

THE WEEK  
IN PHOTOS  
The Back Page, A14

# WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



136th Year, No. 45

WINNER OF THE 2020 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

## Wallowa County Voices



Caitlin Rushlow  
Enterprise

### Ph.D. work brought her here

ENTERPRISE — Caitlin Rushlow first moved to Wallowa County when she settled in Joseph in 2017. A year and a half ago, she and her partner purchased a house on Alder Slope and call that home.

Her family being in southwestern Michigan, she was working on her Ph.D. in hydrology at Idaho State University in Pocatello, when she learned of Wallowa County.

"I decided I needed something to help break up the big chunks of writing so I came here to work for Beth Gibans at Backyard Gardens," (in Joseph and with the farmers market) she said. "So, I got to spend about half my time working outside and serving the community and about half my time finishing my research. It was a really good mix for me."

She now uses her degree as a technical writer for Wallowa County for its natural resource management plan and other ventures.

"I definitely fell in love with the area and found there was good work for me here," she said.

Rushlow recently shared her thoughts on living in Wallowa County.

#### What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

The diversity of the landscape. I just got through running on the moraine. Also, there's the mountains to ski or to go down into the canyons to fish or to hike or whatever.

#### What challenges do you believe Wallowa County faces?

There's quite a few ... I think it's become an attractive destination both for recreationists and retirees and I think we need to consider how to effectively take on that increase in population while taking care of our natural resources.

#### How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you?

I've been lucky. It hasn't affected me personally too much. I work from home and luckily none of my friends or family members have gotten sick.

#### Do you plan to get the vaccine against COVID-19 or are you hesitant as some people are?

Definitely. I can't wait to get it and take care of those around me.

#### What have you learned from living in Wallowa County?

That people are generally good people and want to take care of each other.

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

Get involved in your community and get to know your neighbors and take care of this place if you decide to call it home.

— Bill Bradshaw,  
Wallowa County Chieftain

## McQuead offered Enterprise police chief job

Former EPD officer, he's been at sheriff's office since 2008

By BILL BRADSHAW  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Wallowa County Sheriff's Deputy Kevin McQuead was offered the position of chief of police Monday, Feb. 15, during a special meeting of the Enterprise City Council, according to a press release.

This comes despite his being the husband of city Administrator Lacey McQuead, who is not

a member of the Police Committee that led the hiring process.

Kevin McQuead will replace Joel Fish, who resigned in January after winning election as Wallowa County sheriff.

According to the press release, the Police Committee reviewed city policies pertaining to the employment of relatives and any reporting of misconduct.

"As a result of the policy review, the city council does not feel any nepotism or conflict of



McQuead

interest has occurred with this hiring process or will occur as the city of Enterprise policies are followed," the release stated.

Anyone hired as police chief will report directly to the council.

The committee interviewed two candidates and decided to make a conditional offer of employment to McQuead. The deputy has served with the Wallowa County Sheriff's Office since February 2008, when he resigned as an Enterprise police officer to take the position, according to *Chieftain* files.

In other matters at Monday's special meeting, the council:

- Approved an event permit for the Circle 100 Club "Drive-By" fundraiser to be held March 18 for the Wallowa Valley Health Care Foundation.

- Increased the amount budgeted for the new sports complex by the baseball fields to \$124,050 to reflect the cost.

- Approved moving money from the city's contingency fund to help cover the cost of the engineer to prepare new improvement standards for the city.

- Approved the Information Technology Services Contract between Jay Connolly and the city, which takes effect immediately.

## HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

# GAME ON!

## Football ban lifted, practice begins

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The popping of football pads is starting up once again in Wallowa County.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown on Wednesday, Feb. 10, announced that the Oregon Health Authority's ban on outdoor contact sports will be revised, lifting for some counties the prohibition that had left teams either unable to play football at all or forced them into a passing, touch or flag-football scenario.

"School sports play an important role in fostering students' mental, emotional and physical health," Brown said in a press release. "We will proceed with caution, to ensure that teams are following health and safety precautions to protect our athletes, their families and their communities."

Schools can resume outdoor contact sports based on where their county risk level is at. In low- and moderate-risk counties, practice and games will



Ellen Morris Bishop/For the Wallowa County Chieftain

Enterprise football player Gideon Gray gets a good block as he carries the ball at the Outlaws' practice session in the high school gym on Monday, Feb. 15, 2021. Full-contact football, which had been banned by the Oregon Health Authority, was given the OK to resume on Wednesday, Feb. 10.

be allowed to resume based on forthcoming guidance from the OHA. Counties marked high and extreme risk would have to meet additional stipulations before they could return to the gridiron.

Wallowa County is currently a low-risk county, meaning the Wallowa, Enterprise and Joseph football teams all would be eligible to take the field. Teams began full-contact practice on Monday, Feb. 15.

"We're excited to be here," Wallowa head coach Matt Brock-

amp said. "The kids are excited to have the opportunity to play, for sure. We're just moving forward cautiously."

Joseph head coach Duncan Christman said the news was a "sigh of relief."

"There's (been) no real sense of competition, and there is not a solid drive to compete with anyone," he said. "Being able to have a legit contact football season, it's shaping up to be a big deal for

See Football, Page A13

## Volleyball athletes, coaches excited to be back

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — On the volleyball court, there is a lot of excitement — and a little shock — that a season is going to happen.

"I didn't really expect it. More for Eastern Oregon, we already had a small season," Joseph head coach Jill Hite said. "So I really wasn't expecting us to get another round, but the girls and I were super excited about it. The fact we can play again, we'll take that any time."

County teams can officially start practice Monday, Feb. 22, but already were starting to have open gyms after last week's announcement that volleyball could resume in nonextreme risk counties, such as Wallowa.

"A little bit of relief and excitement, just because this year has been everything but normal," Wallowa senior Ella Moeller said. "Being a senior, we missed out on a lot of things, including sports. To hear we have a chance to play sports again that brought a lot of excitement and maybe hope that things are getting better."

The teams already have an idea of what the season will be like after they got some action during Season 1 in the fall. The masks, sparse crowds and safety protocols will likely be in place again.

"They got a good taste of what is going to be like in the fall," said Wallowa head coach Janae Hulse. "We were able to play our normal game, with the exception of wearing face masks, and to have people to sanitize the ball and equipment. We didn't have to change rules like football. They are excited to get something competition-wise."

Enterprise head coach Lisa Farwell said she also wasn't sure if the season would take place, and is happy to see the players have the opportunity to do any activity.

"I'm excited to get to play volleyball whenever we get to play volleyball. It's just been such an odd year," she said. "We thought we were not going to be ago. ... It's just good to see them playing anything...."

See Volleyball, Page A13

## Cross-country season proceeds

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Running in the snow, should it come to that, isn't a concern for Wallowa Valley head coach Dan Moody.

What is, though, is the current limit on the number of teams who can compete in cross-country.

To date, the Oregon Health Authority has a two-team limitation in place for the sports, restricting cross-country races and meets to just duals.

"It's ridiculous. How can you do a cross-country dual meet?" Moody asked. "There is a way around it that adds a lot of work."

The Oregon School Activities Association announced last week it was moving forward with cross-country in counties that were not at extreme risk, meaning Wallowa County could resume the sport. But the current limitation does hurt what the cross-country team can do.

One option being considered, Moody said, to have a meet of sorts to stagger start times. He said if,



The Observer, File

Zac Knapp runs during a cross-country meet in 2019. Cross-country will resume in Oregon, but currently is limited to just two teams at an event.

for example, Enterprise hosted an eight-team meet, two teams could

arrive at 10 a.m. and race. When they completed their race and had departed, two others could arrive and run the same course, and so on. It would make for a longer day for those organizing the race, but could allow an option for everyone to run the same course.

"Whatever we can do, we're going to do. If it means more work on our part, it's going to be more work on our part," Moody said. "I wish we could have a regional meet (even with bigger schools). At least it would give the kids something. They like to know they are working for something."

OSAA Executive Director Peter Weber said it has been in contact with the OHA about the two-team limit.

"We did communicate our concerns with that, and I think there is a chance that can be changed," he said last week. "Until it comes out in writing, we don't know."

Wallowa Valley runner Zac Knapp said that while the two-team limit hurts, just getting races run

See Cross-country, Page A13

