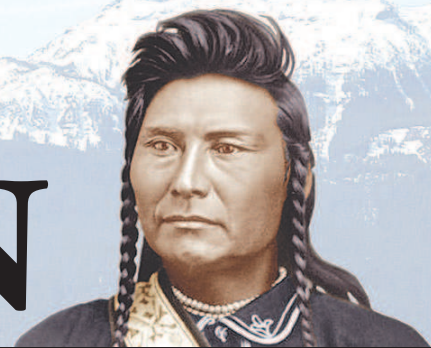




Get ready for the Fair

44-page special section | **INSIDE**

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



Enterprise, Oregon

Issue No. 10

Wallowa.com

June 21, 2017 \$1

• MT. HIGH BRONCS AND BULLS •

ONE FOR THE RECORD BOOKS



A horse makes a break for it in the Wild Horse Race at the 2017 Mountain High Broncs and Bulls event.

Photos by Ellen Bishop for the Chieftain

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

It was a year for the record book at the 2017 Mountain High Broncs and Bulls event in Enterprise June 10.

It started off big in a small way with a record 33 entries in the muttonbusting event.

Despite their desire to “live life large,” as announcer Lee Daggett put it, not one child made the buzzer. Kreb’s big Suffolk rams were sheared this year so the grip wasn’t as good and some of the big rams could really bounce.

Bull rider Cody Ford of Hermiston also made the record book with the first back-to-back Mountain High Bull Riding Championship, winning the buckle this year with a single ride high-rise score of 86.

John Pitts of Panama City, Fla., took second with 75 points and River Stephenson of Blackfoot, Idaho, tied for third with Jory Markiss of Redmond, Wash., with a score of 69.

Winner Cody Ford cowboied up to give the crowd an encore, strapping down on top the bull “Popo” for a final ride even after he’d been declared winner based on his previous rides. He didn’t ride Popo, but the crowd approved his generosity.

Western States Ranch Rodeo Association Ranch Bronc Champion of 2015 and 2016 Justin Quint, from Valentine, Neb., rode two real good horses for a total of 156 to take the win in the broncs. Last year’s to competitors Miles Binger and Barry O’Leary tied for second this year with 149 each.

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Above: Cody Ford of Hermiston rode this black bull for a score of 86 points and the Championship buckle. Ford won last year as well for the Mountain High Broncs and Bulls’ first ever back to back win.



Left: Justin Quint of Valentine, Neb. puts in a good ride on his second horse to go for the Ranch Bronc win at the 2017 Mountain High Broncs and Bulls event.

More photos at Wallowa.com

THE STINK IS OFF

Communities solve solid waste disposal issue

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Rahn Sanitary of Enterprise is coming out smelling like a rose as the cities of Wallowa County deal with the stink of budget cuts that ended county solid waste transfer stations.

Wallowa County Commissioners announced in late May that they would be forced to close all five transfer locations by the end of June. The Ant Flat Landfill and Fish Hatchery Lane recycle station in Enterprise will remain in service.

Brian and Amanda Rahn, owners of Rahn Sanitary in Enterprise, contacted Joseph, Lostine and Wallowa and offered options.

Under consideration was creating a city garbage service and taking bids from a La Grande sanitary service, but in the end handing off the responsibility to a trusted local company for a reasonable price won the day.

Rahn Sanitary will now have a contract for service with every city in the valley.

“All of the transfer sites will be operated basically the same,” said Brian Rahn. “It’s been great working with the communities. What we want is to be able to provide more options for the county to get rid of their waste.”

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Wallowa Hometown Project moving toward completion

Eagle Cap Excursion Train back in Wallowa’s future

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Wallowa City revitalization project begun in late 2016 continues to push toward its goals.

Both the Friends of the Joseph Branch and Wallowa Union Railroad Authority have been working to bring the Eagle Cap Excursion Train to Wallowa by July 22, a process that might prove easier than originally anticipated, according to Wallowa Hometown Project spokesman Garrett Lowe.

Lowe is a Wallowa businessman, a city council member and a member of the railroad authority board, in addition to serving as the spearhead for the Wallowa Hometown Project.

See *TRAINS* Page A7

Meeting transit needs for Wallowa’s veterans

Program logs half-million miles annually

Oregon’s Highly Rural Transportation Program, a federal, state and local partnership that is helping meet the urgent transportation needs of veterans who live in extremely rural areas, has logged more than a half-million miles in its first two years of operation.

That’s farther than the distance to the moon and back.

Veterans have been transported all over the Pacific Northwest to see doctors and receive medical care. Federally funded and administered by the state

and its partner agencies in the 10 participating counties, including Wallowa, the program is tailored to the needs of rural veterans who often do not have adequate access to medical care in their communities.

Connie Guentert, Wallowa County manager for Community Connection of Northeast Oregon Inc., knows the challenges better than most. Community Connection is the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs partner agency for the Highly Rural Transportation Pro-

gram in both Wallowa and Baker counties. Guentert and her dedicated staff grapple with the difficulty of serving highly rural veterans and other clients every day.

“We’re very remote out here,” she said. “We have very large land expanses, minimal medical facilities, and the only public transportation in the county is us,” she said. “Our drivers face long winters, adverse weather and road conditions, rock slides, deer, elk, even bears on the road.”

The trips are rarely short. Because of the scarcity of services, Wallowa

County veterans must travel to appointments in La Grande, Walla Walla, Boise and even as far as Portland or Tacoma — a round trip of more than 700 miles.

Funding comes in the form of annual grants from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. A maximum of \$50,000 may be awarded to any counties classified as “highly rural,” which means fewer than seven residents per square mile.

Oregon has 9 such counties in addition to Wallowa — Baker, Gilliam,

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CONNIE GUENTERT | Wallowa County manager for Community Connection of Northeast Oregon Inc.



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