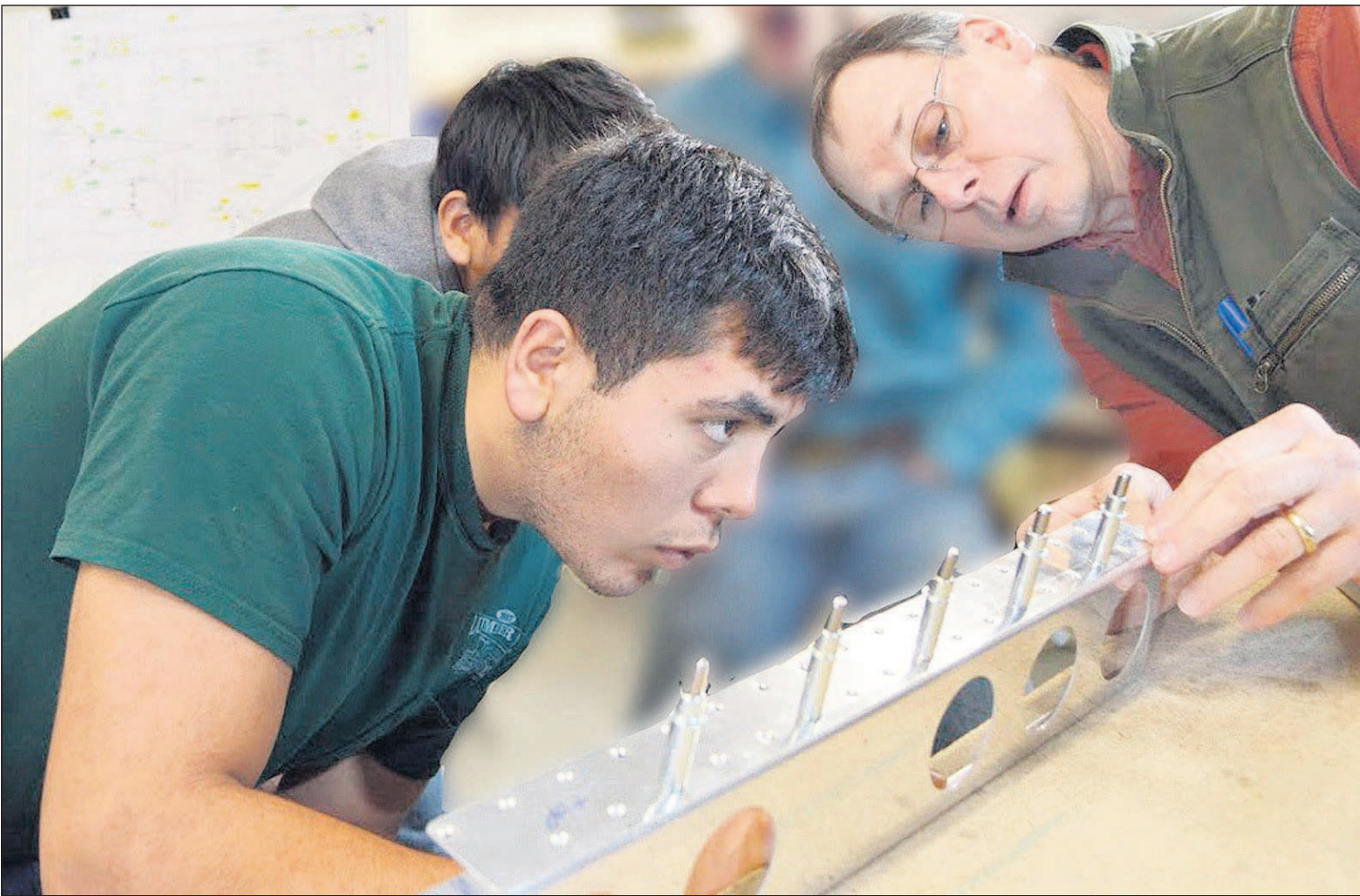




Aviation student Ben Lopez takes the instruction from Michael Flemming seriously as he learns about the engineering and mechanics of building a kit airplane.

Kana Oliver for the Chieftain



Paul Wahl/Chieftain
Heidi Van Schoonhoven, a long-time Democrat activist, came to U.S. Rep. Greg Walden's appearance in Wallowa Monday armed with signs expressing her opposition to his recent vote on health care.

Walden answers for health care vote

By Paul Wahl
Wallowa County Chieftain

Health care was the minds of most who attended a town hall meetings hosted by U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Oregon) Monday.

Approximately 100 people attended the session at Wallowa Elementary School, Walden's last stop of the day. Several dozen showed up with mostly uncomplimentary signs, which were brandished throughout the hour-long session.

Questioners accused Walden of voting to scuttle Obamacare to give fellow Republican President Donald Trump a victory and said he lied to Oregonians by voting for a bill that withdrew some protections for people with preexisting conditions.

"Did you read the bill before you voted for it?" asked Ruby Boyd of Joseph.

Walden assured Boyd he had indeed read the bill and argued repeatedly that the Republican-sponsored measure was a better plan since it allowed states to tailor health care spending to their unique needs. He admitted that older people pay more for health care under the new law, but explained it was designed to bring younger people back into the plan.

Walden said under Obama's plan, younger individuals paid a disproportionate share of health insurance costs to subsidize older participants — a point he also made in Baker City and Elgin.

Walden said he has been on the forefront of health care legislation for years and saw the vote May 4 as a way to "fix a failing system."

Walden said the bill, which is being considered in the U.S. Senate, provided a narrow exemption to allow insurers to refuse coverage for preexisting conditions and said he didn't expect that to happen in Oregon.

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AVIATION TAKES OFF AT JOSEPH SCHOOL

Students awash in learning opportunities

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County is far more steeped in aviation than anyone guessed. Joseph Charter School instructor Toby Koehn first proposed an aviation class in 2016.

That idea took off, and airplane professionals have dropped from the sky to help the students who enrolled.

In addition to speakers, retired U.S. Air Force Flight Engineer Brett Hays of Enterprise donates the use of a flight simulator he built himself.

"It's a fully functional flight simulator," Koehn said. "It's some pretty cool technology and a huge donation"

Principal Sheri Kilgore calls the support of the community "crazy amazing."



Kana Oliver for the Chieftain
Aviation students from Joseph Charter School, Rylie Warnock and Gavin Baldwin, practice setting rivets on Micheal and Rene Flemmings's kit plane.

"It took a lot of dedication on the part of Toby Koehn and others. I don't think a lot of people understand how much aviation is a part of our county."

Joseph Charter School Aviation Class will help host a fly-in this July. The Northeast Aviation Foundation has announced that the Puget Sound Antique Aircraft Tour will arrive at the Joseph Airport, July 10. A fundraiser barbecue is at 5:30 p.m., \$25 for tri-tip with shrimp followed by a day full of activities and opportunities to observe more than 40 vintage planes on the tarmac. This is the first time the Puget Sound Antique Aircraft Tour has visited the county.

The class is involved in building an airplane — in virtual reality.

Four teams from the class are in the middle of the General Aviation Manufacturers Association nationwide contest to design and fly aircraft based on powerful software programs.

One hundred schools across the nation are competing.

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The completed Van's RV-7 kit plane will look like this one except that the plane finish is a polished aircraft aluminum silver. The Flemmings have not decided what color they'll paint their craft.

Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Volley and return: Commissioners to reconsider transitional housing issue

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County Commissioners will take another look at Point of Connection Ministry president Neal Isley's request for a conditional use permit to establish transitional housing.

Isley's plan is to accommodate up to four recently released nonviolent offenders. His building, the former Youth Center on Highway 82 between Joseph and Enterprise, is in a rural nonresidential zone.

Isley originally took in parolees in answer to an unofficial request from county

probation officers in 2015. Wallowa County Probation Officer Kyle Hacker said the additional oversight a faith-based program provides can benefit parolees.

"Isley's idea is more hands-on than a county facility (would be)," Hacker said. Hacker also reported that he had at least 45 individuals he would put in a transitional housing facility immediately were it available.

Isley requested permission to allow his church to operate the facility to the Wallowa County Planning Commission May 31, 2016.

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Chieftain File Photo
Neal Isley of Point of Connection Ministry explains his housing program to a crowd of about 50 county residents at a meeting held in the summer of 2016.

Things looking up for Lostine

New leadership has sparked plans for changes

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Lostine is under new management, and there is fresh planning afoot.

Former Mayor Krag Norton and former city recorder Jodi Burgess both ended their 18 and 19 years of service, respectively, at the end of 2016. They said they had plenty to do at their day jobs with Nor-

ton Welding.

Fire Chief Dusty Tippet took over as mayor of the town of 215 in January, serving double duty. Toni Clary has taken over the city recorder spot.

"It's amazing," she said. "There's an amazing amount of history in this little tiny room — justice dockets that go back to the 1800's, ordinances that start in 1903, lots of pictures. I just like it a lot."

Clary has been busy lately switching the city records from hand ledger to computer.

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