

Free Medicare 101 classes coming to Eastern Oregon

Wallowa County Chieftain

Eastern Oregon residents with questions about Medicare will be able to get free in-person help this August during Medicare 101 classes hosted by the Oregon Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance program. “We hear from people from many different backgrounds, and about the only thing they all share is the feeling that Medicare is complicated,” said volunteer instructor Sally Peatow of Hermiston. “I always tell people it really has to be. It touches on many different areas of health care and it covers so much. Medicare 101 classes give people a head start learning about the basics,

and we can connect folks to additional enrollment help if they would like.” Participants will find out how to enroll in Medicare and will gain an understanding of costs. They will also get information on where to get Medicare help in their community. The two-week tour is sponsored in part by Libraries of Eastern Oregon. Classes will be held in Enterprise from noon to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 16 at Community Connection and in La Grande, from 6-8 p.m. Monday, Aug. 15 in the Misener Conference Room at the Union County Courthouse Annex. Early registration urged. Call 800-722-4134 or email shiba.oregon@oregon.gov.

Oregon timber harvest down

Wallowa County Chieftain

After two years at slightly above four billion board feet per year, Oregon’s timber harvest dropped below that in 2015 to a number on par with the 2012 harvest, according to the Oregon Department of Forestry’s annual timber harvest report issued this week.

Decreases occurred across all ownerships except for state-owned forestlands. Approximately 49 percent, or 30.2 million acres, of Oregon is forested. Federal forestlands account for 60 percent of these forestlands, industrial forestlands for 19 percent, family forestland owners own 15 percent, state-owned forests comprise 3 percent, and all other forestland owners (counties, tribal, etc.), 3 percent. The only area of increase was where USFS had entered into collaborative agreements with Grant and Harney counties. State forestlands harvest had increased from 230 million board feet in 2014 to 290 million board feet in 2015, for an overall 26 percent increase in timber harvest.

During that same time private Industry harvest decreased statewide by 10 percent from 2014 to 2015 to 2.36 billion board feet. These decreases were present on both sides of the Cascades, but were most prominent on the west side, as a percentage, where private industry harvest declined by approximately 9 percent.

Non-industrial private landowners had an approximate 19 percent decrease in harvest, statewide, for a 2015 total of 453 million board feet. Harvests on Native American forestlands decreased approximately 9 percent from 57 million board feet in 2015 to 52 million board feet in 2015.

The decrease in timber harvest was largely driven by the slowdown in exports to Asia. Along with the decrease in log exports, the expiration of the Softwood Lumber Agreement in the fourth quarter led to an increase in imports of lumber from Canada, affecting demand for Oregon logs. Finally, an active fire season, along with a wet and warmer than usual winter, created issues for logging and hauling.

CHAR

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A Northeast Oregon native with deep family roots in Wallowa County, Williams’ grandfather built the first cabin on the west moraine in 1918. She has been an integral part of Wallowa County since she and her husband Dan moved back to the county in 1986. “I didn’t want to move here at all,” she said. “The winters were too cold.” So her husband Dan offered to put his contractor skills to work and build her an indoor riding arena. “That sealed the deal,” she said. Today, as always, Williams’ life revolves around her horses. She confessed that she has finally given up two important but risky activities — riding colts and roping. But life without horses, she said, would be close to impossible. The arena, which allows riding during the coldest part of the winter, remains an integral part of her stable. Her horses include paints, palominos and a Peruvian Paso. She likes mares because they seem to be wiser than geldings, she said. Williams’ pride and joy is Paintnot Patterson, a straight-legged, big-boned, kind-hearted 3-month-old half-warmblood colt out of her registered paint mare. “He’s going to be 17 hands,” she said proudly. “But I’m going to have to sell him. I don’t know what I’d do with a horse that tall.” Her favorite ride is her Peruvian Paso. “She has a wonderful gait, and it’s not that far to the ground.” Of all her work here, Williams treasures her time teaching at the Imnaha



Ellen Morris Bishop/For The Chieftain
2016 Chief Joseph Days Parade grand marshal Char Williams with her Paint mare and 3-month-old foal, Paintnot Patterson.

School. “There is no more rewarding job than teaching at Imnaha,” she said. From supportive ranch families and kids who relish the outdoors, to the landscape itself, “It’s the greatest teaching job ever,” she said. Her longtime and caring work as an

educator and horsewoman, stewardship of Chief Joseph Days and family ties to the community and event make Char Williams an outstanding Chief Joseph Days Grand Marshal. “This is such a beautiful place,” she said. “And it’s especially beautiful to those of us who live here.”

Wallowa Valley Trail Riders Association

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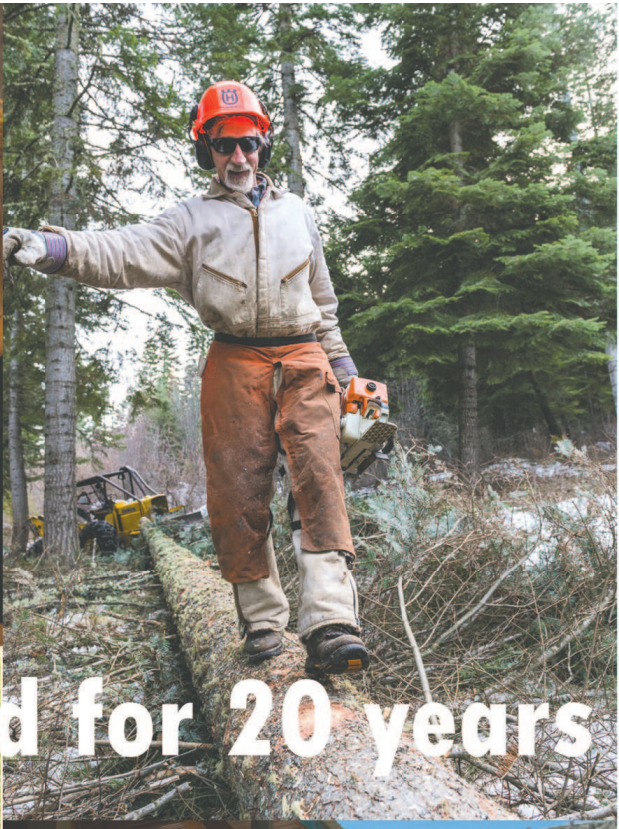
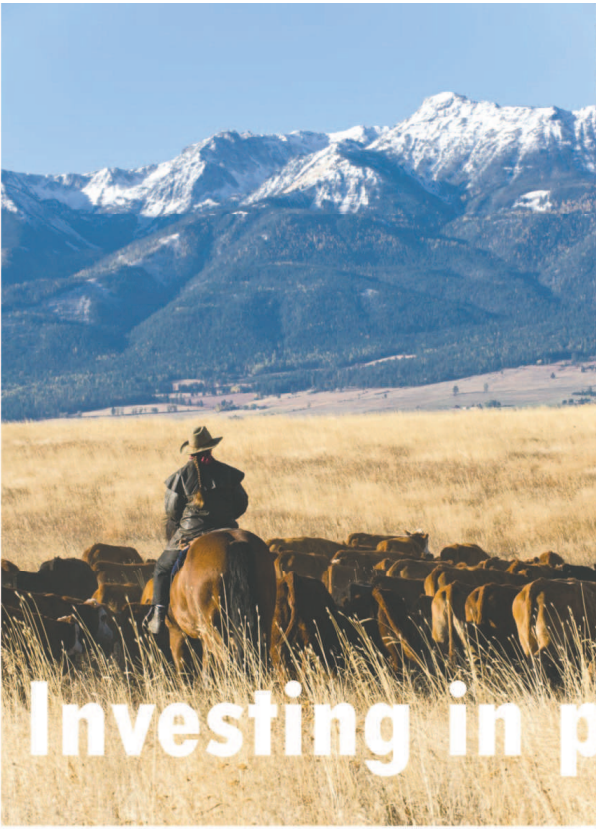
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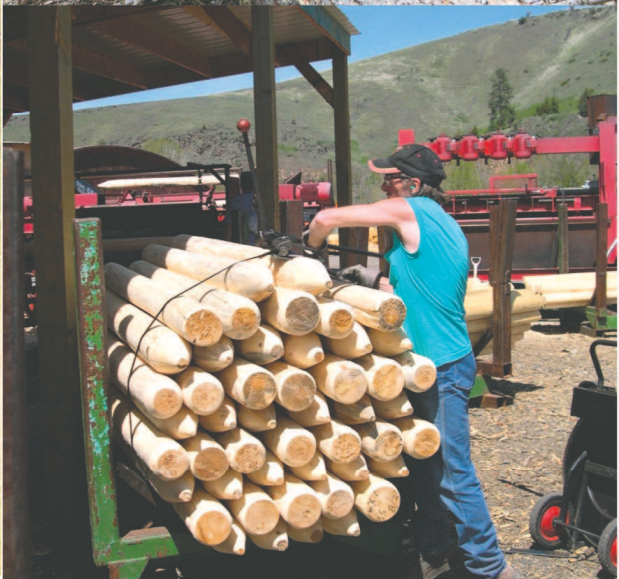
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