

Education Foundation dinner, auction April 7

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

This will be the first year that Enterprise School District Superintendent Erica Pinkerton witnesses the generosity of the community at the Enterprise Education Foundation banquet and auction.

She will be the special guest for the evening.

The event is set for the April 7,

doors open at 5 p.m. and dinner is at 6 p.m. Dinner will be provided by Jess and Zane Anderson's catering. Prime Rib will be served. El Bajio provides the no host bar.

Among the donated items for the auction are: a Traeger grill from Coleman and Chrisman's Viridian Management Inc. of Enterprise; the very popular branded bench made by Mark Keffer (5th grade teacher); a two-night stay at the Lake Street

House in Joseph; a gallon of huckleberries; and much more.

The event is a community favorite, packing Cloverleaf Hall with 176 attendees, laughter and spirited bidding. Last year the community topped the \$1 million mark in donations – having donated \$1 million over 12 years for K-6 music teachers and K-12 art teachers for their schools.

The annual \$40,000 pledge will

be made to the school district and two more special announcements will be made.

One is that, thanks to an anonymous donor, the organization will be offering a new recurring scholarship for a student that will be pursuing an art of music career – the first winner will be announced during the auction.

The other announcement is a secret until the evening of the dinner

and auction.

Tickets are available through Sandy at the Elementary School office or get ahold of co-chairs Jen Cameron (541) 398-0903 and Jessie Cunningham cunninghamcrew@live.com.

Tickets are \$25 for a single and \$40 for a couple.

You can also get tickets via Enterprise Education Foundation on Facebook.

County Meals on Wheels will carry on

Concerns over possible cuts to programs valid

By Kathleen Ellyn
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The proposed federal budget, released by President Donald Trump in mid-March, met with immediate and strong opposition when it was revealed that one of the programs slated for cancellation supported Meals on Wheels.

Trump's budget proposed cutting \$3 billion from the Community Development Block Grant program under the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which supports a variety of programs, including Meals on Wheels. The Block Grant program has made more than \$150 billion in grants over its 42-year history and the budget reflects the administration belief, stated in the budget comments, that "the program is not well-targeted to the poorest populations and has not demonstrated results."

The budget also calls for cutting \$715 million from Community Services Block Grants under the Department of Health and Human Services on the grounds that it duplicates emergency food assistance and employment programs. Another Health and Human Service program for the poor that is targeted is the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, which helps the elderly and low-income individuals pay their heating and power bills. The administration plans to cut \$3.4 billion from that.

But Meals on Wheels cuts were the primary flashpoint for many.

The program serves more than 2.4 million Americans 60 and older, more than 500,000 of them veterans each year. Most of those served live alone, take more than six medications, and rely on the meals for at least half of the food they consume, according to a Meals on Wheels factsheet.

More than 2 million volunteers support the program.

In 2010 the program was partnered with local hospitals to record the possible benefit of serving the meals to recently discharged seniors and found that readmission rates fell from 17 to 20 percent to just 6 percent.

In 2014 a bipartisan resolution commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Community Development Block Grant program recognized the work of the program.

There seems plenty of reason for outrage that such a program would be threatened with budget cuts.



Karen Frentress, 74, of Enterprise shares news of her grandson with volunteer Jim Stivers as he delivers her Meals on Wheels lunch. Stivers, a Navy veteran of Vietnam, has been involved in volunteer work of some kind for more than 40 years. "I can see a big difference between local support and government support," Stivers said. "If it's done right, local support is much better."

In fact, the Community Development Block Grant accounts for only about a quarter of the funding for Oregon's Meals on Wheels program. Oregon serves 48,738 meals per year with half of the \$12.5 million cost picked up by Older Americans Act federal money.

Losing a full quarter of their budget, however, will create a severe strain on the program administrators say.

Wallowa County is not as affected as other counties and states. The funding streams for Meals on Wheels in Wallowa County are primarily made up from two federal funding streams not targeted: The Older Americans Act Fund and Nutrition Services Incentive Program managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"This year because the budget is so tight we put \$5,000 for Wallowa County from Community Services Block Grant, which is targeted for elimination," said Margaret Davidson, executive director of the four-county Community Connection of Northeast Oregon.

So, if the budget passes Congress as written, which is unlikely, Wallowa County Meals on Wheels would lose about \$5,000 of their \$191,000 budget.

The other funding streams for Wallowa County Meals on Wheels include donations, a contract with the state to deliver clients served by the Department of Human Services for in-home care clients (technically a federal source but managed by the state), fundraising events, Wallowa County Board of Commissioners contribution of



U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden sharply criticized the cuts to service grants and cuts to Meals on Wheels in particular. He is here pictured volunteering in December to take part in Meals on Wheels deliveries in Eugene.

\$7,000 per year, a city of Enterprise donation of \$2,000 per year, and more.

Fundraising is a big help for Wallowa County. Meals cost \$8 to \$9.54 each to make and the suggested donation at the door is \$3.50 for those 60 and older. Donations help fill the gap.

Fortunately, the generosity of local sponsors has meant that the main entrée of meals served both in county senior centers and for Meals on Wheels have been covered by donations for more than five years, said Connie Guentert, executive director of Wallowa County Community Connection.

Donations in Wallowa County make up \$40,000 of

the budget every year.

"We'd carry on with Meals on Wheels but we'd be relying more and more on fundraisers and personal donations," Guentert said. "We already fund raise all the time. The 'Love of Mother Dinner' on May 7 is all about senior nutrition, we get elk and deer tags from the Nature Conservancy. We're always looking for funding."

The direction of the new administration is of more concern for CCNO as they work to cover seniors and people in need in Grant, Wallowa, Union and Baker counties.

"I think all the programs are a concern to us equally," said Guentert. "We focus on

Meals on Wheels because these are homebound individuals and at a higher risk of not having anyone checking on them."

Some of the other programs Wallowa County individuals count on include targeted Health and Human Services programs funded by Community Service Block Grants, such as Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

"If these program's budgets were cut we would not be able to help as many people we have been able to in the past with energy assistance or emergency housing," she said. "It would be pretty detrimental to those programs. We'd be telling people no and we try not to do that."

Cuts proposed in the Department of Energy also include cutting \$121 million from the Weatherization Assistance Program.

"We are quite aware of the proposal of cutting all of the Community Service Block Grants. That is money we use to cover all of our community here," Guentert said. "I think we will be writing letters and making trips to Salem to advocate for our seniors."

Brown appoints Powers to Tenth Circuit

Gov. Kate Brown announced Tuesday that she will appoint Thomas B. Powers to the position of circuit judge on Oregon's Tenth Judicial District, which encompasses Union and Wallowa counties.

Powers will fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Judge Brian C. Dretke.

Powers' appointment will be effective April 1.



Powers

"Tom Powers has dedicated his entire legal career fighting for justice on behalf of all Oregonians," Brown said. "He will continue to bring his passion for service with him to the bench, and I am confident he will work hard to ensure that the people of Union County and Wallowa County have access to a court committed to the fair and impartial administration of justice."

Powers has most recently managed a solo private practice in Enterprise, where he handled indigent criminal defense cases, civil matters, and represented small businesses.

Prior to opening his own firm, Powers practiced law for more than a decade at Williams Love O'Leary & Powers, PC, where he represented plaintiffs in medical device negligence cases.

Powers has also served as a senior assistant attorney general in the Financial Fraud/Consumer Protection Section of the Oregon Department of Justice.

Powers earned his law degree from Lewis & Clark Law School in 1998, and his bachelor's degree in political science from Florida State University in 1993.

He has been a member of the Oregon State Bar since 1998.

Studded tires must be off by March 31

Drivers in Oregon are reminded to remove studded tires by Friday, March 31.

"We encourage drivers to not wait until the March 31 deadline to remove their studded tires, especially if they aren't driving in the mountain passes between now and then," said Luci Moore, state maintenance and operations engineer.

Studded tires are allowed in Oregon from November 1 through March 31. While the law allows ODOT to extend the studded tire season when necessary, current weather forecasts do not support an extension this year.



Births

A son,
Rylen Jaymes Butterfield
was born March 18, 2017, in Enterprise to Jaymes and Rachelle Butterfield of Joseph. Grandparents are Mark and Anna Butterfield and Ronald and Cindy Bonney.

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THANK YOU

The family of James "Butch" Wicklander would like to thank everyone that phoned, texted, sent cards, brought food, and donated to the family's account at Community Bank. We would also like to send a very special thank you to Dr. Kirsten Caine, EMTs Joyce Himes, Ashley Immoos, Tom Clevenger and the Wallowa Memorial Hospital Emergency Room staff for the support and care.

Thanks again for all the kind words.
Joyce, Beau, Keith, and Belinda

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