

Legislators left Salem with unfinished business

The Legislature closed its 2017 session a few days ahead of schedule, and there has already been plenty of political posturing about the successes, missed opportunities and issues that need to be revisited.

EDITORIAL

Voice of the Chieftain

Many veteran lawmakers say the session was one of the toughest they've participated in and they closed it with a feeling of unfinished business. As state Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, said in a statement afterward, "We had some satisfying wins. At best, our successes are tempered by disappointment."

On the plus side, lawmakers were able to balance a \$21 billion operating budget that began with a \$1.4 billion shortfall even though the state experienced record revenue leading up to the session. Along the way, they managed to approve:

- A long-term, \$5.3 billion transportation improvement package.
- A \$600 million tax on insurers and providers that preserves health care for about 350,000 Oregonians who gained Medicaid coverage under the expanded federal Affordable Care Act.
- Record funding for K-12 public schools, up 11 percent from the current biennium. For most of the state's 200 or so school districts, lawmakers say it's enough money to keep current services going.
- A controversial \$10 million reproductive health bill expanding funding for no-cost abortions, family planning services and postpartum care. Oregon's bill is unique to other states in that patients would have access to the procedure for virtually any reason, at any time, including sex-selective and late-term abortions.
- A plan to reduce state spending over the next two years by \$200 million.

Lawmakers also approved the state becoming REAL ID compliant, which will allow residents to upgrade their driver's licenses or identification cards to federal standards in the future.

Oregon will now also be joining a handful of other states that give judges the power to take guns away from suicidal or dangerous people.

The state also became the third in the nation to raise the tobacco sales age to 21, although tobacco possession isn't affected.

With successes, though, there were certainly failures. Lawmakers couldn't agree on revenue reforms that included a corporate income taxing structure that would stabilize and provide long-term school funding, and they declined to tackle the elephant of the session, the spiraling costs of the Public Employees Retirement System and instead kicked that \$22 billion problem down the road.

Gov. Kate Brown has vowed to get all parties to the table to work out solutions to the major issues, but her lack of leadership was evident throughout the session, so the jury is out on whether she can follow through.

It also remains to be seen what the session's impact will have in our region. Lawmakers drastically cut funding from Measure 98, which voters had approved, that would have provided money to help schools raise graduation rates and provide more vocational and technical education, something that would be very helpful in rural areas of Eastern Oregon. Community colleges also didn't get as much funding that they need, which can hurt Blue Mountain Community College.

It's also uncertain what the taxing impacts will be on our region, especially combined with local city, county and school taxes, and what benefits the transportation package will provide our area.

What is certain, though, is that there is unfinished business. Democrats and Republicans alike should start thinking about how to address those issues, and about who among them is up to providing bipartisan leadership that all Oregonians can look up to.



Spending 46 years on Main Street

In July of 1971, just before Chief Joseph Days, I pulled into the Mountain View Motel in my new used 1967 VW bug and thought about my first day on my new job at the Wallowa County Extension office. I'd flown from Washington, D.C., to Portland, spent a week learning about Oregon State University's ag and community development programs, bought the bug and headed east.

They forgot to tell me how extension agents — or anyone else — dressed in Wallowa County, so on that first Monday in mid-July, I put on a dress shirt and tie, slacks and sport coat and drove into Enterprise and parked in front of the courthouse. The extension office was on the second floor of the courthouse, where the D.A. now sits.

Extension secretary Ruth Makin welcomed me and told me that County Agent Chuck Gavin would be in shortly — he was probably across the street at Homan's Drug Store having coffee. I stood in what would become my new office and looked down as people slowly filtered into the courthouse. There were no sport coats, so I took mine off and hung it in the closet. The tie followed, and I rolled up my sleeves.

Chuck Gavin clambered up the stairs and into his office, sat back in his chair, threw his legs and boots up on the desk, and asked me in. There must have been a quick handshake, and then, as he scratched his ear on the side of his face that had been left partially paralyzed as a result of one of his WW II Purple Hearts, he began peppering me with questions.

"Where are you from?"
 "Well, I came here from Washington D.C. and before that the Peace Corps in Turkey and..."

"Where'd you grow up?"
 "Well, I went to high school and col-



MAIN STREET

Rich Wandschneider

lege in California, and ..."
 "Where'd you start out?"

"Minnesota, I was born there and we moved to California when I was 10 and ..."

"How big a place?"
 "Must have been about 1,500 people in Fosston, Minn. ..."

"You might make it here."
 And then Rose Reynolds at Homan's made us some tuna salad sandwiches, and Keith Zobell, the Chesnimnus District Ranger, picked us up for a county tour. We drove highways and back roads, went to Imnaha and Flora, Buckhorn and Billy Meadows, where we looked in a small cabin built by CCC workers in the '30s and saw wooden water troughs built at the same time that were now being replaced with steel tanks.

I don't remember who all we met, but it was ranchers, farmers, loggers and foresters. And 10 or 12 hours later we were back in Enterprise, and I crawled into the VW with socks full of wheat chaff and stickers, pockets full of dust, and the notion that I had arrived at a special place with terrane-trees, rivers, canyon breaks and white-capped mountains — that was new to me and as old as forever.

And history too. My knowledge of the Nez Perce began right there. "Imnaha," "Wallowa," "Chesnimnus," "Chief Joseph" and other places and names rattled around.

It didn't take long to figure that the Nez Perce War was less than a 100 years

from us, and that a couple of the old timers — Ben Weathers for one — had probably been here to shake the hand of Joseph when he came in 1899 and tried to buy back some of his land.

I remember hearing that "you weren't a native in Wallowa County until you'd been here four generations." But I had been in Turkey, where native meant language and culture and dirt, and spent a year in the American East, where white people bragged on the Mayflower. Four generations didn't seem like much, and I quietly answered — trying not to sound too smartish — that I imagined the only true natives here were Indians.

Forty-six years later I'd stand by that statement, but with a much broader and richer understanding of the Indian people who once lived here and everywhere across this country, and of the waves of immigration and movements of people that get us to the globe we share now.

Rootedness in place is a luxury that few people have. I think of millions of displaced people in and from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam and Cambodia, among others. But also of restless Americans, shuffling from state to state, north to south, job to job.

Could it be that the rants about immigrants are really loss of and fears of losing our own frail tethers to the places we live and work? And that wherever we go or live, we can't find or be the Chucks and Keiths who welcomed me to this place 46 years ago? And that we fear and do not listen to the ancient ones — the Indians — who really know the geography and old habits of this and any place?

Rich Wandschneider lives in Joseph and writes a monthly column for the Chieftain.

The summer is going by too fast

So how has your summer been going?

Although I was warned the day I arrived that summer was über busy, I didn't really catch the meaning until this week. It seems like this week's edition is a special edition for all of the events about to hit.

Several things stand out for me regarding summer in Wallowa County.

The number of people who flock to our door is amazing. I haven't found a handy number, but somewhere between a half-million visitors and a million has been quoted to me, and that seems plausible.

From my window on the world here on First Street, I am amazed at the number of vehicles that pass through Enterprise, some of them on their way north to Lewiston and some on their way south to Joseph and Wallowa Lake State Park.

It would be interesting to spend a Friday sitting at the intersection of Hwy. 82 and Hwy. 3 and take a count of the number of vehicles and which ones go which directions.

And these people come from all across the country. Again, it would be interesting to stop each one and ask them how they heard about Wallowa County. A cursory



WAHL TO WALL

Paul Wahl

track of license plates is also revealing. We have a lot of visitors from California, in addition to Washington and Idaho, not to mention Oregon.

The other item of note is the number and quality of events that are produced here to attract folks to come and spend their money. Last week, both Fishtrap and Wallowa Valley Music Alliance produced events that from all reports were tremendous in scope and participation.

I didn't get nearly as much time to hang out with fellow writers at the Summer Fishtrap as I would have liked. Carla Arnold invited me out to Wallowa for the final performance of the Wallowa Fiddle Camp Tunes Camp Friday. The auditorium was alive with excited children and adults making music and having a ton of fun. If you missed the concert by the camp faculty Thursday night on the courthouse

lawn, you missed a great event.

Another aspect of life in Wallowa County that can hardly be described is the vast natural beauty that surrounds us. Whether it's the view from the top of Mt. Howard or the deep blue of Wallowa Lake, the babbling brooks or the rushing Wallowa River, bountiful vistas await.

My wife and I have found ourselves taking refuge at Wallowa Lake State Park as often as time will permit. Strolling or taking a leisurely bike ride through the park has rapidly become our favorite summer pastime. Well, eating ice cream from one of the many wonderful vendors in the area is near the top, as well.

Next up, it's the Tamkaliks Celebration in Wallowa and then what is shaping up to be the largest event of the summer, Chief Joseph Days the week after that.

Don't miss the Chautauqua coming to Enterprise. It's a day full of fun and activities.

The early portion of August brings us the Back Country Bash, the Sunrise Iron Antique Tractor Show and of course the Wallowa County Fair.

We are all going to be exhausted by Alpenfest.

Charge ODFW an access fee

In response to Mike Harshfield's conviction on shooting elk on his property for causing damages:

If Mike has to pay for the dead elk, then why doesn't the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife have to pay for the damages the elk caused?

Therefore, as of Aug. 1, 2017, ODFW will have to pay an access fee of \$50 per access to any land owned by Tippet Ranch Inc.

LETTER to the EDITOR

Payable prior to any access to cover damages caused by their wildlife.

This is the only way to recoup money from ODFW to cover damages.

Casey Tippet Joseph

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN

USPS No. 665-100

P.O. Box 338 • Enterprise, OR 97828
 Office: 209 NW First St., Enterprise, Ore.
 Phone: 541-426-4567 • Fax: 541-426-3921

Wallowa County's Newspaper Since 1884
 Enterprise, Oregon

MEMBER OREGON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Publisher	Marissa Williams, marissa@bmeagle.com
Editor	Paul Wahl, editor@wallowa.com
Reporter	Stephen Tool, stool@wallowa.com
Reporter	Kathleen Elynn, kellyn@wallowa.com
Newsroom assistant	editor@wallowa.com
Ad sales consultant	Jennifer Powell, jpowell@wallowa.com
Office manager	Sheryl Watson, swatson@wallowa.com

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY:
EO Media Group

Periodical Postage Paid at Enterprise and additional mailing offices

Subscription rates (includes online access)	1 Year
Wallowa County	\$40.00
Out-of-County	\$57.00

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

See the Wallowa County Chieftain on the Internet
Wallowa.com
 facebook.com/Wallowa | twitter.com/wcchieftain

POSTMASTER — Send address changes to
 Wallowa County Chieftain
 P.O. Box 338
 Enterprise, OR 97828

Contents copyright © 2017. All rights reserved.
 Reproduction without permission is prohibited.

Volume 134