

# Wallowa woman grateful she moved back

Bethany Jones first moved to Wallowa when she was 3½ years old. After graduating from Wallowa High School, she moved away for awhile and then came back eight years ago. She now lives in Wallowa with her 10-year-old daughter and is engaged to be married to Frank Meyers. She handles the billing for Alpine Chiropractic in Enterprise.



Bethany Jones

## Wallowa County VOICES

By Bill Bradshaw

### What's the best thing or place in Wallowa County?

I love lots of things about this county. You can't go wrong with all the wilderness areas. There's so much diversity here, whether you're looking for the mountains or the canyons or the lakes or the rivers, you're going to find it, and

it's a really short drive. The scenery is amazing.

### What's the greatest challenge facing the county?

I think to carve out a living here is challenging at times, but well worth it. You could go somewhere else and make more money, but it wouldn't be as fun.

### What can people do to make Wallowa County a better place for us all?

Just to spread kindness. I think that's a great ideology.

What have you learned from living in Wallowa County?

I don't know. I learn things every day. Since you came back, what did you learn about the county by living away from it?

I love the people here. I love how quiet and slow everything is. It's not fast. It's not crazy. You don't have all the crime and things that go on in other places. I love raising my daughter here. It's just a wonderful place to live and I'm so glad I came back every day.

### What's your advice for people who are thinking about moving here?

If they want a quiet, enjoyable, beautiful place to raise their families, this is it.

## Firewise: Neighbors in Lostine Canyon getting informed on wildfire prevention

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Firewise Committee. On Friday, Oct. 11, at the Lostine Wildlife Area the Firewise groups and Commissioner Susan Roberts met to dedicate signs along the road recognizing the Firewise community. Roberts expressed hopes that Lostine's actions will be an example to other communities in the county.

"Hopefully, your accomplishment will serve to inspire other communities to take important and necessary steps to improve their protection from the potentially catastrophic risks of wildfire," Roberts said.

Eng emphasized the necessity of the program.

"We live in an extreme fire-risk area and we have to learn to adapt to that," he said. "There's not much we can do about changing the weather, changing the terrain, changing the land ownership and some of the ways it's managed."



Bill Bradshaw

The Lostine Wildlife Area was the site of a dedication ceremony Friday, Oct. 11, for the Lostine Canyon Firewise Community sign recognizing area residents' interest in making efforts to safeguard their area against an inevitable wildfire.

Lostine Canyon residents interested in establishing a Firewise Community conducted their initial meeting in April 2018. Since then,

neighbors in the Lostine Canyon have been working on becoming better informed about how to prevent wildfire from destroying their

homes and their community, how to respond in the inevitable event of a wildfire in the Lostine Canyon and how to recover after a wildfire passes through their community. Residents have been creating "firesafe" perimeters around their homes, removing closely spaced and insect-damaged trees, trimming low-hanging branches and chipping. They have taken advantage of offers by foresters Tim Cudmore and Eric Carlson, of the ODF, to help identify diseased and insect-infested trees to help reduce fuel loads around their homes, while also preserving privacy and wildlife habitat.

They have also taken advantage of free exterior home inspections by one of their neighbors, Gary Willis, a former Hood River fire chief, to learn what they can do to better fireproof the exterior of their homes.

"Being informed that you live in an area with an 'extreme' fire risk, it shifts

your thinking from, 'I'll reduce my fuel load one of these years to I need to do it this year,'" canyon resident Fred Brockman said.

Oregon Department of Forestry forester Matt Howard emphasized the inevitability of another wildfire in the area.

"I don't know if it's ironic or what, but we're standing in a fire spot from about 50 years ago," he said. "It started down in the flat here and with the north wind went up the canyon. So that's within this generation. The fact that you folks were collective enough and had enough gumption to stick with it through this process

to become nationally recognized, it's a very big deal. It's something, I think, you should be very proud of."

Howard hopes the Lostine community will serve as an example for others in the county. He expects the ODF and Wallowa Resources can begin work in the spring organizing more such communities at such places as Wallowa Lake and Hurricane Creek.

"You folks are a model for other communities in the future and your collective experiences here are going to help other communities decide whether they want to pursue being Firewise-recognized or not," he said.

## Training: Workshop for officers seeks to fill the gaps

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create a map for our community that shows where to go for certain services and who is the contact for each organization.

Police Chief Joel Fish Jr. and Officers Jacob Curtis, Cody Billman and George Kohlhepp were certified as having completed the CIT course.

Eilene Flory, a crisis intervention coordinator for the institute, said it was impressive that 100% of the Enterprise Police Department has received CIT certification, even though there are just four officers.

"It's still 100%," she said.

She noted that the statewide average is 33%.

Tosca Rawls, public relations and development director for the Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness, called the EPD's certification "a great accomplishment and partnership within our community."

Sequential Intercept Mapping is a nationwide effort to address the over-representation of adults with mental illnesses in the criminal justice system. During the process, community stakeholders identify service and policy gaps and opportunities to address the needs of this target population, according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health website.

"As we go through your community's resources, we identify your community's resources and gaps, and oftentimes in the mapping between law enforcement and mental health it is brought up that there's a gap between the two agencies," Flory said. "Sometimes it's just an understanding of what law enforcement can do, to take somebody under custody because of a mental health issue or law enforcement not understanding what mental health can do."

Rebecca Frolander, the district attorney for Wallowa County, was one of the attendees at the workshop and offered input on some of the gaps in the legal system here.

"Generally, people with severe mental health issues shouldn't be in the criminal justice system," she said.

Attendees discussed options, such as a diversion to ensure offenders cooperate with health care providers to ensure they're taking their medicines.

"The spectrum of behavioral health is quite large," she said. "Depending whether they are able to understand what is required of them. People who've committed low-level misdemeanors, maybe they've just stopped taking their meds. We can do a low-level diversion to force them to restart their meds."

Since SIM is an attempt

to divert those with mental health issues from the criminal justice system, alternatives are necessary.

"If it's appropriate, we want to divert someone from the criminal justice system," Flory said. "Our goal is to help identify where the gaps are and where we can help intercept that person from going into the jail. Looking for what kind of resources are out there to help divert them because we have found that jail is not necessarily the best place for them. But it also doesn't give you a get-out-of-jail-free card. If you're a danger to yourself or to other people and if it's needed to keep the community safe, we need to put you in jail."

Wallowa County does have a mobile crisis team that works with police and there is a one-bed mental health holding room at Wallowa Memorial Hospital.

"It's awesome that you guys have a state-certified holding room because in a lot of places we work with in eastern Oregon the hospitals are little and they don't have a holding room," she said.

Frolander said she understood the Center for Wellness was to create a roadmap to fill gaps to find a better means of helping those with behavioral issues.

"We're very early in that process," Frolander said.

**Athlete of the Week**  
**Zeb Ramsden**  
 This week's athlete of the week honor goes to Wallowa Cougars football player, Zeb Ramsden. The WHS junior poses a dangerous threat on either side of the ball as he proved in the Cougs' 74-6 massacre of the Pine Eagle Spartans last Friday. Ramsden bagged one tackle with five assists and snagged an interception while haunting the defensive side and on offense raced for 137 yards on 10 touches and hit pay dirt twice. Receiving saw Ramsden with four receptions for 54 yards and another TD.  
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