

LOSING HIS CATTLE

ATTACKS CONTINUE TO FRUSTRATE
OREGON RANCHER | PAGE A8



WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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PLUNGE IN, RUN OUT!



Courtesy photos/Kathy Drake

IN — The Wallowa County hardy of heart Polar Plungers make their way into Wallowa Lake to celebrate the new year on Jan. 1.
OUT — The same hardy revelers on their way out of the lake at a bit faster speed. About 85 people attended the event with several dozen actually participating in the plunge and an equal number in a support role.

Wallowa Memorial Hospital shows profit in 2018

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa Memorial Hospital, the county's largest employer, made a profit in 2018 along with significant strides in other areas, according to chief executive officer Larry Davy.

Davy spoke to the *Chieftain* about the banner year from his modest-sized office at the hospital. The National Rural Health Association, using a metric that ranges from patient care and satisfaction to financial strength, rated Wallowa Memorial sixth among 1,350 rural hospitals around the country.

"It think it's a great commentary on our staff, our physicians and our community support," Davy said. "It shows that local efforts for health care are very effective."

Still, Davy said he and the staff are not satisfied with the ranking and are striving to be number one.

"We don't target numbers," Davy said. "But if you do your job well, with quality and service, those numbers come."

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Environmental groups pull out of wolf plan talks

By Gillian Flaccus
Associated Press

PORTLAND (AP) — Environmental groups in Oregon announced Monday they have withdrawn from talks on how to manage the state's rebounding wolf population because of what they called a "broken" process, and concerns that state wildlife officials want to make it easier to kill wolves that eat livestock without trying other alternatives.

The announcement came after months of negotiations to update rules on how and when wolves can be killed as their numbers increase and they spread farther west and south after re-entering northeastern Oregon from Idaho more than a decade ago.

It wasn't immediately clear what would happen to the talks, although the environmental groups said they would "collectively and actively" oppose the wolf management plan proposed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Michelle Dennehy, an agency spokeswoman, did not return a call and email seeking comment. The agency oversees the group of ranchers, hunters and wolf conservation

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Alpenfest to move to Wallowa Lake State Park

Seeks financial support for big tent

Wallowa County Chieftain

Oregon's Alpenfest has lost the only home it has known: the 97-year-old Edelweiss Inn declared recently as uninhabitable.

"We have loved that old building, but we knew it was just a matter of time before something like this would happen," said Chuck Anderson, the festival's president.

The festival plans to go forward in 2019 and hold the event under a 3,200-square-foot tent at Wallowa Lake State Park in September. The

nonprofit festival is launching a campaign to pay to rent the tent, a stage, dance floor, heaters, lighting and other necessities, estimated at roughly \$15,000 annually, Anderson said.

Anderson said he is working with state parks officials for the necessary permit and applying for financial support from regional foundations and local businesses.

Eventually, Alpenfest directors hope for the festival to be staged permanently at an event center. A 3,800-square-foot structure at the northeast corner of the marina parking lot with views overlooking Wallowa

Lake is currently included in the park's longterm master plan. But that idea awaits architectural concepts, funding and county approval. The process and construction will probably take several years, said Anderson.

The Edelweiss, located next door to and owned by Wallowa Lake Tramway, has a storied history. Before the Tramway acquired it, a series of owners used it as an Elks Lodge clubhouse, a roller-skating rink. There are Prohibition-era legends of bootleg liquor and rooms available for more than just dancing.



Edelweiss Inn

