

New energy brings benefits to Enterprise



Kathleen Ellyn

I first heard about the work that the McKee brothers were doing in conjunction with an announcement that there would be an indoor archery range in Enterprise.

That was exciting enough for me, but when I went to see Andy McKee of Joseph I found out that he and his brother Todd (who lives in Michigan) have been buying buildings in Enterprise, fixing them up, and giving them new life for a couple of years.

This is exactly the sort of energy we want to encourage.

Here are a couple of young guys who believe Enterprise is a good place to invest in – a place that will attract more business.

Not only that, these guys are remodeling and creating rentals – and that’s something the entire county desperately needs.

Andy is the flight instructor at the Joseph Airport, but like many people who live here, he needs at least two jobs to make it in Wallowa County; thus, the business and residential expansion business.

The Brothers McKee’s most recent acquisition is the 1916 Bowlby Stone building at 107 River Street (across River Street from El Bajio and kitty-corner from Ace). The building was formerly owned by the late Doug Terry and housed Friends Restaurant in addition to providing several rental units upstairs.

The interior stone walls bear chisel marks from back in the day when the stone was brought from the Bowlby Stone Quarry out on



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Andy McKee takes a practice shot in his new indoor archery range in Enterprise.

Swamp Creek (for \$1 a cord), the soft stone was hand-sawn as well.

“It’s really unique to our area,” said Andy McKee. “You don’t see this anywhere else. These old buildings are such a neat part of Enterprise, it’s fun to be part of preserving it while upgrading it for someone who may want to rent it.”

That upgrading is extensive.

The McKees first got Ralph Swinehart of Wallowa Mountain Engineering to inspect the building and declare it safe to remodel. Now, Melville Stone is doing the “tacking and pointing” on the exterior stone. That’s scraping out some of the crumbled mortar and refilling with glue and new mortar.

Inside, the building has been reinforced, gutted of all of its lathe and plaster and dividing walls, stone and brick exposed on the outer walls, double pane windows replacing the old, and highly efficient electric and heating installed. Even the light bulbs (historically

appropriate Edison-style bulbs) are highly efficient with an entire six-light fixture pulling just 24 watts.

There are now two very modern, high-efficiency business rental spaces being finished downstairs, an archery range in the basement, and a fourth apartment being completed upstairs.

The fourth apartment will be a 1,000 square-foot luxury apartment with one and one-half baths, quartz counter tops, high-end appliances, circle sawn fir floor, walk-in closet and more.

The archery range is 69-feet long by 18-feet wide, carpeted, and beautifully lit by three LED flat-panel “skylights” that feature a bright blue sky. There is also a viewing area behind glass and that will include a couch, a music system and other comforts.

“This place looked like the set of a horror movie when we started,” Andy McKee said. “We tried to think of a way to use the space



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Andy McKee looks out the historic door of one of the energy efficient offices he and his brother are remodeling in Enterprise.

that would benefit the community and the archery lane seemed a good idea.”

Andy posted an announcement on Facebook and got 150 responses from the community, enthusiastic about the idea and that sealed it.

There will be a monthly membership; the range will be open seven days a week, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

“It’s a really neat space, now, and the virtual skylights make it so you don’t feel like you’re in a basement,” McKee said.

A grand opening and open house is planned for the end of April.

To purchase a membership to use the archery range, email andy@eaglecapflight.com.

Business planning retreat scheduled at Wallowa Lake

A business retreat offered specifically for experienced entrepreneurs is being offered by Northeast Oregon Economic Development District April 27-29 at Wallowa Lake.

The retreat, titled “Alpine” is recommended for individuals who feel like their business has overwhelmed them and begun to run them instead of vice versa; have a new idea and wonder how to fit it into the larger business; feel they are at a crossroads and wonder whether to scale up or scale back; know they could benefit from support of peers and hearing how they have handled the same issues you face.

The three-day retreat provides an opportunity to assess how your business has been going up to this point, while also developing a vision for the future. This process, offered within a peer-to-peer learning environment, will reconnect you to the “why” of your venture and help create in-roads to meeting short- and long-term goals.

The course also provides the opportunity to determine if and when to scale your business model.

Annie Milroy Price, founder of Birdseye Business Planning & Adventures, which is used in the Business Foundations curriculum offered twice a year here in Wallowa County, will lead the retreat.

NEOEDD staff will be in attendance to learn from her as well.

Attendees will be able to

learn from their peers throughout the retreat, focus on the numbers and the stories that they tell, and learn how to use financial tools to control and understand your operations.

The retreat will be at Wallowa Lake Camp, 84522 Church Lane, in Joseph. Most sessions will be in Hill Hall and meals will be in Bailey Lodge.

Sessions begin on Thursday at 12:30 p.m. and continue with several breaks and meals until 9 p.m. Various housing and meal packages are available. Costs are from \$235 for full lodging and meals to just \$55 for commuters. Contact NEOEDD for further details.

The cost of the training is subsidized by a Community Development Block Grant, which requires NEOEDD to confirm that a majority of the attendees have a low-to-moderate income. All registrants will be required to complete a registration form and disclose household income. If NEOEDD already has this information, participants won’t be required to submit it again.

Registration deadline is Wednesday, April 19. Our cut-off date for reserving rooms and arranging for meals is April 19. We will not be able to accommodate requests to participate after that date. Requests for refunds made by April 19 will be honored minus a 3 percent processing fee for payments made electronically.

To register, contact Kristy Athens at kristyathens@neoedd.org.

NE Oregon Forests seek members for resource advisory committee

The Northeast Oregon Forests Resource Advisory Committee is seeking nominees for new members to serve on the committee.

The committee is tasked with recommending projects to improve forest health, watersheds, roads and facilities around Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests.

The projects that are funded through the committee have a major impact on the communities of Northeast Oregon and are varied in focus and scope, ranging from fish passage restoration to constructing new trails.

Projects have also utilized youth crews, which provide young people with unique opportunities to develop a love of the outdoors while gaining valuable hands-on work experience.

Committee members are officially appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture for a term of 2 years, and can get reimbursed for travel expenses to, during and from meetings.

In order to ensure that the group is able to accomplish its goals, members are expected to be able to commit to up to two full-day meetings each year.

Residents of Wallowa, Baker, Grant, Union, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Crook and Wheeler Counties are particularly encouraged to submit applications although others may apply.

Such committees have been found to work best when many interests and industries are represented by their mem-

bers. Recreation groups, environmental groups, industry leaders and employees, elected officials and local residents are all needed to provide a balanced and diverse group.

The three categories of committee members needed are: 1) Industry professionals with experience in forest products, recreation, mining, grazing, or timber; 2) environmental groups and individuals connected to groups interested in wild horses, archeology and dispersed recreation, and

3) elected officials, American Indian tribal representatives, school officials or teachers.

Nominations will be accepted until April 30, 2017.

If you are interested in serving on the Northeast Oregon Forests RAC, or would like more information about the responsibilities of the committee, please visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/malheur/workingtogether/advisorycommittees> or contact a following representative near you:

• Jeff Tomac, Northeast Oregon Forests Designated Federal Official (541) 523-1301 or by email at: jtomac@fs.fed.us

• Arlene Blumton, Wallowa-Whitman NF RAC Coordinator (541) 962-8522 or by email at: ablumton@fs.fed.us

• Susan Garner, Malheur NF RAC Coordinator (541) 575-3039 or by email at: scgarner@fs.fed.us

• Ian Reid, Umatilla NF RAC Coordinator (541) 427-5316 or by email at: ireid@fs.fed.us

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