

# New shingle, joyful returns and congratulations



## BIZ BUZZ

Kathleen Ellyn

There's a new addition to our tourist businesses that is sure to please. Bigfoot Balloons has opened and is ready to lift off immediately. The balloon season will extend until around mid-September.

Owners Jake Thomas and Shannon Tuck moved here from Chattanooga, Tenn., lured by the opportunity to fly their balloons out of a mountain town where they can also enjoy paragliding.

"Those two things kind of sucked us in," said Thomas. They're avid outdoors people who enjoy hiking, riding dirt bikes, flying in wingsuits or paragliding and more.

They launch their balloon from the Joseph baseball field on N. Lake Street at sunrise and the three-hour trip includes an hour of gliding at 2,000 feet wherever the wind blows (mostly out over the Zumwalt Prairie). The excursion includes the flight, setup, packing up and champagne toast. You can go up in a shared flight or your group can book an exclusive flight.

They are offering discounts to local folks.

Call Bigfoot Balloons at (423) 443-7994 or visit them at bigfootballoons.com.

Folks at the head of the lake are welcoming a new facilities manager for the Wallowa Lake Tram. Perry Batten, a former Wallowa County resident and graduate of Enterprise High School, has "come home" to act as lift maintenance and operations manager.

"I was trying to get home," Batten said. "It was time after 20 plus years of living in California. In all the places I've been in the last 20 years, there's no place that compares to here. The people, the mountains — it's always been home."

Batten originally left Wallowa County to make a career and chase good

skiing conditions. He moved to Kirkwood, Calif., to manage a big ski area with 16 lifts and act as lift maintenance and operations manager.

The move back to Wallowa is a vertical move because the tram operation offers so many more responsibilities, he said. He'll be working on some upgrades to equipment, a complete cosmetic overhaul of the gondolas, managing the facilities of the restaurant and cabins and more.

"I'm really enjoying it," Batten said. "It seems like it's been a seamless transition."

Batten is the son of Doug and Carol Batten of Enterprise. He is married to Adrienne and has two children, Keith, 15, who attends Joseph Charter School and Henry, who is almost a year old.

Batten will continue to get his skiing in doing "a lot of backcountry skiing" and using his time off to travel to experience the snow sports in other areas.

Congrats to Kim Tippet of Community Bank, who retired last month after 18 years with Community Bank.

She began as a teller in 1999, working in both Enterprise and Joseph branches. In 2010 she took on a new role as the loan file coordinator and was promoted to staff accountant in 2012.

"Kim is always super upbeat and positive," said Leah Johnson, marketing manager of Joseph Community Bank. "She always had a smile on her face and was just a pleasure to work with. No matter what the task in any position, she was always finding ways to improve efficiency."

Kim's retirement plans include adding more lakes to her Wallowa Mountain hiking to-do list and catching up on reading, painting and visits with family.

# YOU 'CAN' DO IT



Contributed photo

Terminal Gravity Brewing of Enterprise is offering its Eagle Cap IPA in new 12-oz. cans. They're on shelves now at a variety of retailers. Packed with Citra hops and a 6.1 percent alcohol by volume, the beer features notes of citrus, tropical orange and grapefruit.

## Groups sue over Lostine Corridor project

### Complaint filed in federal court

By George Plaven  
East Oregonian

A controversial logging project in the Lostine Corridor — one of the most popular and well-trodden entry points into the Eagle Cap Wilderness in Wallowa County — will be challenged in court.

Two nonprofit conservation groups are taking the U.S. Forest Service to court over the plan.

The complaint, filed May 31 by Oregon Wild and the Hells Canyon Preservation Council, accuses the Forest Service of violating the National Environmental Policy Act by improperly authorizing the project as a "categorical exclusion," allowing the agency to sidestep a formal environmental impact study.

Kris Stein, district ranger for the Eagle Cap Ranger Dis-

trict on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, signed off on the project April 5. Restoration activities include treating roughly 2,110 acres of forest and removing hazard trees to make the area safer and more resilient to wildfire.

The Lostine Corridor is located along an 11-mile stretch of road that follows the Wild and Scenic Lostine River until it dead ends at Two Pan Trailhead, encompassing some private land along with seven campgrounds and three trailheads for visitors to access the surrounding wilderness.

For decades, the corridor was managed lightly to avoid disturbing natural resources including habitat for fish, wildlife and sensitive plant species. Now Stein says there is so much dense and overgrown vegetation that it poses a safety risk for the nearby community.

"A lot of people were really concerned about the con-

dition out there," Stein said. "We needed to do something about this."

But Rob Klavins, northeast Oregon field coordinator for Oregon Wild, said the project goes well beyond mere public safety. According to the lawsuit, the Lostine Corridor project would harvest an estimated 4 million board feet of wood, with just 7 percent of tree removal designed to protect people.

"The vast majority of the project is not about that," Klavins said. "It's an industri-

al timber sale."

Klavins said the project was shielded from NEPA review thanks to what he described as a loophole in the 2014 Farm Bill. That year, Congress amended the Healthy Forests Restoration Act to help expedite small logging projects "in an area in which the risk of hazard trees poses an imminent risk to public infrastructure, health or safety." The amended was based largely as a response to the outbreak of pine bark beetles across the West.

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**2017 Season • First Half (May - July)**

# Summer Events & Presentations

Get your FREE Eclipse Glasses!

Mark your Calendars  
**Eclipse Presentation Thursday August 17th • 7pm at Wallowology**

**Fri, May 26** Free! **Wallowology Opens for the season!**

**Fri, June 9** Free! **Wallowology Season Opening Party 10am - All Day!**

**Fri, June 9** Free! **Presentation: Photographing Raptors: The Art of Developing Patience, Rick McEwan, Nature Photographer. At Wallowology! 7pm**

**Sat, June 10** Free! **Field Trip: Raptor Nesting Sites, Rick McEwan, 8:30 am Meet at Wallowology. Pre-register at (541-263-1663).**

**Sat, June 17** **Photography Workshop: Connecting with Nature, Rick McEwan, Nature Photographer. 1:30pm - Midnight Pre-register at Wallowology (541-263-1663). \$150**

**Fri, June 30** Free! **Watershed Festival, Wallowa County Fairgrounds. 11am - 4pm**

**Fri, July 7** Free! **Presentation: Wallowa Lake Moraines Geology Study, UofO Earth Sciences Dept. At Wallowa Lake Lodge. 7pm**

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**Fridays** Free! **Discovery Walk** leaving from Wallowology. 10am-Noon

**Saturdays** **Saturday Science!** Most Saturdays 10am - Noon Hands-on science & art for ages 9 - 12. \$5 per class.

**Sundays** Free! **Discovery Walk** leaving from Wallowa Lake Lodge. 9-11am

**Tuesdays** Free! **Twigs & Tales Story Hour** at Wallowology. Noon to 1pm In Partnership with Wallowa County Library.

**Wednesdays** Free! **Discovery Walk** leaving from Wallowa Lake Lodge. 4-6pm

# Wallowology!

**Natural History Discovery Center**  
 508 N. Main • Joseph • 541-263-1663 • wallowology.org  
**Open • Tues - Sun • 10am - 3pm**