

Mass-casualty drill tests county's response

By Steve Tool

Wallowa County Chieftain

The Enterprise High School bus driver who was texting while driving is slumped over the wheel, deceased. A smashed truckload of chemical fertilizer is leaking profusely while a female EHS student staggers off the wrecked bus crying and bleeding profusely from several wounds. Other injured students sit wounded in the bus.

It wasn't real, but rather a planned mass-casualty drill for Wallowa County's emergency services and Wallowa Memorial Hospital on Thursday evening.

Wallowa County emergency services director Paul Karvoski said the drill mainly was a test of Wallowa Memorial Hospital's new emergency operation plan and the emergency room's ability to handle multiple patients.

"We just decided to throw in the wreck and the hazmat material for the local fire department," he said.

Personnel from Enterprise Fire Department, Enterprise Police Department, Wallowa Memorial Hospital and Emergency Medical Services participated in the drill.

Enterprise High School and the Alternative Education School contributed 10 students between them to serve as accident victims. EHS junior Paul Stangel volunteered. Two members from the Oregon Health Authority, Dean Marcum and Kris Hansen, oversaw the event and provided a later critique. The crash scenario took



Steve Tool/Chieftain

Emergency services personnel, including firefighters and EMTs, load a wounded Enterprise High School student into an ambulance during a mass casualty incident drill on Thursday.

place at approximately 6 p.m. at the county's gravel pits several miles north of Enterprise along Highway 3. Beforehand, students and county personnel gathered at the Cloverleaf Hall for the application of faux wounds and blood stains.

EHS junior Jean Luc Palma also volunteered for the exercise. "I volunteered to help because I thought it was important," he said.

Palma's injuries included a severe concussion with bleeding from both ears. He later said he received excellent treatment during his subsequent interactions with emergency services and medical personnel.

The incident required three ambulances to transport 10 students and the "dead" bus driver to the hospital.

Before the "hot wash" (critique) offered later in the evening, Marcum praised the

performance of the firemen he supervised.

"These guys did good," he said. "We're not here to yell at people. We're here to help them help the public the best way they can."

Hansen added that emergency room personnel stood up well to the incident, especially considering they hadn't had a mass casualty drill in some time.

"Overall they did well. There's some lessons to be learned, but they want to improve," she said.

"I was impressed with the scale of it, getting all the departments involved, because that would be all the departments involved in a real-life situation," said hospital information officer Stacy Green after the critique. "It was a good exercise to go through."

"I think overall it went well and opened some eyes in areas we need to improve on," Karvoski said.

EVENT

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Plenty of folks already love this event, but for those still sitting on the fence, here are a few good reasons to give it a try this year.

- Ladies, you can dress the part.

These little dresses and vests are adorable and fun and you can get them at Heidi's Dress Shop in Joseph. It's amazing what a little embroidery and flounce can do for your spirit.

- The polka is easy to learn.

Don't be intimidated by the professional dancers you'll marvel at during the Alpenfest. You don't have to know what they know, you just have to get inspired to take the floor. To help you out, you can take free 45-minute lessons on both Friday and Saturday at noon and 5 p.m.

- Liquid courage is readily available.

A pint of Terminal Gravity Alpenfest Ale is part of the enjoyment this year — served in free souvenir pint glasses. Classy.

- There are accordions.

Sure, accordions are the subject of a lot of bad jokes made by people with limited musical taste — or folks who once overdosed on a single mu-

sical style. Those folks will not be at Alpenfest to ruin your fun.

Accordions are amazing inventions with world-wide appeal, and when they came to our country with our forefathers, they were the best thing to happen to a community gathering since the fiddle. They're easier to carry than a piano, encompassing rhythm and base in addition to a keyboard, louder than a mouth harp for great projection into a packed room of revelers and well respected by many musicians from jazz to country to chamber music artists.

- You can be an outdoor sport enthusiast, despise flouncy dresses, choose to wear lycra compression gear and still love Alpenfest.

This year is the fifth anniversary of the Alpenfest Race, a serious multi-discipline event that includes a 5.5K paddle, a

31.5K road bicycle race that gains 2,300 feet in altitude, another 25K trail bicycle ride that gains 600 feet in altitude and a finishing 10K trail run that gains 1,200 feet in altitude.

The bike race begins at 9 a.m. Saturday at the Wallowa Lake State Park boat ramp and ends at the beer tent at the foot of the Tram.

Alpenfest kicks off Thursday in Enterprise with the ceremonial Main Street procession from Depot Street to the Wallowa County Courthouse Gazebo at 3:45 p.m.. It then moves to Terminal Gravity for the tapping of the first barrel of Alpenfest Ale at 5:30 p.m.

The many events of Alpenfest, which include art shows, dancing, yodeling, alpenhorn demonstrations, dancing, eating and drinking, begin at the Edelweiss Inn at Wallowa Lake at noon Friday.

PLAN

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The group, which includes County Commissioner Susan Roberts, Commissioner-elect Todd Nash and Wallowa Chamber of Commerce Director Vicki Searles, then discussed other details of branding the project: the need to become a 501c3; a theme for signs at both ends of the city; and their first real project toward the dream — moving the Lostine train station to Wallowa.

The revitalization dream is in the most preliminary stages with little "nailed down," but the "visioning" option of determining what residents most want to see is something they feel will work well for the group, Lowe said.

This is not the first time the city has geared up to attempt a revitalization. In 2008 Wallowa was among local cities to participate in a study, conducted by Johnson-Gardener LLC, a consulting firm with experience working with communities to visualize their industrial futures. Much has changed since that time, and Wallowa is ready to test the waters in a new craft.

Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD) Development Specialist Sara Miller was on hand to explain the process of gathering consensus through a program called Vision to Action. The program asks members of the community to come together and literally draw pictures of their ideas for revitalization. The pictures, along with some facts about the physical layout of the town and the amenities it already provides (new water system, for example), are taken to an artist who then creates a conceptual visual plan of what the new Wallowa might look like.

"It's really helping you go through a process where you find those common things that enough people in the community can support that you get that traction you need to move forward," Miller said.

The conceptual rendering shows where a community wants to go, that the community has worked together to create their plans and can be included in grant applications or presentations made to potential investors.

The process has worked well in many other cities. A brochure from the city of Creswell, Ore., was distributed at the meeting. Creswell has a project in mind similar to that of Wallowa — revising the site of a former lumber mill.

Doing something with the Bate's Mill site certainly is on the minds of Wallowa residents, but much would have to be done to make that a reality and discussions centering around the site have been had before. The fact that it's a Brownfields site that may need expensive restoration has been a major hurdle for potential sale of the site for years. A preliminary Department of Environmental Quality Phase 1 study — a survey of operational functions only — was completed in 2008. That study is now out of date and the DEQ will require a new Phase 1 before the process of converting a Brownfield site to a building site can begin.

For now there is just one project on the table — moving the Lostine Train Station from Terry Jones' property in Lostine to Wallowa and placing it on 1.5 acres of land that will be deeded to the Wallowa Hometown Project by Bud Phillips of Wallowa. The new Wallowa Hometown Project already owes \$2,400 for the partitioning of that property, and fundraising must start immediately.

Lowe's goal is to have the train station moved and fundraising done before November.

The need for quick action is pushed by the fact that the train station needs a roof before winter.

That one project is the nucleus of a much grander plan, but it encapsulates that grand plan well because, as it stands, the grand plan centers around the railroad. In thinking about what Wallowa City had to offer, Lowe said, it became clear that they had one of the largest industrial properties in the county, adjacent to rail, in the Bates Mill site. They had the "incubator" building, in which entrepreneurs built their businesses for a set time also sitting right on the rail line. And they had a product at the Integrated Biomass Resources plant that could be shipped out by rail.

"Timber is not coming back to what it was," Lowe said. "Timber harvest is not the answer, but it's part of the answer. Tourism is not the answer, but it's part of the answer. Industrial shops are not the answer, but they are part of the answer."

Lowe also serves on the

Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA) and is in a position to know what the railroad can and cannot offer. So an early move on his part was to present WURA with a petition from the city to have the train service returned to Wallowa — provided WURA had a good working budget for that, and provided the city got the Friends of the Joseph Branch (who own the engines and cars) to agree.

"Both those requirements have been met," Lowe said. "WURA sent inspectors from Minam to Wallowa and they let WURA know the cost."

But that's not all there is running in Lowe's train of thought. WURA owns the rail and rail bed, but Union Pacific owns the land beneath. So Sara Miller asked Union Pacific if they'd be open to letting someone run fiber optic cable down the rail bed. Union Pacific said yes. No plans were discussed, no agreements signed, but there was willingness on the part of Union Pacific to consider such a plan.

"We'll be looking for financing for that (rail work), and if you've got to fix the rail you might as well throw fiber optics under it," Lowe said.

Lowe contacted Sen. Jeff Merkley and mentioned the fact that the state gave \$5 billion to fiber-optic companies and they've not yet delivered on that investment in Wallowa.

"We have suggested the legislature appropriate some of that money and give it to a company who'll get fiber optic out to Wallowa," Lowe said.

Jeff Crews, Vice President of Eastern Oregon Net, Inc., also attended the meeting and helped establish the new website name and address.

It's another big push for Wallowa, but Lowe finds the community ready to give it a go. He's certainly ready and has volunteered to be the point man through which companies, grantors, politicians and others can communicate.

"We're strong citizens here in Wallowa," Lowe said. "I'm putting my money where my mouth is. My wife Beth (McCrae) Lowe is fifth generation and the minute we got married I started planning on how we'd get back to Wallowa."

World Rabies Day is September 28th

September 26-30, we are offering a RABIES VACCINATION SPECIAL for previously unvaccinated dogs, cats and horses: \$15 rabies vaccination, free exam. Call now to schedule 541.426.3331



M. C R O W & C O .

L O S T I N E , O R

National Family Meal Day
Monday September 26th

Family Meals Make a Difference!

The more often you sit down to a meal as a family, the less likely your kids will be involved in risky behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and using other drugs.

"All great change in America begins at the dinner table" -Ronald Reagan

Easy Baked Lasagna

- 25oz frozen cheese ravioli (keep the pasta frozen)
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 cups spaghetti sauce
- parmesan cheese, to taste

- Preheat your oven to 400 degrees.
- Pour 1 cup of the spaghetti sauce into the bottom of a 9x13 dish. Layer with half of the frozen ravioli & half of the mozzarella cheese.
- Layer the other half of the frozen ravioli, remaining cup of spaghetti sauce, & remaining cup of mozzarella cheese over top. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese.

Bake, covered with aluminum foil, for 30 minutes. Remove tin foil & continue to cook for 10-15 minutes. Sometimes I will turn the oven up to broil at the very end for a minute to brown the top a little bit more, but that's not necessary.

Yield: 6 servings.

Building Healthy Families urges you to participate in Family Meal Night as often as possible!

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