County permittees that some "wordsmithing" would be done to change the tone of the document to better reflect how grazing practices and science related to it had changed over



Laverty

the past 20 years.

"(NRAC member and OSU Extension Agent) John Williams and I will be doing that wordsmithing with a small group of policy writers this winter," Laverty said.

The new meetings are divided into impact groups:

- 6-9 p.m. Nov. 2 at the Armory in La Grande: Discussions of access and wilderness on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
- 6-9 p.m. Nov. 4 at Hepner City Hall: Livestock grazing on the Umatilla
- 6-9 p.m. Nov. 9 at the Armory in Baker City: Blue Mountains Forest Plan, Baker County and Wallowa-Whitman

- 6-9 p.m. Nov. 10 at North Fork John Day Ranger District in Ukiah: Grazing on the Umatilla and Malheur
- 6-9 p.m. Nov. 12 at the Armory in La Grande: Scale of restoration on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and Umatilla



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*Sue Peart, Enterprise*

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