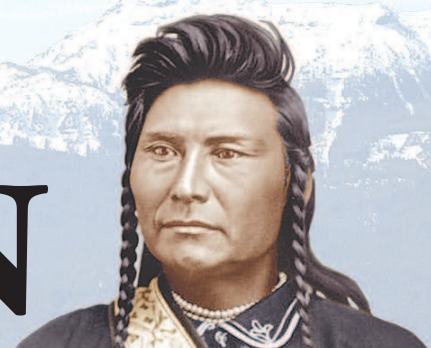




WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



Loop Road will get \$8M in improvements

Open bottom bridge to replace three old culverts

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

An \$8 million project to rehab the first five miles of the Wallowa Mountain Loop Road (39 Road) from Imnaha Highway to the cattle guards is to begin in April 2019 and

be completed by October 2019. Those first five miles are county road and the rest of the road is Forest Service road. The Forest Service spent \$5.3 million to reconstruct 18 miles of its portion of the road in 2016-17.

Wallowa County Commissioners applied for a grant for the project from Western Federal Land Access back in 2015, but “these things take time,” said Wallowa County Commissioner Susan Roberts.

The county was notified in 2016

that it had won the grant, but project design took several years to complete.

The county was required to match the grant at a rate of 10.27 percent, or approximately \$827,000.

Fortunately, Roberts said, the State of Oregon partnered with Wallowa County and gave the county \$529,028 to rebuild the connection to the Imnaha Highway, where a curving loop approach currently obscures line of site.

“The big curving loop will disap-

pear and the road will tee-up,” said Roberts. “We’ve had several accidents there, one fatal. (Now) there will be a right-hand turn lane as you come from Joseph toward Imnaha, to help get people off the highway.”

In addition to improving the county portion of the road, an open bottom bridge will replace the three culverts currently under the road — enhancing safety and allowing better fish passage.

The county paid \$123,000 of its match money in advance, from

which Western Federal will subtract the match percent of each phase as the project progresses.

That leaves approximately \$107,000 the county still has to find in its budget. The county has applied for an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board grant. Should that fall through, commissioners have also banked money in the road department account.

“The project is sorely needed,” said Roberts. “That road is in fairly bad condition.”

YOUTH SOCCER WRAPS



Paul Wahl/Chieftain

Wallowa Valley Youth Soccer Association wrapped a busy year Oct. 20 with the organization’s annual jamboree. Malcolm Albee, center, gets off a quick kick during morning action while opponents Cyrus Carter, left, and Nicholas Samples move in. **MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE B1.**

ELECTION 2018

Wrong ballots mailed to some

Vendor error is likely at issue, clerk says

Residents of Wallowa County, Enterprise and Lostine may have received incorrect ballots in the mail for the 2018 General Election.

Wallowa County Clerk Sandy Lathrop said Monday morning her office discovered the error. The contractor that printed and mailed the ballots apparently stuffed incorrect ballots into envelopes.

Dozens of voters have contacted

the clerk to ask about the ballot.

“Not all Enterprise and Lostine residents received the wrong ballot and not all Wallowa County residents received the wrong ballot,” she said.

Lathrop suggests voters in Enterprise check their ballot to be sure the Enterprise City Council races are listed. County residents whose ballots include Enterprise City Council races have received an incorrect ballot.

Monday afternoon, Lathrop issued an update. She said Precincts 1, 2 and 9 — which include Wallowa County,

Enterprise and Lostine — appear to be where the problem is centered.

Voters in no other cities appear to be impacted.

Lathrop is working with the vendor to correct the problem. New ballots will need to be mailed to those who received incorrect versions.

The clerk’s office had gone to a vendor this election cycle rather than doing it in house because of issues in the last election cycle where some ballots ended up in Florida.

Questions should be directed to the county clerk’s office.

Joseph unsure about county library books

Concern over mold liability is at issue

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Joseph City Library may be trying to expand or even change its space, but one thing it isn’t sure of is expanding its collection of books. At least if they come from Wallowa County’s now defunct library.

The subject came up at the Joseph

City Council’s Oct. 4 meeting when city librarian Eric Shoudel included it in his monthly report. He said the Wallowa County Library Foundation is trying to find a home for the collection.

Shoudel said he had recently culled around 600 children’s books from the city library, and while he didn’t want to replace them all, he said he’d like to have 200-300 of the county’s volumes.

See LIBRARY, Page A11

Wick bids adieu to county planning commission

Ken Wick peruses the thick book of regulations that define the powers of a member of the planning commission. Wick is retiring from the planning commission after nearly 30 years of service.

Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain



After nearly 30 years of service

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Now that’s dedication.

When Ken Wick became a Wallowa County Planning Commissioner in 1988, he was working as an outfitter for Bill Sharkey at Divide Camp out on Little Sheep Creek.

“I can remember in 1989 riding in (eight miles up

the west fork of the Wallowa River), on my big black horse “Seeger” to do the planning commission meeting. I did the meeting, and then rode back so I could be there to cook breakfast.”

Thirty years later, the balance of day job and volunteer service is easier, but Wick has decided it’s time to take a break. He’s keeping his real estate job with Real Estate Associates in Joseph, but he’s “retiring” from the volunteer planning commission position.

See WICK, Page A11

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