

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



Enterprise, Oregon

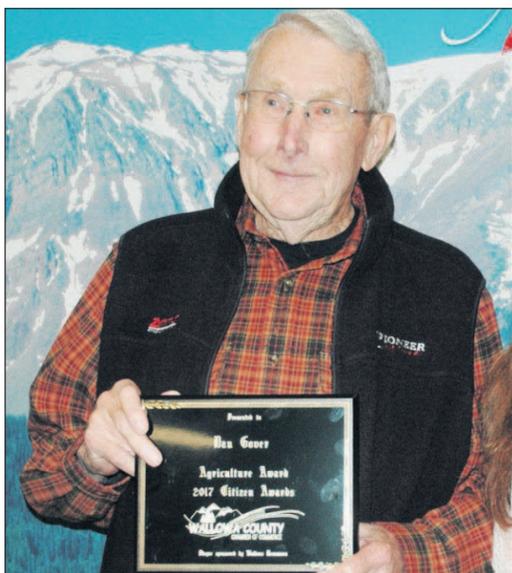
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2017 Citizens Award Banquet

AND THE WINNER IS...



Dan Gover of Enterprise was astonished when he received the Agriculture Award. Gover, 80, was recognized for his exemplary resource management, both as a farmer and a timberman.



Penny Arentsen, pictured with husband Paul, accepted the Nonprofit Award. Arentsen is so involved in the community that it was hard to choose just one project to honor her for, but presenter Marla Dotson narrowed it down to the Joseph Playground project.



Jennifer Gibbs of Wallowa Elementary poses with presenter Ann Bloom. Gibbs, a teacher for 30 years, was awarded the 2017 Educational Leader Award.

Amid cheers and tears, chamber honors best of the best

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County has not begun to run out of outstanding citizens to honor each year at the Chamber of Commerce Citizen Awards. Another seven were feted Jan. 28 and as usual, astonished winners, standing ovations and tears from presenters and recipients were the rule.

Marc Stauffer

The capacity crowd at Cloverleaf Hall saw the first award of the evening go to Enterprise resident Marc Stauffer, who was honored with the award of Excellence in Community Service.

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Photos Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Enterprise Track and Field Coach Dan Moody was surrounded by supporters as he was surprised with the Unsung Hero Award.

“You taught me to be patient, hungry and humble... You lit a flame so bright and hot that today it continues to burn as if it was the first day I raced.”

— David Ribich
in a letter praising Coach Dan Moody

Hospital seeks new management company for assisted living

New contract should be signed before June

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa Memorial Hospital is seeking a new management company for the Wallowa Valley Senior Living Center. The center provides assisted living services as well as memory care for two dozen residents.

Artegan, the current management group, elected not to renew its five-year contract with the hospital in late December.



Chieftain file photo

Wallowa Valley Senior Living Center will have a new management company in place by this summer.

Artegan did not give a reason for nonrenewal.

The hospital's CEO Larry Davy and board chair Nick Lunde said the hospital has begun the search.

“Under the terms of the 2013 contract, we would need to do a renewal before June,” Lunde said. “They were required under the contract to give at least 90 days notice.”

When the center opened in 2013, a company called Marathon served in the management capacity for nine months before it was bought by Artegan.

“We didn't have to do a new contract with Artegan; they just took over Marathon,” Lunde said. Both men said that Artegan did not give a reason for nonrenewal.

Artegan will remain until June 27. It's possible that a new company might take over the contract before June.

“You want to look at who's adept at running them already,” Davy said. “Artegan gave Nick (Lunde) a reference of an organization that's

considered strong.”

Lunde added that the new company is a leader in the field and pioneered the concept of assisted living, which had its origins in Oregon.

“Quality and customer service is huge, but they also need to be fiscally responsible,” Davy said.

Alpine House, an assisted living facility in Joseph, has also been contacted. Their selection would mean local rather than remote management. Davy added that the talks are at a stage of feasibility assessment for both parties.

Both men are confident of finding a replacement company before the deadline.

“I don't want to consider the alternative,” Lunde said with a laugh. “Seriously, we have a couple of strong leads.”

“Failure is not an option,” a smiling Davy added. “Assisted living and senior care is very important. It's

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Drugs drain resources

Law enforcement battling worst epidemic in county's history



Crystal meth is just one form of the drug methamphetamine.

Carfentanyl found in recent case

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County has a drug problem. Law enforcement and the district attorney's office are aware of it, as are circuit court and those who read the dispatch log.

Law enforcement, including district attorney Mona Williams, Enterprise Police Chief Joel Fish and Wallowa County Sheriff Steve Rogers are drawing battle plans.

They sat down in Williams' office recently for an hour-long interview with the Chieftain to discuss their challenges.

The three have around 80 years of law enforcement experience between them.

“It's not new, it just kind of changes – ebbs and flows,” Williams said of the illicit drug trade in the county.

Street drugs such as those found in large urban areas of the state have turned up.

“We're one of only three counties in the state that has actually found Carfentanyl,” Rogers said.

The drug is 10,000 times more powerful than an equivalent unit of morphine and can be absorbed

through latex gloves. It's so dangerous that the sheriff's office won't field test it; the drug is bagged and sent to an Oregon State Police Crime lab.

So is the situation worse than it was 15 years ago?

Today, marijuana products are legal to ingest. Williams said she still considers marijuana a drug, and if it is counted, drug use is more prevalent.

“I'm seeing more of it than I did when I took office 11 years ago,” Williams said.

Crystal Methamphetamine has also become more prevalent.

“We weren't seeing a lot of meth when I first started,” Williams said. “I would say a high percentage of cases that come through have a PCS meth along with whatever else there is,” she said. The others agreed.

They believe meth presents the biggest problems.

The county appears to have a higher than expected percentage of middle-aged meth addicts.

“It's that addictive,” Williams said.

Rogers said that kids are always going to push boundaries, but with the high potency of today's drugs, they don't get many chances for error.

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