



# FIRE GUTS CITY HALL



Photos by Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Firefighters from Joseph and Enterprise join forces to put out a blaze in Enterprise City Hall. Flames were reported coming out all of the window at about 6:30 p.m. prior to the regular city council meeting.

## Vacant church could become a temporary home

By Kathleen Ellyn  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Fire destroyed Enterprise City Hall Monday evening. Police tape surrounded the building Tuesday morning and Enterprise Police Chief Joel Fish was parked out front, making sure no one entered the damaged building. The State Fire Marshal was expected to arrive shortly from Bend.

Fire broke out as members of city council were gathered for a work session prior to the regular council meeting at 7:30 p.m.

See FIRE Page A16



Above, Enterprise firefighters gear up to go back into Enterprise City Hall in search of hot spots. Left to right: Jake Schaefer, Trenton Neil and Tyler Miska.

At left, City Manager Michele Young (foreground) watches in distress as her office goes up in smoke Monday night. Councilman Micah Agnew crouches beside her, councilwoman Jenni Word stands to his left, Mayor Stacey Karvoski (turquoise shirt) stands behind.

## TASK FORCE FIGHTS DRUGS

By Steve Tool  
Wallowa County Chieftain

People who have noted the ramped-up number of drug-trade arrests published over the past year can thank the Street Crime Team.

The team is a coopera-

tive unit of Wallowa County Sheriff's Office and the Enterprise Police Department. Its goal is to eliminate or severely curtail drug traffic and its associated crimes, burglary and theft.

It was developed after other efforts had failed.

Several years ago, another county handled Wallowa's parole and probation, which led to less than satisfying outcomes and considerable repeat criminal behavior. The sheriff's office once belonged to a drug task force that involved Union, Wallowa and Baker counties, which also proved largely ineffective for Wallowa County.

The sheriff's office regained control over the parole and probation duties



Jed Stone

around five years ago and also pulled the plug on the drug task force.

"We thought we could do better," said Wallowa County Sheriff Steve Rogers.

The sheriff's office spearheaded the creation of the team in 2015. Team members initially consisted of Chief Deputy Fred Steen as supervisor, deputy Kevin McQuead and Enterprise police officer George Kohlhepp. The team found some early success, but the addition of Enterprise officer Jed Stone late in 2015 helped raise the bar.

Stone had previously worked in undercover narcotics for the Oregon State Police. He had extensive knowledge of writing search warrants and

See DRUGS Page A16

## Hay harvest going strong

### Conditions are said to be ideal for the crop

By Kathleen Ellyn  
Wallowa County Chieftain

After several years of low prices, primarily due to labor unrest and the closure of the Port of Portland, premium hay producers in Wallowa County finally are looking forward to higher prices.

"We've been offered \$265 a ton for Timothy, and the buyer hauls it out of here," said Kellie Schear, a Wallowa county hay farmer from Enterprise. "We're getting good crops this year, too."

According to the USDA Market Services, Eastern

Oregon Alfalfa is going for around \$160 per ton.

Most growers think it's about time. Between November 2014 and May 2015, agricultural shipping was down by 40 percent, according to a study completed by Boshart Trucking near Tangent, in western Oregon and other hay shippers. As a result of that loss of shipping when the port closed, international buyers went elsewhere for their hay and that resulted in hay carryover for 2015.

"Those markets depend on reliability, and once we couldn't ship in a timely manner, we lost a lot of our Timothy market," said Wallowa County OSU Extension Agent John Williams. "Timothy is one of the big products we produce in Wallowa County. Closing the port of Portland actually started the tumbling of the hay market in the Pacific Northwest."

The problem for hay growers was compounded because prices had been good before the shutdown, so more land had been put into hay. The resultant glut combined with loss of market made for a massive carryover.

That market has begun to come back, and although Williams warns that the market has not been fully tested, growers are optimistic.

"We've grown a lot of hay, there's no question the volume is there," Williams said. "Hay producers in Wallowa County always do a really good job of management

See HAY Page A16

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TO PREVENT HUMAN-CAUSED WILDFIRES.

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