

One good reason to expand the fair

This week, we are in the middle of the Wallowa County Fair run. There are a number of events and activities on the schedule. Make plans this week to get over to the fairgrounds and see what's going on.

Our editorial page this week has a bit of a county fair theme with this column, Sen. Bill Hansell's column and Scott Hathorn's letter to the editor.

I echo Scott's sentiments and appreciate Bill's recollections of the highlights of most county fairs, although not Wallowa County's production.

For Bill, the not-to-be-missed for was elephant ears. For me, it was Indian fry bread.

There are a lot of opportunities for the fair to progress.

I know many on the fair board respond with "who is going to do all that work?" That is a legitimate question. The answer is volunteers. Create the vision, and volunteers will materialize. It's kind of my paraphrase of "if you build it, he will come."

No one is criticizing the fair board. What we are saying is perhaps it's time to step to the plate and create a county fair that would attract folks who could help pay for the upkeep of the fairgrounds and other nice-to-haves.

Several people have expressed to me their surprise that the fair was not able to keep up with routine maintenance but had never put out a plea for help.

I can only answer for the Rotary Club of Wallowa County, but I can say they were never contacted. Our club is filled with guys with time on their hands who would enjoy being part of a work team to improve the fair grounds. No one asked.

This isn't the first time this has happened. It's almost as though there's an aversion to putting out a plea for volunteers to keep us from losing one more thing on that long list that begins with the Enterprise swimming pool.

Maybe it's a turf thing. Maybe it's a control thing. I haven't really figured that out, but it's particularly annoying to a newspaper editor.

We have never turned down an organization that has come to us and said "do a story letting your readers know we have a problem." And when we have, people have responded. I can cite a number of examples from the past year.

Scott mentions the carnival, another thing the county has lost over the years. Carnivals aren't as prevalent as they once were. I checked on the Oregon Association of County Fairs website. There are five carnival vendors listed, three of them in Oregon. Seems to me one of them would be willing to make the trek over the hill.

You need only look as far as Chief Joseph Days to see the impact an army of volunteers can make on an event. Their 200 volunteers attract upward of 30,000 people into the county over five days. So let's say the fair only utilizes 100 volunteers. Could we attract 15,000 people? That would be a dandy start.

Here's my final thought on the matter. Everyone I know in the agricultural sector of our county tells me that telling their story is becoming more important as the threats to our way of life grow.

What better way than to bring together folks not engaged in ranching or farming and clue them in on the importance of agriculture and its role in feeding the world?

That opportunity alone should be enough to get everyone on board with being part of an expanded county fair. See you at the fair.



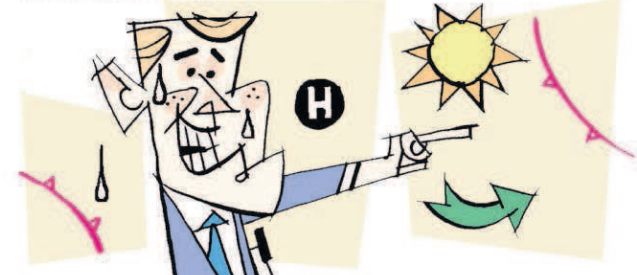
WAHL TO WALL

Paul Wahl

FUTURE FORECASTS

ALONG WITH THE RECORD BREAKING HEAT EXPECT HISTORIC SANDSTORMS, MASSIVE FIRES AS A WARMING DENIAL SYSTEM FLOODS WASHINGTON, D.C. WITH COLD CASH.

AS DROUGHT CONDITIONS WORSEN AND OUR POWER GRIDS COLLAPSE THOUSANDS DIE IN HISTORIC HEAT WAVES



CHANGE DENIERS, COASTAL FLOODING REFUGEES AND HEAT REFUGEES HEADING NORTH SHOULD EXPECT RECORD BREAKING HEAT.



County fairs are a terrific tradition

As I was preparing to participate in the 2018 Umatilla County Fair Parade, it occurred to me what a unique and special institution county fairs are. All 36 Oregon Counties have a fair, including Wallowa and the other six counties I represent in State Senate District 29.

Each year Oregonians gather together to showcase and celebrate at County Fairs across our state. There is something for everyone at these gatherings, which were first held before statehood in the mid-1800s.

I have been attending county fairs for decades, as a participant, spectator and parent. In my 30 years serving as a county commissioner, I came to an entirely new appreciation for what these fairs mean to our way of life and their importance.

What makes most county fairs so special and attractive? Let me share my reasons, in no particular order except for the first. My top 10 reasons why county fairs are special.

1. Elephant ears, corn dogs, and ice cream! It doesn't get any better than this!
2. Something for everyone. It doesn't matter whether you are young or old. This is one reason why in 2017, more than 1.5 million guests attended fairs in Oregon.
3. Showcasing achievement. Last year, according to the Oregon Fairs Association, there were more than 58,000 4-H and FFA exhibits. Add to this figure over 46,000 adult, and 22,000 youth exhibits, and you have thousands



GUEST COLUMN

State Sen. Bill Hansell



COUNTY FAIRS ARE A BRIDGE. THEY BRIDGE GENERATIONS, URBAN-RURAL, ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS, POLITICS, REGIONS AND SO MUCH MORE.'

of Oregonians showcasing their talents and achievements.

4. Parade. Everyone loves a parade, and the county fair parade is always a fun one.
5. Volunteers make it happen. Every fair has a hard-working fair board and hundreds of volunteers. Many fair board members take their vacations to live in a trailer on the fairgrounds. And as far as I know, they receive not a dime for their services. In fact,

for most board members, it costs them money to serve. They are hardworking and their contributions make county fairs happen.

6. Fairs are a gathering place. I have many lifelong friendships and memories that began in 4-H and FFA at fairs.

7. Heritage and culture. Our county fairs provide the venue to express and keep alive our heritage and culture, both past, present and future.

8. Entertainment. Wow! I have enjoyed big names like the Oakridge Boys and The Charlie Daniels Band. There is daily entertainment, and local groups on the stages at county fairs. All for the price of an admission ticket.

9. The carnival and rides. I have to admit when it comes to rides or games of skill, I'm not much of a participant. Rides and elephant ears don't go together for me, and I'll choose the "ears" every time. I do like to watch.

10. County fairs are a bridge. They bridge generations, urban-rural, ethnic backgrounds, politics, regions and so much more.

I encourage you to make plans to attend the Wallowa County Fair this week.

State Sen. Bill Hansell is a huge supporter of county fairs, and has exhibited both as a youth and adult. He even took home a blue ribbon for his water-color painting at the Umatilla County Fair. All six of the Hansell children were livestock exhibitors, which helped pay for their college educations. He and his wife Margaret reside in Athena.

County fair could be so much more

I just read the letter about dumping the Wallowa County "bed tax bump." Very reasonable.

Obviously, the maintenance and operation of the fair grounds should be shouldered by the entire county populous, not preponderantly by the local hospitality industry, which is apparently considered "low hanging fruit" by some of our county commissioners.

Then I read the Wallowa County Fair schedule of events that appears to be heavily weighted toward 4-H and FFA activities, which are a good foundation but not much to rouse or attract the rest of the county who aren't FFA or livestock enthusiasts.

So, here are a few ideas that have been deployed by various successful county fairs.

- Where's the entertainment that would attract a broader audience to see the 4-H and FFA exhibits and generate revenues?
 - Where's the fun of the midway carnival, the Ferris wheel, "carni" games and food vendors?
- As an aside, Chief Joseph Days just hasn't been nearly as much fun since it lost the carnival.
- And where are the music venues for generating revenues from a different segment of the community and attract tourists from a field that could bolster the county's economy during an otherwise "lull" in its event calendar?
 - And why not throw in the excitement of a demolition derby such as what the fair

LETTERS to the EDITOR

used to have?

- Why isn't a rodeo coordinated with the fair?
- And how about a farm equipment expo to show off the latest farm and irrigation equipment and present information about obtaining grant monies to underwrite such modernization?

It seems to me that county fair has an opportunity to make a much greater contribution to the county at large while simultaneously inviting tourism dollars.

Scott Hathorn
Joseph

Not everyone wants wolves dead and gone

The Chieftain's story about the year's first livestock predation by the Harl Butte pack last week does a disservice to its readers. There is more than just one voice, and that inimical to wolves, in Wallowa County.

Commissioner Todd Nash, known for his uncompromising opposition to wolves anywhere in cow country, never ceases calling for slaughtering wolves for even a small number of stock predations.

He says the state needs to do its part (kill wolves) if we're going to achieve coexistence with wolves and ranchers.

He is implying that Oregon hasn't made huge efforts to accommodate the livestock industry by providing full compensation for dead or injured stock, providing generous funding for the use of nonlethal deterrents and compensating for cattle missing at the fall round-up. Commissioner Nash benefits from all these programs. All at tax-payer expense.

When wolves and cattle mix on public lands, there will be some stock predation, especially of undersized, sick or injured stock, and an ODFW investigation will seldom discover whether an animal was sick or injured before being attacked.

The 225-pound two-month old calf taken by the Harl Butte pack was a very tempting target, not much bigger than a wolf. A basic management practice is to calve in January and February so calves are large when released into wolf territory on public land, something this rancher didn't do.

Those ranchers who like Nash are incessantly calling for the extermination of wolves should themselves do their part and actually make a serious effort to adapt their management practices to wolf presence. Ranchers in Oregon and the West are doing this successfully.

Oregonians overwhelmingly support wolves and are paying to help the livestock industry cope. Nash and his friends should adjust to this reality and stop viewing their fellow citizens and state with contempt.

Wally Sykes
Joseph

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN

VOLUME 134 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

Contents copyright © 2018. All rights reserved.
Reproduction without permission is prohibited.

Wallowa County's Newspaper Since 1884

MEMBER OREGON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Published every Wednesday by: EO Media Group

Publisher Chris Rush, crush@eomediagroup.com
Editor Paul Wahl, editor@wallowa.com
Reporter Stephen Tool, steve@wallowa.com
Reporter Kathleen Eilyn, kellyn@wallowa.com
Newsroom assistant editor@wallowa.com
Ad sales consultant Jennifer Powell, jpowell@wallowa.com
Office manager Cheryl Jenkins, cjenkins@wallowa.com

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