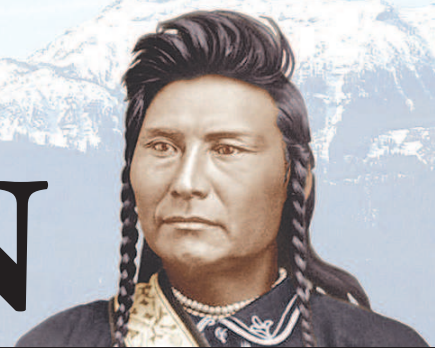


WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



Library district boundaries set

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

The way has been cleared for the bulk of Wallowa County to vote on whether to create a special taxing district next May to fund libraries.

City councils in Wallowa, Joseph and Enterprise have approved resolutions including those cities in the proposed district boundaries. Lostine City Council voted to opt out.

The decision was a split vote in Lostine. Several Lostine residents are working with the council to encourage a second look at the issue.

The district idea came before the Enterprise City Council on Wednesday night.

Among concerns of the Enterprise City Council were that a tax for libraries will put the city closer to a taxation ceiling imposed by the state on municipalities.

Ballot Measure 5, approved in 1990, states that no taxing district may col-

lect more than \$10 per thousand of property assessed value. The current tax rate in Enterprise is \$8.90 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation.

If the proposed library district is approved, the tax rate would climb to \$9.57 per thousand in Enterprise, leaving just 43 cents per thousand for funding of a previously discussed countywide recreation district or fire district.

There were also misgivings about the city library's ability to carry on with all the programs the county now provides. Some council members said they were not aware that when the county library goes away, 900 outreach programs to children, families, elderly or homebound might be cut down to 100 or less. Also the SageCat interlibrary loan system would no longer be available to residents outside city limits without purchasing a library card.

Council members also expressed concerns with the remarkable speed at which the Wallowa Valley Library Foundation

was moving.

Spokeswoman for the Foundation, Autumn Wilburn, explained that the timeline is driven by the procedural requirements of state law for getting on the May 15, 2018 ballot.

Approval of the ballot measure in May will avoid the negative consequences of the county library closure because taxes can be collected to operate the libraries in 2018.

Council members said they had only recently received the complete feasibility study for the proposed district and felt rushed to make a decision without enough information.

Foundation president Autumn Wilburn and former foundation president Kim Witherrite, along with a contingent of Foundation board members, library professionals and citizens fought to convince the council to allow them the six months additional time needed to explain

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Library foundation building financial base

The Wallowa Valley Library Foundation fundraising committee has been actively working since July to raise funds to endow the foundation.

A number of projects are under way including a raffle for a new women's bicycle donated by Outlaw Motor Sports, participation in the Christmas Bazaar in Joseph the two weekends after Thanksgiving; sale of crocheted "bookworms" and auctions at the Soroptimist Thrift Shop in Enterprise.

The group is also seeking grants.

The bicycle raffle will be Nov. 1. More crocheters are also needed.

"We are looking for ways to raise money outside of Wallowa County, as well," said committee chairwoman Annette Byrd. "There are many people outside the county who are watching carefully to see how this plays out. Former residents are concerned, and many willing to help out."

Byrd said the goal is to place the foundation on firm footing to help support all of the libraries in the county on an on-going basis.

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Bingham named to Joseph council

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Joseph City Council voted unanimously to appoint Kathy Bingham to the council at a special meeting Oct. 23. Bingham fills the spot vacated by former council member Tyler Evans, who resigned his seat over the summer.

The city had intended to vote on the position Oct. 12; however, a council quorum was not present.

Council members Tom Clevenger, Rodd Clark, Pearl Sturm and Teresa Sajonia attended the meeting as did mayor Dennis Sands and city administrator Sandra Patterson.

Initially, former council member Sharan Newell had also applied for the empty seat. Bingham attended the meeting Monday, and Newell did not.

Almost immediately, Pearl Sturm nominated Bingham for the position while Sajonia seconded. The vote was unanimous with Sands abstaining as Newell is his sister.

Bingham will fill the remaining three years of Evans' position. He was elected in 2016 after serving a temporary appointment.

After thanking the council and receiving their good wishes, Bingham asked for a copy of the council rules and also asked if she were required to take ethics training.

Sands said he would get her a copy of the rules and noted the League of Ore-



BINGHAM

gon cities occasionally offered ethics classes.

"As we go through this, I hope you'll all be patient and point

out what I could be doing wrong or right or need to change," Bingham said.

Bingham, who has lived in Joseph since 2006, later told the Chieftain she had no hesitation about throwing her hat in the ring as she had attended meetings over the past 11 years and knew sessions could get contentious. She also had a close friend, Pam Lotta, who served on the council for a number of years.

"I'm retired, and I have the time and energy to put into doing the job," she said. "I want to do something for my city. I enjoy living here, and I think we face some challenges that need careful consideration in the future."

Bingham said the challenges were pretty straightforward: Sewer and water plant operations, street repairs, budget and economic growth.

"We have the same challenges most small cities in the nation have," Bingham said. "We're not unique in any way. It's just that we have a volunteer base here and a very low tax rate. We can't make that dollar stretch anymore, and we have to be creative in how we make it stretch."



Kaydance Payne was among a number of children who enjoyed a candied apple during the Fall Festival Celebration Oct. 19 at Wallowa Elementary School. The event was sponsored by the Wallowa Cougar Parent Advisory Committee. In addition to apples, the 100 or so children who attended also had the opportunity to play several games and tour through the haunted house.

Paul Wahl/Chieftain

Rabid skunk reported; warnings sounded

A skunk found in Wallowa County has tested positive for rabies.

Wallowa County Health Department has issued warnings for residents to stay clear of skunks, dead or alive.

"Do not touch, hit or destroy it and do not try to remove it," a department spokesman said.

Call Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at 541-426-3279 or Brady Smith at 541-530-9949 to have it removed, and call your healthcare provider or local public health department immediately to report the exposure and determine if preventive treatment is needed.

If the animal is available for testing and the test results are negative, preventive treatment is not needed. For concerns

about a domestic animal please call your veterinarian.

Rabies is a virus that affects the nervous system in humans and other mammals. A person may contract rabies through a bite, scratch, or saliva from an infected animal. If untreated, rabies is fatal.

Recommendations to help prevent the spread of rabies:

- Keep vaccinations up-to-date for all dogs, cats and other animals you own.
- Seek immediate veterinary assistance for a pet if it is bitten by a wild animal.
- Do not touch, feed or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.

OK Theatre plans centennial benefits

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

The first in a series of centennial fundraisers to push the renovation of OK Theatre in downtown is Oct. 27 at Lostine Tavern.

"Countdown to Centennial Celebration" is designed to begin the process of raising \$56,000 in matching funds for a \$100,000 grant awarded by the state earlier this year to the Greater Enterprise Main Street organization, which will oversee contracting for the theater's renovation project.

A signature beer, OK IPA, has been brewed especially by Terminal Gravity for the theater and will be unveiled and available for purchase along with pre-Prohibition cocktails. Vali's Alpine Restaurant will provide small plate hors



Steve Tool/Chieftain

OK Theater's first in a series of fundraisers is set for Oct. 27 at Lostine Tavern.

d'oeuvres.

Event guests are encouraged to wear period costumes to celebrate 100 years of movies and live entertainment. Plans for the renovation will be revealed before the main event.

Professional auctioneer John Topp plans a new twist on the live auction, which

features bidders competing to pay for specific items such as bathroom fixtures, heating and ventilation systems or electrical installations.

"Some of the events will be performances, some will be auctions — the timeline will be revealed at the kick-off

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