

Antique equipment show this weekend

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Erl McLaughlin just launched into the third decade of showing off his collection of antique agricultural equipment. He’s been collecting and restoring longer than that — since 1983, he says.

McLaughlin, an Enterprise wheat farmer, likes to down-play his impressive collection a bit. According to him he’s just “been keeping busy after the wheat is all in” by traveling to find antique equipment and bringing it back to restore it in his massive 220-by-40-foot barn.

Like most collectors, he’s enthusiastic about his collection. So, he’s held an open house day every summer for 20 years so that visitors can view that collection at his ranch located at 65708 Sunrise Road on Alder Slope outside of Enterprise. This year is his 21st year of doing that and the Show Day at Sunrise Iron is all day Saturday, Aug. 6.

Donations are welcomed, but McLaughlin won’t turn anyone away.

“You know who’s the loser then?” he asked. “Me. Because then I might not meet the person who could tell me something I don’t know about these machines or tell me where I can find the next one.”

It’s hard to believe that McLaughlin’s extensive knowledge of the machines in his collection needs any freshening. Just walking with him through the building is a treat.

“This little plow came out of Haines, Ore., by way of Arizona and was used in some early John Wayne movie,” he said. “So, it’s barely used. It was made in 1914 or so and it’s an Oliver left-handed plow. You got to go around the

field backward to what most guys do because it throws the dirt the other way.”

Despite his knowledge he insists he still has things to learn from visitors and that there are some small items in that collection the uses of which he is still unsure. That’s not surprising, McLaughlin says, because he didn’t grow up with this equipment — he just likes it a whole lot.

And fortunately, like most farmers, McLaughlin is also adept at mechanics — learning as he goes, if necessary. He’s restored everything from clothes washers and butter churns to a 1913 Battle Creek 40-horse steam engine.

He reckons he’s got more than 100 items in his barn in Enterprise, but he’s got more equipment and pieces of equipment stored at other locations. Those pieces can be important, because searching for parts to put a 100-year-old piece of equipment back into condition might take years.

“If it was easy, I’d get bored,” McLaughlin said.

Or you just might have to go with what you’ve got. One of his pieces, a 1915 Model 10-20 3-Wheel Case Tractor, is one of only two known to exist.

All that restoration work doesn’t keep a farmer like McLaughlin busy enough in his down time, though. He’s also been making laser-cut decorations, wagon wheel coffee and wine-tasting tables, mantle pieces and more. All of that will be on display Saturday as well.

“When the good Lord’s blessed me with this much, people need to come here and see what I’ve collected,” McLaughlin said. “Then they’ll know I’m three sandwiches short of a picnic.”

Roof fix spruces up courthouse

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

If you pass by the Wallowa County Courthouse and wonder about the new exoskeleton that suddenly grew around the building, not to worry — it’s not metamorphosing into a giant insect. Rather, it’s the beginning of a \$700,000 roof repair project. The current roof is the original from the building’s 1909 construction and has caused some damage to the courthouse from leaks.

The roof replacement, financed through a recent Community Bank loan, is the beginning of a hoped-for larger project to refurbish and update a large portion of the courthouse interior. This includes a second-floor renovation with greater disability access and a new fire suppression system for the Circuit Court, which will be at least partially funded by a state grant.

“We have a lot to do, and it’s a long-term project,” Wallowa County Commissioner Susan Roberts said.

Roberts helped spearhead the project, and said she is pleased with the progress. Work crews haven’t uncovered any major surprises or unexpected damage to the building.

“On the other hand, we didn’t find any million dollar object either,” she said.

A brief moment of hope flashed after a file cabinet search revealed a vintage box that purportedly contained a number of miniature John Deere tractors. There were no tractors inside.

“That was our big find,” Roberts said with a laugh.

While the construction was scheduled to cause minimal intrusions, Roberts said the district attorney’s office was forced to relocate to 107 SW



Steve Tool/Chieftain

The completed scaffolding is just the beginning of long-term courthouse renovation.

1st St., Suite 102 on July 25. Although some of the project also takes place above the circuit courtroom, no plans are underway to relocate those proceedings.

The DA’s office didn’t have a complete roof, so debris from the third floor demolition immediately filtered down into the space, one reason for the move.

“The continued noise was also something we couldn’t deal with, with the kind of work we do,” District Attorney Mona Williams said.

While offering a respite from the construction din, Williams and her staff of three are feeling the heat as the new space lacks air conditioning. Strategically placed fans offer

limited relief.

“We didn’t bring any of our desks,” Williams said.

“We’re just working on tables. We brought our chairs and computers and some of our files, and that’s about it.”

Williams’ office will move back to the courthouse once the current renovations are complete, likely some time in October.

The Grants Pass office of the Ausland Group is acting as construction managers for the project. Tim McDonald is the group’s on-site superintendent, and he spent several months coordinating with county officials to devise a plan to expedite the roof replacement with a minimum of disruption. As project managers, the group also hires sub-contractors to accomplish a number of tasks associated with the project, including the scaffolding installation.

“It’s pretty impressive, especially around the tower — the whole thing, actually,” he said.

McDonald said crews are currently working on some third-floor demolition with roof demolition starting on Aug. 8.

“Things are progressing quite well. We’re just trying to get this roof done before the winter hits.”

Fire restrictions announced

Wallowa County Chieftain

Last August the Phillips Creek fire started due to an abandoned campfire near Elgin and burned 2,601 acres at a cost of more than \$6 million to suppress.

“This fire was human-caused and entirely preventable,” said John Buckman, District Forester for Oregon Department of Forestry’s Northeast Oregon. “The fire created hazards for the public and firefighters, damaged forest lands and was very costly to suppress. It is these types of fires that the department is trying to limit with a variety of specific fire prevention measures.”

A recent increase in warm, summer-like weather conditions prompted the Department of Forestry to institute a set of fire prevention measures in a Regulated-Use Closure starting July 29. All lands protected by the district are under heightened fire safety restrictions at that time, including forestland within one-eighth mile of the district boundary. Preventing human-caused fires within the Northeast Oregon District is the objective of the fire prevention measures, which include the following restrictions:

- Open fires are prohibited, including campfires, charcoal fires, cooking fires and warming fires, except at designated locations. Designated locations with the Regulated Use Closure area include but are not limited to the following

Oregon State Parks: Emigrant Springs, Ukiah Dale, Catherine Creek, Hilgard Junctions, Red Bridge, Wallowa Lake, Minam and Unity Lake. Portable cooking stoves using liquefied or bottled fuels are allowed.

- Debris burning is prohibited, except in burn barrels for which a Burning Permit has been issued. Smoking is prohibited while traveling, except in vehicles on improved roads, in boats on the water, or at a cleared area free of flammable vegetation.
- Non-Industrial chainsaw use is prohibited from 1-8 p.m. Chainsaw use is permitted at all other hours, if the following firefighting equipment is present with each operating saw: one ax, one shovel, and one 8 ounce or larger fire extinguisher. In addition, a fire watch is required at least one hour following the use of each saw.
- Cutting, grinding and welding of metal is prohibited from 1-8 p.m. Cutting, grinding and welding of metal is permitted at all other hours, if conducted in a cleared area and if a water supply is present.
- Mowing of dried and cured grass with power driven equipment is prohibited from 1-8 p.m., except for the commercial culture and harvest of agricultural crops.
- Any electric fence controller in use shall be: 1) Listed by a nationally recognized testing laboratory or certified by the Department of Con-

sumer and Business Services; and 2) Operated in compliance with manufacturer’s instructions.

- Use of fireworks is prohibited.
- Use of sky lanterns is prohibited.
- Use of exploding targets is prohibited.
- Use of tracer ammunition or any bullet with a pyrotechnic charge in its base is prohibited. Possession of the following firefighting equipment is required while traveling, except on state highways, county roads and driveways: one shovel and one gallon of water or one 2.5 pound or larger fire extinguisher.

The Regulated Use Closure for ODF’s Northeast Oregon District affects private, state, county, municipal, and tribal lands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry in seven counties: Union, Baker,

Wallowa, Umatilla, and small portions of Malheur, Morrow and Grant.

To report a fire, call Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch at 541-963-7171 or dial 911.



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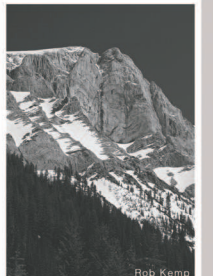
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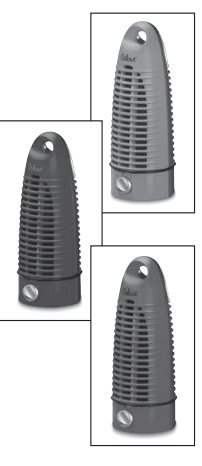


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