

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

2018

HOOP SHOOT

Elks name regional winners in Enterprise | Page A11

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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PRESERVING AG LAND

One rancher's experience with conservation easements

By Tracy Robillard
Contributing Writer

In a county without a single traffic light, the threat of development is real. Wallowa County is home to about 7,000 year-round residents. The area hosts more than 700,000 visitors during the peak of summer tourism season.

Vacation homes and cabins scatter communities like Enterprise and Joseph, driving up real estate prices and making an attractive investment opportunity for tourism development.

Many farmers and ranchers, especially those with a view, can earn more capital by subdividing their property and selling it for housing development, rather than keeping it in production. This is especially true when farms change hands between generations.

Parcels of farmland are being subdivided and sold into lots for housing and commercial development. What was once large swaths of ranch lands are being slowly converted into subdivisions, mini-mansions and vacation homes.

And local farmers like Woody and Megan Wolfe are determined to take a stand and protect their way of life.

"It's become much more profitable to sell off farm land for development rather than to farm the land," Wolfe said. "You can drive around here and see the 'for sale' signs popping up more and more."

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Landowner Woody Wolfe works closely with the Wallowa Land Trust, the Nez Perce Tribe, and other partners to protect and conserve natural resources on the family's century farm in Wallowa County.

“There's very few great places left. And the ones that are great — eventually you get enough people coming in and it will change things, and it becomes not so great anymore.”

Woody Wolfe
Landowner

The Agricultural Lands Easement on the Wolfe Farm protects the property forever from development while sustaining ecological habitat and agricultural production.



Mr. Nash goes to Washington

County commissioner tracks forest document in halls of Congress

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County commissioner Todd Nash has heard a lot of lip service from politicians and government officials who claim they want to change management policies on federal forest lands. He hasn't seen much action until now.

A 14-year collaborative effort that resulted in the Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision has made its way to the nation's capital. The plan revision includes three national forests: The Wallowa-Whitman, the Malheur and the Umatilla.

Nash said that before the revision departed Oregon, the plan saw some significant revision, particularly in the area of grazing. The original revision called for more stubble height in grazing allotments, which would have caused ranchers to pull their cattle off allotments significantly earlier.

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Adult rape charges dropped; juvenile charges substituted

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

A Measure 11 charge of rape in the first degree against a 16-year-old male Wallowa County student was dismissed without prejudice in Wallowa County Circuit Court Dec. 6.

Wallowa County Deputy District Attorney Rebecca Frolander filed the motion for dismissal, which was granted by Judge Russell B. West. The defendant in the case, whom the Chieftain has not named, was instead charged as a juvenile with sexual abuse in the second degree along with sexual misconduct.

According to court documents, the incident took place Sept. 22 when the defendant allegedly had sex with the victim while

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A VETTED TEAM

Enterprise animal doc prepares for sled dog races

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Early risers in Enterprise and Joseph have seen it: a beanpole on an orange contraption whisks by their window as they're getting their first cup of coffee.

What was that? They step out on their porch and in the early dawn light they see not seven tiny reindeer but seven husky dogs pulling the orange painted framework of a dog sled on wheels. The musher — the beanpole — is six feet tall.

The sled team has begun conditioning for the Eagle Cap Extreme sled dog races Jan. 17-20.

The musher is Dr. Jereld Rice of Enterprise Veterinary Clinic. The team is made up of his own dogs, some of them

purchased from other mushers well-known to Wallowa County sled dog race fans.

He has huskies from the "Skinny Leg Sleddogs" kennel of two-time ECX 200-mile winner Brett Bruggeman of Great Falls, Mont.; the "Silver Sepp" kennel of EXC contender Josi Thyr of Cataldo, Idaho; the "Team Warren" kennel of EXC competitor and winner of the 2017 300-mile "Race to the Sky," Laurie Warren of Council, Iowa.

Some of his dogs trace lineages back to the canines of Norwegian-born Leonhard Seppala, one of the famous 1925 diphtheria serum run relay mushers whose bravery inspired the Iditarod and owner of "Balto," the famous serum



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Dr. Jereld Rice of Enterprise Veterinary Clinic on a training run with his team. Rice hopes to compete for the first time with his new dog team at the 2018 Eagle Cap Extreme Jan. 17-20.

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