

Fish likely new Enterprise police chief

City extends offer; late-May start date likely

Wallowa County Chieftain

The city of Enterprise has extended a job offer to police chief finalist Joel Fish of Hickory, N.C., who could assume the vacant post within a few months.

According to a city press release issued Tuesday as The Chieftain was going to press, Fish has signed a conditional

employment agreement and the pre-employment screening process has been set into motion. His tentative plan is to begin work the week of May 23.

Fish was one of two finalists, along with Mark Daniel of Sherwood, Ore., who attended a public meet-and-greet event March 9 at Community Connections in Enterprise.

According to the press release, “the city received several positive comments from the community regarding the hiring of Mr. Fish. The Enter-

prise Police Department is excited to have someone come in and take the leadership role to take their department to the next level. The Enterprise City Council would like to thank our staff; George Kohlhepp, T. J. Miller and Jed Stone for stepping up and doing a great job.”

If the hire is finalized, Fish will replace former Chief Wes Kilgore, who resigned in March 2015.

Fish, 50, has two children with his wife of 27 years, Catharine — an adult daughter and 10-year-old Joe.

His career has consisted of more than 17 years in investigations with the Catawba County Sheriff’s Office in Hickory (192 employees with about 72 working the jail and fielding 11,680 calls for service last year). He climbed to captain of investigations, after which he spent a year and a half as a patrol captain and then captain of



Fish

communications.

“It’s a really great job,” Fish said during the March 9 meet and greet. “Right now I’m over the school resources officers for 26 schools, over the crime-prevention program and security for the courthouse. I like patrol but I like getting out and talking and working with people — I like the interpersonal relationships.”

Wallowa County, he said March 9, is “basically my dream place. You’ve got mountains right here, the plains, you’ve got woodlands

to the north, the canyons. It’s very diversified. I was always trying to think: would I like to live in Arizona? Montana? But you’ve got it all right here.”

Fish also praised the work of Enterprise Police Officer George Kohlhepp, who has shouldered many additional responsibilities during the city’s search for a new chief.

“I found George is very enthusiastic,” he said. “He’s very intense about his job. I enjoyed listening to him and he has good reason to be proud, I believe.”



Steve Tool/Chieftain

Joseph girls go door-to-door to help local Humane Society

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County Humane Society President Carol Vencill recently received an unexpectedly pleasant call informing her that two grade-school girls had raised nearly \$100 to donate to the organization.

Ariana Samples, 10, who is home-schooled, and McKenzie Keffer, 11, a fifth-grader at Joseph Charter School presented their donation during a recent meeting. Samples is the daughter of Caleb and Darcy Samples of Joseph, and Keffer is the daughter of Mark and Michelle Keffer, also of Joseph.

The girls spent about 18 months raising the funds, ac-

cording to Darcy Samples. They sold homemade goods such as zucchini brownies, cherry swirl cupcakes, jewelry and hand-sewn items around their neighborhood and at the Lower Valley Farmers Market.

“We wanted to have a club, and we both like animals,” Ariana Samples said.

Darcy Samples said she supports and encourages the two girls getting involved in community fundraising, but she doesn’t do the work for them.

“I just buy supplies and drive them around. They love to make things and sew, and I told them they should have a cause. I like to see them participate.”

After Ariana Samples

made a short speech, the two girls presented the board with a Mason jar filled with their fundraising efforts, prompting the board to break out in applause.

Samples and Keffer plan to raise funds for other charities as well, but they’ll always come back to WCHS.

“We’re doing this for two years and we’ll find something else,” Keffer said.

Vencill said she was totally shocked when she received the call about the girls’ efforts toward fundraising for the humane society.

“We knew nothing about it. We’re recruiting them for future volunteers. We really like seeing the kids doing this, and we’re hoping it’ll rub off on some of their friends.”

Forest Resiliency meeting Tuesday

Wallowa County Chieftain Discussion of the U.S. Forest Service’s regional Forest Resiliency Project moves to Enterprise next week with a meeting from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, March 29, at Cloverleaf Hall.

USFS has scheduled a series of meetings for the public to weigh in on an ambitious restoration project on the Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla and Ochoco national forests. The Forest Resiliency Project aims to accelerate the pace and scale of restoration in the area, restoring the Blue Mountains to healthier condition and lowering the risk of severe wildfires.

span 13 counties in Eastern Oregon and southeast Washington.

Public meetings are being held to share information and discuss concerns among residents. After the Enterprise meeting, project leaders will visit the Blue Mountains Conference Center in La Grande from 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, March 30.

Public comments will

be accepted on the project through April 5. For more information, visit www.fs.usda.gov/goto/forestresiliencyproject or contact Darcy Weseman at 541-278-3755.

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Farmers Market on hiatus in Enterprise

Vendors symposium for Joseph market set for April 16

By Scot Heisel
Wallowa County Chieftain

With the 2016 summer market season just a few months away, members of the Wallowa County Farmers Market board have firmed up some significant changes for this year — some good, and some admittedly not so good.

Following several years of declining attendance, the Thursday night market in Enterprise is being put on ice until a plan to breathe new life into the venture can be formulated.

Vendor and market manager Carol Bartlow said the board recently met and made the tough decision to cancel the 2016 Enterprise season.

“(Enterprise) is just in need of more community involvement and more vendors,” Bartlow said. “Within the last few years it has been dropping down, as far as attendance, and it’s just logical to call a hiatus to

find a way to build it up again.”

Bartlow added that putting the Enterprise market on hold will help board members and vendors place renewed focus on the Saturday market in Joseph. That effort gets underway with a Vendors Symposium from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, April 16 at Fishtrap, 400 E Grant St. in Enterprise.

This year’s preseason gathering will offer a new slate of valuable resources for veteran vendors and anyone who is interested in testing the farmers market waters.

“(The symposium) is the first of its kind,” Bartlow said. “Every year we have an annual meeting. Potential vendors come, we answer questions. This year, to build up the market and get new people involved, we have a guest speaker to help understand what it means to be a vendor. And we have a panel of veteran vendors who will share tips on what it takes to be successful.”

At the symposium, marketing specialist Cathy Bingham will offer advice on general marketing strategies, including advertising and social media.

Also, Jody Berry of Wild Carrot in Enterprise will discuss the “nuts and bolts” of booth presentation and the practicalities of on-site product display.

Following presentations and a panel discussion, there will be a question-and-answer session on all things related to the market to cap the event.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity,” Bartlow said.

She also said that while the Joseph market will continue to have live music during several weeks during the season, other new entertainment options are in the planning stages.

The Joseph Farmers Market runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays starting May 28. For more information, contact Bartlow at 541-398-8435 or visit www.wallowacountyfarmers-market.com.

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