



Rocky Wilson/Chieftain

Much of the Integrated Biomass Resources log yard is decked with logs 6" in diameter and less. IBR is based three miles northwest of Wallowa, on a 73-acre site formerly occupied by Wallowa Forest Products.

Local fire at Integrated Biomass Resources, cause unknown

On Sunday, May 12, at approximately 1 a.m. a fire occurred at Integrated Biomass Resources in Wallowa. No one was present at the mill and there were no injuries associated with the fire. The exact cause of the fire is unknown at this time.

Integrated Biomass Resources is an existing small diameter mill, located just outside Wallowa at the former Rogge mill site, dedicated to developing value-added products from small-diameter trees, including posts, poles, bundled firewood, pulp chips, short saw logs, energy, and biochar. Over nearly a decade of operation, IBR has increased small wood utilization and forest restoration, reduced the cost of forest management by creating value for restoration residuals, and supported Wallowa County through the creation of 25 jobs.

IBR is thought by some to be a key player in the economic development of Wallowa County.

The fire originated in the vicinity of a firewood

processor and spread to a hydraulic fluid tank that resulted in a high intensity fire that caused significant damage to the surrounding equipment. Fortunately, the fire did not spread extensively beyond this localized area thanks to the efforts of local fire fighters, including Jeffrey Weeks, the Fire Chief of the Joseph Fire Department. Jeffrey and his family happened to be returning home from out of the County and driving on highway 82 soon after the fire began. Spotting the fire, he drove to the site, called 911, and initiated the firefighting effort which limited the damage.

While the fire certainly creates a challenge for IBR going into the summer season, the damaged equipment and infrastructure will be rebuilt and operations will continue, as will the benefits that IBR brings to the community and our surrounding forestlands. IBR would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise and Joseph Fire Departments.

Soaring to new heights with aviation education at Joseph Charter School

Kana Oliver
For Wallowa County
Chieftain

The aviation population has been diminishing over the years and is in desperate need for fresh faces to replenish the void left by retiring pilots and mechanics. Since 2016, Joseph Charter School has been preparing students interested in aerospace to take flight in its New Heights Aviation Program. Students develop important skills for aeronautics both in the classroom and through hands-on experiments and construction of aircraft. They also are encouraged to develop skills that are necessary to be successful in the field such as communications, logistics, and thinking outside of the box.

Construction of the new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Building at Joseph Charter School began in early April. The building will serve as the new home to Joseph New Heights Aviation. Inside, there will be classrooms designated for CTE learning that will help propel Joseph into the future of education.



Christian Ambrosio

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Building at Joseph Charter School. Construction began April, 2019.

A Federal Aviation Administration approved simulator will be available to students. This simulator will work both visually and physically by moving as a real airplane would. Students will also be able to get hands-on experience building aircraft in open spaces. Wallowa and Enterprise High School students and community members will be able to use the

facilities by appointment.

The building is funded by a half-million-dollar Career and Technical Education grant issued in January 2018 to the Joseph New Heights Aviation program. They are receiving additional help through an American Airlines \$12,000 grant. It is being constructed by Wellens Farwell and is targeted to be completed by July 31 for the

2019-2020 school year.

"The new building will allow our school district to change with future education trends and can be transformed into what our students need," Superintendent Lance Homan explained. "The design and location will allow for all students K-12 to take advantage of CTE education and get introduced to real-world experiences."

Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland visitor center grand opening

The Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland will be hosting a "Grand Opening" of their visitor center from noon to 5 p.m. on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend, May 25. The event is held in conjunction with the "Sharing Blankets" exhibit, held at the Wallowa Longhouse on Whiskey Creek Road from 2-7 p.m. on the same day.

The visitor center, located at 209 E. 2nd Street in downtown Wallowa, has been the site of many improvements over the past two years. Decorative exterior painting was completed

by muralist John Michener. Inside the visitor center, interactive exhibits include a hands-on topographical map of the Wallowas, a "Seasonal Round" calendar of plants and animals, and an American girl doll diorama for children, all impeccably crafted by JR Rymut, owner of Echo Fabrication in Enterprise. Paintings by another local artist, Anna Vogel, are also featured, in addition to contemporary Native art by Lloyd Barkley, Wilbert Beebe, Kevin Peters, Hal Brightcloud and Ellen Taylor. Colorful and informative

photo panels tell the story of the wal'waama, the people of Wallowa, as told by Nez Perce members of the board of the Wallowa Homeland. A full resource library complements the exhibits. Visitors are reminded throughout the space that the Nez Perce people and this land are intertwined, today as they have always been. The message is one of shared commitment to this place, Wallowa, through stewardship of the land and cultivation of cross-cultural relationships. Stop by any time between noon and 5 p.m. to experi-

ence the exhibits and meet some of the artists. Refreshments will be provided.

Meanwhile, at the Longhouse, five Native textile artists will display their handmade blankets, beginning at 2 p.m. Organizer Britt Rynearson is a Nez Perce descendant, and has developed an informative website for the project www.sharing-blankets.org. Refreshments, discussion and stories of the tradition of sharing blankets will commence at 5 p.m. All are welcome, and quilters are especially encouraged to attend.

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