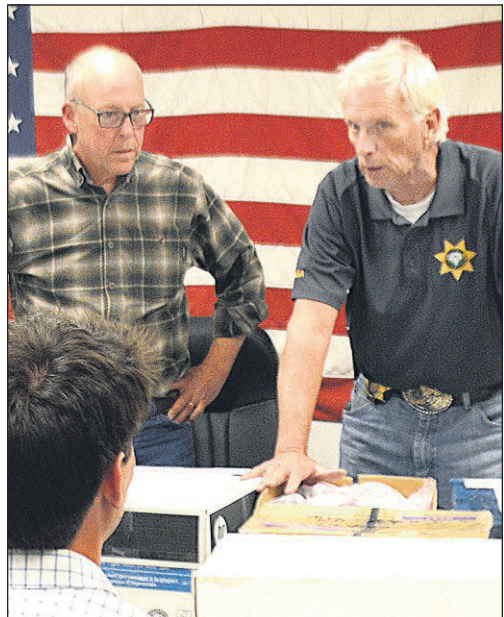


Walden visit includes opioid abuse discussion



Steve Tool/Chieftain

Oregon U.S. Rep., Greg Walden listens as Wallowa County Sheriff Steve Rogers explains the boxes under his hands are the product of a dispensary for unwanted prescription medication located in the county's justice center. Walden visited Wallowa county to see how rural areas are dealing with the opioid crisis.

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

U.S. Rep., Greg Walden found out that rural areas are suffering as much as big cities from the opioid crisis after he made a one-hour whistle stop in Wallowa County last week.

He met with Winding Waters Community Health Center, the Enterprise Police Department and Wallowa County Sheriff's Office to learn how the agencies team to combat the opioid crisis in eastern Oregon. The Sept. 19 event took place at the county's justice center in Enterprise.

After Walden introduced himself, the group discussed the drug dispensary kiosk located inside the lobby of the justice center. The kiosk allows anyone to safely dispose of unwanted prescription medication. The items are then shipped to the Drug Enforcement Administration for proper disposal in an incinerator.

"It's probably the single biggest

thing Winding Waters and we ever did, was to put that thing (the kiosk) out there," Wallowa County Sheriff Steve Rogers said.

"That's great to know," Walden replied.

Walden's jaw dropped as EPD officer George Kohlhepp brought in and stacked bag after bag of discarded medication onto the conference room table. Rogers told everyone that the bags contain a variety of prescriptions but most are opioids.

The DEA receives shipments from the county approximately every six months.

"The last time we shipped, I had one jail cell clear full," Rogers said. "A jail cell?" Walden asked, incredulous.

Kohlhepp explained that among other drugs, he finds copious amounts of hydrocodone and fentanyl. Because of the presence of fentanyl, which can be hazardous to touch and also a component of other drugs, law enforcement officers no longer perform field tests.

Also on the agenda was a dis-

cussion of Narcan, a nasal spray used on those who have overdosed on opioids. Narcan blocks opioid receptors in the brain, thereby reversing the overdose.

Rogers said the county had only suffered one known opioid overdose while Dr. Liz Powers of Winding Waters said she had been on call when a person was admitted experiencing an overdose and would have perished without medical attention.

"I would say that EMS uses it very frequently," Powers said. Two of the county's schools have a supply of Narcan in case of a drug overdose, as well.

As officer Kohlhepp told of the difficulties in stemming the flow of drugs into the county, Dr. Powers assured him that all the county's law enforcement had made a significant dent in the supply. She told a story about a patient undergoing withdrawals who came into the hospital emergency room at 2 a.m.

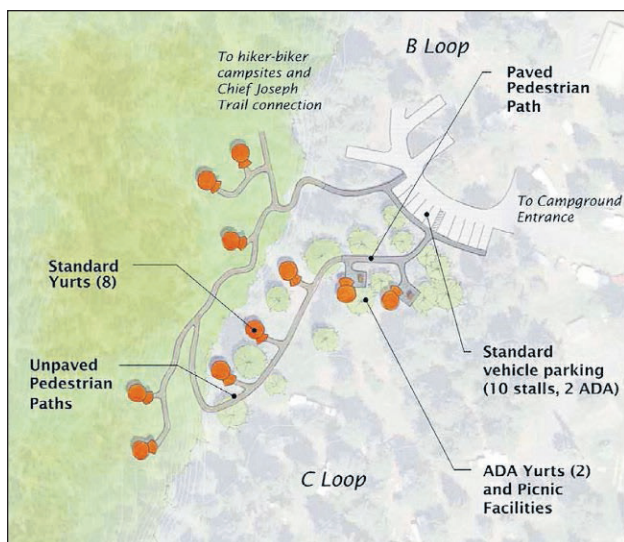
"He said, 'I'm here because I can't find drugs anywhere in Wallowa County,'" she related.

The rest of the hour-long meeting featured exchanges between the congressman and the other participants regarding various methods law enforcement uses to combat drug crime and the clinic's part in dealing with drug abuse from a health care perspective.

Nic Powers, Winding Waters' chief executive officer, said that he appreciated the opportunity to share what the clinic is doing to fight drug abuse. "I was really pleased that our politicians on a national level can see how much this community cares about health and wellness, and how hard we're all working to improve our community health," he said.

Rogers said he appreciated the opportunity to share his perspective with the congressman.

"I think it's a pretty telling and positive thing that a U.S. representative wants to show up in a county this small to see what we're doing," he said. "You could see from the amount of drugs on the table that it's a problem."



The number of yurts will increase five-fold at Wallowa Lake State Park under a proposed planning document.

YURTS

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Oregon State Parks Northwest Regional Manager.

Tutor, who had seen yurts manufactured by Pacific Yurts at the state fair, began a crusade to see them placed in as many state parks as possible.

Fast-forward to 2018, 30 state parks have roughly 200 of them mostly clustered on the coast. Most users book as far in advance as a year for the opportunity to spend a night or two in the units.

"It's the most competitive facility we have and the hardest for which to get a reservation," David Stipe, Planning and Design Manager at Oregon State Parks and Recreation told a handful of people who attended the final public hearing on the plan.

Under the proposal, the two existing yurts at Wallowa Lake would be relocated to an area between B and C loops and eight more added along with a small parking area to create a yurt village, according to JR Collier, Wallowa Lake State Management Unit Manager.

"The new ones would be

similar to what we have," Collier said.

Besides popularity with campground users, the yurts are heated and ideal for year-round camping.

Collier said when and if the yurt village is constructed, it would open the door for more winter-time activities in the park, such as hiking and snow-shoeing.

Yurts generally do not have toilet facilities; the 4-7 campers in each pay \$45 per night and utilize the campground's amenities.

Stipe said they are simple to clean, require little to no maintenance and are solid structures.

According to one national report, yurts are popular with young couples who do not have the wherewithal to own a camper and older campers who struggle to use a tent.

State park yurts come in "rustic" and "deluxe" models. Deluxe versions have kitchen facilities and a restroom with a shower. Most of the units are 16-feet in diameter with a skylight, electricity, heat, lights and an outdoor fire pit with picnic table. Pet-friendly yurts are also available.

ELECTION

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Also running unopposed are Stacey Karvoski for Enterprise Mayor, Jenni Word for Enterprise City Council Position 1 and David Elliott for Enterprise City Council Position 2.

Two incumbents on Joseph City Council are running for a total of three seats — Teresa Sajonia and Pearl R. Sturm. The third candidate would have to be elected by write-in.

Gary Hulse is seeking the Wallowa Mayor position, Joe Town and Oran McCrae are standing for city council seats.

In Lostine, incumbent Dusty Tippet is running unopposed for mayor. Kate Shelton and Darci Calhoun are on the ballot for two seats on Lostine City Council.

Thomas Smith, James Yost, Kevin Melville and Leonard Post are running unopposed for seats on the Wallowa County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Wallowa and Union county voters will select between former Wallowa County District Attorney Mona Williams and La Grande attorney Wes

BE AN EDUCATED VOTER

Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce will host a candidate forum 6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 10 at Cloverleaf Hall on the campus of Wallowa County Fairgrounds. Invitations have gone out to candidates in all contest races on the Wallowa County version of the General Election ballot.

Candidates have an opportunity for a short introduction and will answer a specific number of written questions from the forum committee and audience. Questions for candidates may be written on 3x5-inch cards that will be available at the door. They will be collected prior to the candidate presentations.

The forum will follow a nonpartisan, unbiased and impartial format.



the Court of Appeals Position 7 and Robert Manicke, judge of the Oregon Tax Court.

Five statewide measures are also on the ballot, as well as one to be decided by Joseph residents — repeal of a ban on marijuana related businesses in that city.

Statewide measure include the following:

- Measure 102: Amends Oregon's Constitution to allow local bonds for financing affordable housing with nongovernmental entities.

- Measure 103: Amends Oregon's Constitution to prohibit taxes/fees based on transactions for "groceries."

- Measure 104: Amends Oregon's Constitution to expand (beyond taxes) application of requirement that three-fifths legislative majority is needed to approve legislation raising revenue.

- Measure 105: Repeals a law limiting use of state and local law enforcement resources to enforced federal immigration law (Sanctuary Law). Rep. Greg Barreto is one of two chief sponsors of Measure 105.

- Measure 106: Prohibits spending "public funds" directly or indirectly for abortion.

Williams for a judge's seat on the Circuit Court, 14th District, Position 5.

In regional elections, incumbent Greg Walden is being challenged by Democrat Jamie McLeod-Skinner and Independent Mark R. Roberts for Oregon's U.S. Representative from District 2.

Independent Skye Farnam is challenging Greg Barreto for state representative from the 58th District. Barreto is listed as both a Republican and Democrat on the ballot.

Statewide, Wallowa County voters will help select one of six candidates

to serve as governor. Constitution Party candidate Aaron Auer, Libertarian Nick Chen, Republican Knute Buehler, Independent Patric Starnes and Progressive Chris Henry are challenging incumbent Democrat Kate Brown.

Several statewide nonpartisan judge candidates are also running unopposed, including Adrienne Nelson, judge of the Supreme Court Position 5, Bronson D. James, judge of the Court of Appeals Position 2, Robyn Ridler Aoyago, judge of the Court of Appeals Position 4, Steven R. Powers, Judge of

Kyrgyzstan visit canceled

A group of livestock producers and pasture specialists from the Kyrgyzstan will not arrive in time for an event previously schedule for Sunday in Enterprise.

Michael Hale, rangeland specialist for The Nature Conservancy, told the Chieftain Monday the delegation's visas had been canceled. "I am hopeful that it will happen sometime in the future," Hale said.

Diane Daggett

for Wallowa County Commissioner

What do I mean by "Keep Us Rural"?

PROTECT & STRENGTHEN OUR AG & FORESTRY ECONOMY

To protect our rural way of life we must ensure that our natural resources-based economy — our farms, ranches, and forests — remain our dominant economic drivers.

When they flourish, our county prospers.

How do we do this? Watch your mailbox, my flier is coming.

Your vote matters. Vote to Keep Us Rural.

Diane Daggett

for County Commissioner

Keep Us Rural

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