

BMCC introduces new Wallowa County Small Business advisor

By Casey White-Zollman
Blue Mountain Community College

ENTERPRISE, Ore. — Blue Mountain Community College's Small Business Development Center in Wallowa County is excited to announce it has added Lori Schaafsma to the team as a Business Advisor. BMCC operates a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) out of Enterprise to serve the Wallowa County region.

With a background in retail sales, banking operations training and development, and family ranching and farming, Schaafsma looks forward to bringing the skills, experience and abilities to assist small business in Wallowa County. She plans to help her clients navigate the process of creating a business plan to maintain the focus of why they started the business in the first place. She helps business owners "own" their financials by giving them a clear and easy understanding of the various numbers that reflect the pulse of their business.

"We all have certain fears associated with owning and operating a business," Schaafsma said.



Contributed photo
Blue Mountain Community College's Small Business Development Center in Wallowa County has added Lori Schaafsma to the team as a Business Advisor.

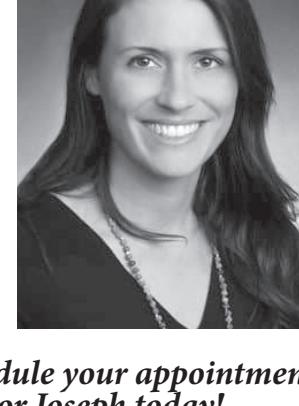
"Having focus and understanding your business finances are the keys to the path of success. Small businesses are the super heroes of our communities. They come to the rescue to fill a need and provide services at all sorts of levels, while creating jobs to build our local economies. I am part of an awesome team of guides that help small business super heroes build and maintain the foundation of their path to success."

To contact Schaafsma, visit her in the Wallowa Resources building in Enterprise, 401 NE 1st St., Ste. 13, call 541-278-5833, or email sbdc@bluecc.edu.

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Edelweiss Inn's future uncertain

Inn needs much while owners busy with tram

By Bill Bradshaw
Wallowa County Chieftain

It was the end of an era, this year, when Alpenfest had to move from its 40-year venue of the Edelweiss Inn to tents pitched at the Wallowa Lake State Park marina.

"It wasn't condemned or anything, despite rumors," Edelweiss co-owner Mike Lockhart said. "It just wasn't in a condition to be used for events."

He said the building's roof is its biggest problem. Indeed, on Thursday, Oct. 3, one could see several places where melting snow was dripping inside.

"We've been fighting that for over 15 years," Lockhart said.

He estimated it would be cost-prohibitive to refurbish the century-old structure.

"It'd be well into the seven digits," he said.

Chuck Anderson, the alpenmeister of Alpenfest, said it was sad that the festival wouldn't be able to return to the inn. The organization would plan to use tents again next year.

"We're not planning to go back," Anderson said. "We appreciate that it was available to us for 40 years," noting that Alpenfest always had use of the building for



Edelweiss Inn co-owner Mike Lockhart stands outside the dilapidated-looking, century-old, former home of the Oregon Alpenfest on Thursday, Oct. 2, a week after Alpenfest moved to a new location. He and his partner are unsure of the building's future, but it's unlikely they'll go to the expense of refurbishing it.

Prohibition was implemented early in 1920, that fell through. With a solid wood floor and wide-open interior, the building was used as a roller-skating rink, a place for dances and receptions, and has largely sat idle for decades other than for occasional events.

"When we acquired the tram in 1984, it wasn't in great shape then," Lockhart said of the inn. "It never generated enough income to keep it going," he said.

Right now, Lockhart and Whittemore are focused on upgrading the Wallowa Lake Tramway, now that it's

shut down for the season. They're refurbishing it for next year; their crews adding new windows, fabric and seats to the tram cars; painting all 25 towers that hold nearly 2 miles of cable that are pulled by a 150 hp electric motor on the 3,800-foot rise to the summit of Mount Howard.

But Lockhart doesn't really want to see the historic building torn down or scrapped.

"I've had lots of people calling in and wanting to salvage the stuff from the building, but we're not interested in that," Lockhart said.

Wurstwagen gives taste of Alpenfest all year long

Mobile brat concession raises funds for event

By Bill Bradshaw
Wallowa County Chieftain

With the 2019 Oregon Alpenfest in the history books, it's time to begin raising money for the 2020 event. One of the chief fundraisers is Alpenmeister Chuck Anderson's Wurstwagen.

"All summer long, we sell bratwursts, mostly in downtown Joseph on Saturdays as a fundraiser for Alpenfest," Anderson said. "Then, when there are special events like the car shows or a music festival, sometimes we go to those because obviously there's going to be more traffic."



Alpenfest Alpenmeister Chuck Anderson stands alongside his Wurstwagen, which sells bratwursts at special events about 60 days a year to raise money for the annual Oregon Alpenfest.

He estimated the Wurstwagen is open about 60 days a year, staffed by Anderson, his wife and Alpenfest volunteers.

The menu is limited, but quite in keeping with Alpenfest. Bratwursts at the wagon sell for \$6 for the sandwich.

The Wurstwagen's history coincides with the modern Alpenfest. It is a bit of a reincarnation of a soda-and-bratwurst concession operated by some of the founders of the original Alpenfest, Joe and Rita Ehrler, who still live in Joseph. They spoke highly of Anderson's operation and his efforts at the renewed Alpenfest.

"Chuck does a wonderful job," Rita Ehrler said.

Anderson revived Alpenfest, and along with it, the Wurstwagen, in 2012. "We started borrowing a Coca-Cola trailer or Pepsi trailer from the distributors in La Grande and we would sell bratwurst out of them," Anderson said. "Then, three years ago, I noticed that this concession cart was for sale near Ontario, Ore. It was a shaved ice concession, painted a light blue color.

The family that owned it decided they didn't want to do shaved ice anymore. My wife, Carmen, and I made an offer. Although it was less

than what they were asking, we considered the difference to be a donation to Alpenfest. So, they got a little bit of a tax deduction from that."

But a blue color and shaved ice hardly went with Alpenfest.

A member of the Alpenfest board of directors, Calina Ide, had experience painting stage sets. Ide and her mother painted it red, with little flowers and a hand-painted sign. It looked a lot more Bavarian.

Anderson finds the wagon a profitable venture. He said they usually raise about \$3,000 gross each year, half of which goes to Alpenfest after covering their costs.

He said the materials used are all procured locally. The brats come from the Hines Meat Co. in La Grande.

The sauerkraut comes from the grocery store in Joseph. They make it right there with their special recipe. The buns and condiments come from the Dollar Stretcher.

Anderson values the idea of everything going back into the community.

"You bet, that's what we're here for, to support the community," he said. "We calculate that with all the people who come to town for Alpenfest, we contribute about \$150,000 each year at the end of the tourist season to the local economy."

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The residents and staff of Wallowa Valley Senior Living would like to recognize Lyn Moffit for her contribution to our success. Lyn's positive attitude and welcoming smile brightens everyone's day. She continues to be a strong role model always striving for excellence and building positive relationships with not only her co-workers but all of our residents.

Thank you Lyn!

If you are interested in exploring rewarding career options in Wallowa County and have qualities similar to Lyn, please call 541.426.5311 to schedule an interview