



# WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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## Dunn steps up for commissioner slot

By Steve Tool

Wallowa County Chieftain

Bruce Dunn, a forester for R-Y Timber and chairman of the county's Natural Resources Advisory Council, has filed for the county commissioner post soon to be vacated by commissioner Paul Castilleja for health reasons.

Dunn was born in Michigan, where he grew up and attended college, earning a forestry degree at Michigan Tech. He went to work for the U.S. Forest Service in eastern Idaho. He quit the USFS for a private sector job but ended up back at

the forest service when a dam failure destroyed the mill where he worked.

"My job washed away," Dunn said with a laugh.

He found his way to Oregon in 1986 when a former sawmill manager suggested he apply at Sequoia Forest Industries in Joseph. Dunn was given the forester position at the mill, which eventually became R-Y. It closed in 1995. Everyone lost their jobs except Dunn.

"I stayed there to manage the land, which I'm still doing," he said.

Dunn kept a steady interest in the county's manage-



Bruce Dunn

ment, particularly land management. He joined the planning commission and stayed until 1999. Among his accomplishments was the creation of the Wallowa County and Nez Perce Tribe Salmon Recovery Plan to preclude the endangered species listing of chinook salmon.

The plan was later made into Article 36 of the county's ordinances. Because much technical input was needed to

implement the plan, the commissioners formed the county's Natural Resources Advisory Committee, which has two facets: A technical committee that reviews projects and makes recommendations, and a standing committee that develops recommended policy on natural resource issues for the board of commissioners.

"I'm the chairman of both committees," Dunn said. "I was chairman of the technical committee from the beginning and chairman of both committees since 1998."

Dunn said he's running for commissioner because he's

been asked a number of times to do so. But until a year ago, his employers didn't like the idea. Eventually, the company relented because Dunn isn't as busy anymore. With Castilleja soon out of the picture, Dunn said the time is right.

"I think it has to be done, and I'm willing to do it," he said.

Because of his NRAC position and attendance of many of the meetings, Dunn said he's familiar with the commissioner duties and issues. He also has some ideas of his own.

As an example, Dunn said he'd like to see the county form

an ad hoc committee of self-made entrepreneurs like Tyler Hays, Brian Coughlan and Deve Wolfe to brainstorm ideas to bring in as many businesses as possible that will employ 5-15 people.

"We help ourselves move forward," he said. "We don't look for another government program or money."

Dunn added that the employees of these businesses will increase the tax base and alleviate problems such as Joseph street repair and library funding.

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## Health clinic in Enterprise ready to roll

By Paul Wahl

Wallowa County Chieftain

All systems are go for construction of a \$6.5-million integrated health services building in Enterprise.

The project is a cooperative venture between Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness and Winding Waters, a nonprofit community health center.

Supporters of the project recently received an update from a fundraising consultant who has been determining the level of community appeal for the clinic. Additional money is expected from major foundations and the state.

Mike Wilson, senior associate with Westby Associates in Vancouver, Wash., spent months interviewing around 90 county residents regarding financial support. He believes between \$364,000 and around a million can be raised from local donors. He is in the process of securing those donations this week.

A total of around \$3.5 million total is anticipated from all three sources, leaving roughly \$3 million to complete the clinic.

Wilson said the funding plan was a three-legged stool — money from state government, private foundations and the public.

Two-thirds of the remaining costs would fall on the wellness clinic and the other third on Winding Waters — roughly \$2 million and \$1 million, respectively — representing the percentage of the building each would plan to utilize.

"We'll do this through local fundraising, applying to large foundations, applying for any federal grants that may or may not become available, and as a last resort by taking on a limited

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# THE EYES HAVE IT



Courtesy photo



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

All that remains of Kathy Jenkins sight is scant peripheral vision in one eye. It's difficult for her to read even a text on her phone. The eSight glasses gave her 20/20 vision and the illusion of looking straight ahead. TOP IMAGE: Kathy sees her sister-in-law, Sharon Grote, across the room and Sharon captures the event during a recent trial run.

## Fundraiser underway to purchase vision device for Joseph resident

By Kathleen Ellyn  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Kathy Jenkins of Joseph has risen above tragedy continuously throughout her life. When she was five, her father was killed and her sister Elizabeth Grote permanently handicapped in a car crash. Throughout it all, Jenkins survived and made a life in Joseph as a hairdresser operating her own business, Kathy's Korner Beau-Tique, for the past 25 years.

The latest challenge, however, has nearly

proven to be a knockout punch. Jenkins is blind, suffering from both macular degeneration and a rare genetic condition called pseudoxanthoma elasticum or Grönblad-Strandberg syndrome. As a result, she can only see very poorly through a tiny area in her peripheral vision.

"I can't read anything. I have a 10x magnifying loop and that's about the only way I can read a phone text right now," she said.

She first learned she had the rare disease when she went to optometrist and specialist Doc Peterson in Enterprise in 1980.

"He looked in my eyes and said, 'Oh, boy,

Kathy. Do you have a problem,'" she recalled. Unfortunately there was no treatment for the disease at the time. So, Kathy just went on with life.

She lost vision in her right eye in 2006.

She lost vision in her left eye in 2012.

"I gave up driving and gave up my business," Kathy said. "It was one of the hardest things that I had to do because I loved going to work every day. I loved all my clientele."

Her vision deteriorated to the point where she could no longer live alone and in 2013, her sister,

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## Boggan's Oasis may be rebuilt



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Boggan's Oasis is at the junction of Dreamz Road and the Grande Ronde River. Just up the private road, the Vails live and manage cabins and camping spots.

### Insurance settlement will make the determination

By Kathleen Ellyn  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Up on Dreamz Road, off to the left before you cross the bridge over the Grande Rhonde River between Enterprise and Clarkston, Wash., Bill and Ferrel Vail have just returned from a trip to Lewiston.

Bill has made his way

slowly into the couple's double-wide trailer, feeling for the support handles a friend recently installed throughout the house to help him maintain his independence.

Ferrel Vail is opening a new bag of catfood on the porch to feed the plush, outdoor cat. She and Bill have just completed an exhausting day of chasing down

insurance details in the aftermath of a fire that destroyed their café, Boggan's Oasis, Nov. 18. More appointments are set for the next day.

When it's all said and done, the Vails may rebuild.

That's fabulous news for three generations of customers, many of whom have been mailing and calling the couple since the news of the

fire spread.

"It was such a special spot for them. Everybody thought it was just a special place," Ferrel said.

But what will it mean to Bill and Ferrel Vail, who in their early 80s and were planning to retire to Palm Springs?

"We don't know, yet," said Bill. "It depends on a lot of things. But that's going to

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