



THE BIG READ

Kicks off with community event this week.

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WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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 CURBING DOMESTIC ABUSE

LEGAL RECOURSE

137

Individuals in **Wallowa County** who sought safety from domestic violence at Safe Harbors in 2015.

New laws help put teeth in domestic violence prevention

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

A new state law (Senate Bill 525) now allows Oregon judges to order the removal of guns from individuals who are convicted of misdemeanor domestic abuse.

That's important because felony domestic abuse cases often are pleaded down to misdemeanors when victims decide not to testify, limiting the evidence available to prosecutors as they seek felony charges.

This leaves offenders, whose crimes may have risen to the level of a felony, still in possession of guns they may use against their victims in the future.

Amy Stubblefield, director of Safe Harbors, the domestic and sexual violence provider for Wallowa County, said statistics show that when an abusive partner has access to firearms, domestic violence is more likely to turn deadly. According to research published in the American Journal of Public Health, the presence of a gun in domestic violence situations increases the risk of homicide for women by 500 percent.

And in the last year alone, in approximately 20 percent of the cases reported in Wallowa County victims have said they were at some point threatened with a firearm in some way shape or form, including direct verbal threat, showing bullets claimed to be for the victim and more.

"There's a huge risk for victims if their abusers are allowed to have firearms," Stubblefield said.

And there are a lot of victims in the county. More than 137 individuals sought services related to domestic violence at Safe Harbors in 2015.

Some of the victims were children.

Few such cases ever come to trial.

According to Wallowa County Sheriff Steve Rogers, only about 10 percent of the domestic violence cases in the county are even reported to law enforcement.

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Approximate percent of the cases reported in the last year in **Wallowa County** that victims have said they were at some point were threatened with a firearm.



Chieftain Archives

MUSHERS AT YOUR MARKS

Five Iditarod veterans and multiple returnees make 2016 ECX toughest yet

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Mushers from Idaho, Washington, Montana, Alaska, California and Canada will be competing in three races at the Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Races this year.

Five of them have run the Iditarod: two Canadians, Aaron Peck of Alberta (four Iditarods) and Jason Campeau of Alberta (2015); two Washingtonians, Mark Stamm (2005) and Scott White (2010); and Montanan Jessie Royer (2015). All five will be running 12-dog teams in the 200-mile race along with Idahoans Josi Thyr and Bryce Mumford; Washingtonian Scott White; Montanan Brett Bruggeman; and Alaskans Jennifer Campeau and Alea Robinson. It will be Alea Robinson's first attempt at the race. She has competed in the Junior Iditarod twice.

The winner of the 200-mile race will take home \$1,700.

Three mushers will be running eight-dog teams in the 100-mile race: April Cox and Hugo Antonucci, both of Adin, Calif., and Laure Warren of Council, Idaho.

The winner of the 100-mile race will take home \$850.

Four mushers will run six-dog teams in the 62-mile pot race, which is divided into two heats and run over two days: Oregonians Jane Devlin of Bend and Laura Crocker of Trail; Idahoan Carleen Brehmer; and Californian Alyssa Martin.

Crocker, 77, has the distinction of being the oldest musher at the ECX this year.

The purse for the pot race is a division of entry fees for the race, with 50 percent going to the winner.

No juniors are signed up for 2016.

An award of \$250 will be given for Best Cared for Team in both the 200- and 100-mile races.

The fun starts Wednesday morning when Race Central opens at the Joseph Community Center. Mushers present their dogs for the first veterinarian check at 9 a.m. on Main Street in Joseph. Others will be on Main Street in Enterprise at 1 p.m. and a representative musher will greet the kids at the Christian Church grounds at 10 a.m. in Wallowa.

The races begin at Ferguson Ridge Ski Area at noon Thursday. Finishing times vary from Thursday through Saturday.

The awards banquet and dinner will take place at 5:30 p.m. Saturday at the Joseph Community Center.

For a full schedule of events and to purchase tickets to the awards banquet and dinner, visit eaglecapextreme.com. For updates visit the Eagle Cap Extreme Facebook page.



Submitted photo

Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore, represents Harney County. Although he doesn't support the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge by protesters, he understands "the underlying frustration and anger at federal land management and loss of economic opportunity."

WHAT'S NEXT?

With attention focused on SE Oregon, some see opportunity for solutions to rural West's problems

By Eric Mortenson and
Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Press

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden didn't have much of an audience Jan. 5 when he stood on the floor of the House of Representatives to talk about the militia takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge headquarters in southeast Oregon.

That's how it works; Members of Congress give even their most impassioned floor speeches to empty chairs and a single camera.

But in the days since, attention has turned to Walden's 24-minute description of the area he represents and the "decades

of frustration, arrogance and betrayal that has contributed to the mistrust of the federal government."

Judging from more than 130,000 YouTube views of his speech and even-handed editorial response from the largest news organizations, Walden and others who represent, live in and work in the rural West appear to have gained the nation's attention.

The message: No, we do not approve of the armed men who took over the refuge. But the underlying frustration and anger at federal land management and loss of economic opportunity is real.

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