

Poker Run nets cash for locals

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Wallowa County Gamblers all-volunteer snowmobile club held their annual Poker Run fundraiser on Jan. 19. Club treasurer Chad Cooney said the club sold 358 hands at \$5 per hand. He wasn't sure of the exact number of attendees but said that both sides of the Salt Creek Summit parking lot were full.

For a number of reasons, the run is held more as a lottery than traditional poker hands. At each of the six stops on the run, participants choose from a bag of poker chips numbering 1-40. That number is marked on a card. The 36-mile run ends at the Joseph Community Center where the card numbers are counted and totaled. The total number is entered into a lottery with other totals and a computer draws one of those numbers for prizes.

This year's event raised about \$3,500, of which the club will keep about \$1,000.

The route started at Salt Creek Summit parking lot and followed along five stops, each with a bonfire. After completion the participants loaded up and traveled to the Joseph Community Center for the lottery drawing and a tri-tip dinner.

Cooney said his favorite thing about the event was that it got everyone into the outdoors, including some non-participants.

"We had people that came through that didn't have cards or anything," he said. They just rode through to be there with us."

Club president Dustin James agreed.

"We had beautiful weather with great snow," he said. He added he'd like to thank all the club volunteers and the sponsors who put in heroic efforts to get the event off the ground this year.

The monies the club receives for the event are given to such local non-profits as the food bank. The club hasn't decided on the recipient of this year's funds.



Wallowa County Snowmobile Association Poker Run participants gather for a few moments of warmth at Lick Creek, just one of the six stops on the 70-mile run. Courtesy Photo

New primary proposal could mean big changes for Oregon politics

By Claire Withycombe
Oregon Capital Bureau

The growing bloc of Oregonians who don't belong to any political party could have more say in elections under a new proposal from Secretary of State Dennis Richardson.

Richardson got the idea from a former rival: Alan Zundel, the Pacific Green Party's candidate for secretary of state in 2016.

And now Richardson's office is advocating for Senate Bill 225, which is based on a concept Zundel suggested to him last year. It would allow nonaffiliated voters to participate in their own primary.

"I've been interested in how our electoral process works for a long time, particularly in how the two-party system limits competition and keeps the voting public from exposure to

more than just two points of view on issues," Zundel said.

Under current law, nonaffiliated Oregonians can vote in primary elections only for nonpartisan positions such as for judge.

Richardson and Zundel want the state's 880,000 nonaffiliated voters — who now outnumber registered Republicans — to be able to choose nonaffiliated candidates for those partisan offices.

"Although nearly one-third of Oregon voters are not affiliated with any political party, those non-affiliated voters often feel left out of the primary process in the current system," Steve Elzinga, Richardson's governmental and legal affairs director, told lawmakers on Wednesday.

Under the proposal, non-affiliated candidates could enter a state-run primary

where nonaffiliated voters could cast a ballot for the nonaffiliated candidate they preferred.

Officials from Richardson's office shared the proposal last week with senators at a meeting of a committee focused on campaign finance laws.

State Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, expressed concerns about allowing nonaffiliated voters to participate in a major party primary and potentially "sabotage" the outcome.

The bill wouldn't do that, though, Elzinga clarified.

"It creates a new, effectively, a new party for non-affiliated voters," Elzinga responded. "They have their own separate primary for voting on nonaffiliated candidates, and the top nonaffiliated candidate goes to the general election as the non-affiliated nominee."

Major party candidates would be ineligible to win the nonaffiliated primary election "so it doesn't create a proxy battle," Elzinga said.

A second proposal from Richardson could apply to the roughly 45,000 Oregonians who belong to the state's five minor parties — the Libertarian, Constitution, Working Families, Progressive and Pacific Green.

Oregon laws "benefit long-established major parties

at the expense of smaller parties," Elzinga told lawmakers.

Members of those parties can select a general election candidate through a party-run process. Richardson has proposed allowing the state to pay for and run those primaries instead.

"I will tell you, frankly, some of the minor parties are not excited about that," Elzinga said. "They like the current process, and so we don't feel it's appropriate to

require them to do so, but to give them that option at least at that time, I think is a good starting point."

The state would pay about \$140,000 to run the nonaffiliated primary every election year, and \$140,000 per minor party that chooses to participate in a state-funded primary.

Richardson's proposal is now before the Senate Rules Committee, where its fate is uncertain.

Foster Love Shine & Dine

Monday February 11th at 5:30pm

*Building Healthy Families
207 NE Park Street, Enterprise*

Join us as we shine some light on the needs of our vulnerable youth in foster care and how you can help.

Presentations by DHS, CASA, and BHF Youth Mentor Program.

Dinner and Child Care provided

Any Questions or to RSVP contact Erin Taggart
etaggart@oregonbhf.org 541-426-9411

Win a Professionally Guided

Buck Hunt

On the 33,000 acre Zumwalt Prairie

for you and two guests!

To purchase tickets, contact Board President Dana Ingram at 541-910-5146 or make check payable to CJSC for \$100 and mail to: CJSC, c/o Dana Ingram, P.O. Box 588 Joseph, OR 97846

The winner will receive a 3-day guided hunting trip for you and up to two guests on The Nature Conservancy's 33,000 acre protected Zumwalt Prairie outside Joseph, Oregon. Terrain is rough and physically challenging. Oregon hunting regulations apply. The Nature Conservancy has generously donated the LOP tag to benefit Chief Joseph Summer Camp, a week-long educational day camp held each July since 1961 in Joseph, Oregon serving the rural kids of Wallowa County. Raffle to be held at camp location, Ferguson Ridge Ski Area. You do not have to be present to win; winner will be notified within 24 hours of drawing.

Tickets: \$100 each
Only 100 tickets will be sold!

Drawing to be held April 6, 2019

ADULTS \$10

KIDS 10 & Under \$5

WALLOWA COUNTY FAIR

UNLIMITED PANCAKES FOR A GOOD CAUSE

RAISING MONEY FOR OUR WALLOWA COUNTY YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH
DINNER STARTS AT 5:30PM
BINGO STARTS AT 6:30
AT CLOVERLEAF HALL

Pancake dinner includes sausage, coffee, juice, and ONE FREE BINGO CARD

LOTS TO BID ON AT OUR
Silent Auction

A FUN EVENING FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!