

2017 Big Read features Vietnam classic.

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WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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Ellen Morris Bishop/For The Chieftain



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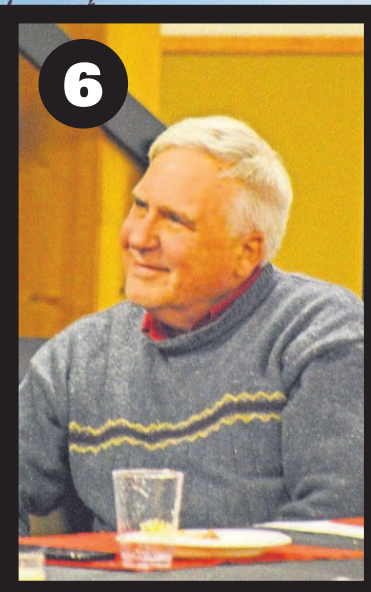
Courtesy Photo

2016

TOP WALLOWA COUNTY STORIES OF THE YEAR



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain



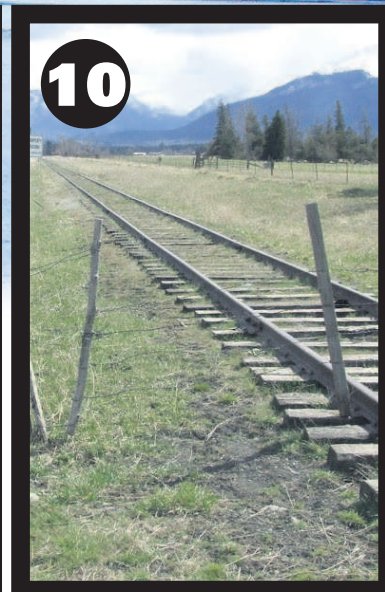
Steve Tool/Chieftain



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Chieftain photo



Rob Ruth/Chieftain

YEAR FULL OF ENDINGS, FIRSTS, CHANGES

By Tim Trainor
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County might seem off the beaten path for big stories, but a quick glimpse through a year's worth of papers reveals stories and issues that reflect and magnify nationwide concerns.

The most impactful stories of the year often involve decisions and actions that will have long, wide-ranging effects both in Wallowa County and outside of it. And it's clear many such decisions were made here in 2016.

Without further ado, our list of the Top 10 Stories of 2016 in Wallowa County.

1

WALLOWA LAKE LODGE SALE FINALIZED

In April it became official. A long, convoluted process finally came to an end, securing local ownership and preservation

of perhaps the landmark property in Wallowa County.

The purchase of the lodge, which sits on the headwaters of Wallowa Lake, also included a 10-acre conservation easement that

was taken on by the Nez Perce Tribe.

That will keep the land, on the south end of the lake, from being overly-developed.

The finish line of lodge own-

ership and operation was found by Wallowa Lake Lodge LLC, which formed and raised \$3.1 million from local investors and others from throughout the Pacific Northwest. That amount allowed



Elane Dickenson/Chieftain

the LLC to purchase the lodge and cover the expenses of a nine-month campaign.

Often, important news stories are about big changes, but this one resonates because an important part of county history will remain the same. Wallowa Lake may benefit for generations.

2

GOVERNOR SIGNS OFF ON WOLF PLAN, FIRST WOLVES KILLED BY STATE IN FIVE YEARS

Wallowa County has been the epicenter for wolf re-introduction in Oregon since the beginning, so it is no surprise that 2016 once again put it front and center in the ongoing debate.

Perhaps the most newsworthy moment, in another year filled with them in regards to wolves, took place in March.

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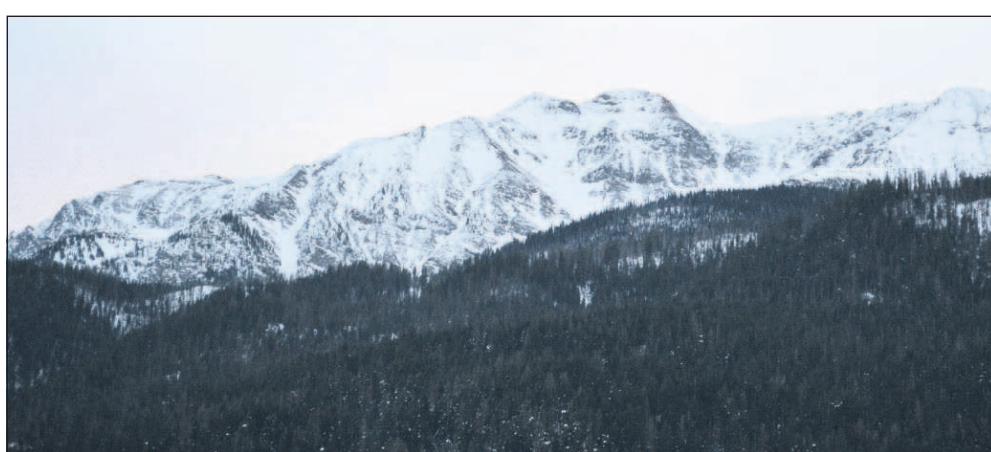
New director hired for Wallowa Avalanche Center

Victor McNeil fills role after former director died in avalanche

By GEORGE PLAVERN
EO Media Group

A new director has been tabbed for the Wallowa Avalanche Center — and not a moment too soon as early season conditions are ripe for backcountry excursions in Eastern Oregon.

Victor McNeil, a professional ski guide for Wallowa Alpine Huts in Enterprise, was officially hired last week by the nonprofit avalanche center. He succeeds former



Mt. Joseph in Wallowa County.

director Kip Rand, who died March 8 in an avalanche while backcountry skiing near Chief Joseph Mountain in the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

Founded in 2009, the Wallowa Avalanche Center provides regular updates and observations on avalanche conditions in the Wallowa,

Elkhorn and Blue mountains. Weekly reports are posted to the center's website, and volunteers host educational clinics on how to identify av-

alanche terrain.

Julian Pridmore-Brown, deputy director for the center, said McNeil has broad outdoor experience and knowledge of the local mountains, which makes him a good fit for the position.

"I'm really excited to see Victor take the reigns," Pridmore-Brown said. "We're thrilled to have him."

As director, McNeil will oversee a team of snow observers whose job is to monitor avalanche conditions on the ground. The center also maintains three weather stations, at Salt Creek Summit and Mount Howard in the Wallowa Mountains, and at Anthony Lakes in the Elkhorns.

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