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WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



137th Year, No. 2

WINNER OF THE 2020 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Wallowa County Voices



Carol Ward
Enterprise

Awaiting research before taking vaccine

ENTERPRISE — Carol Ward moved to Enterprise from Grants Pass in 2010 because her parents live in the county and have ranched near Flora since 1979.

She sells insurance for Wheatland Insurance and keeps books for Don Ward Trucking, a log truck business. Her parents, Don and Barb Ward, have recently sold their ranch and moved to town.

Ward's "significant other," Bill Hopkins, is a self-employed handyman. She has a son and three grandchildren who live in Helena, Montana.

She recently shared her thoughts about living in Wallowa County.

What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

The mountains. I get up there some, but mainly I like looking at them.

Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you?

No. Still as busy as ever.

Have you gotten the vaccine against COVID-19 or are you planning to get it?

No. I'm not sure if I'll get it. I'd like to do a little more research on it. I'm not against vaccines, but I'd like to see what happens.

Have you heard that Tuesday, April 13, the federal and state authorities came out with a warning against giving the Johnson & Johnson one-shot vaccine because of clotting issues?

I've heard of the clotting issues, but I hadn't heard of the government warning. I think vaccines are great, but I don't think there's enough research on what happens in five years. I'm kind of hesitant on that. I think I probably had it last February and I made it through.

What have you learned from living in Wallowa County?

Coming from the hustle and bustle of big cities — the Medford area is very much that way — and it's nice to have the quiet and the community where if something happens, everybody is there to help. Sometimes I wish there was a little more to do and it wasn't so hard to get out of the county to go somewhere, but that doesn't stop me.

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

You better like the cold and the snow.

— Bill Bradshaw,
Wallowa County Chieftain

Pfizer vaccine coming to Wallowa County

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Wallowa County residents who are 16 and 17 years old now have an option to get vaccinated.

Brooke Pace, communications director for Wallowa Memorial Hospital, said the hospital learned Thursday, April 15, that it will receive an allocation of 50 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. WMH has been actively working to fill slots to administer those doses on Wednesday, April 21.

These slots will only be available to the first 50 people who call," Pace told the *Chieftain* Friday. "We are hopeful we'll be able to receive (more) allocations of Pfizer, (but) we haven't been promised anymore at this time."

Wallowa County had not yet been able to administer the Pfizer vaccine because of ultra-cold storage requirements. Pace said the hospital has been able to work with Grande Ronde Hospital in La Grande, which has the ability to meet those requirements, and will transfer the vaccine from La

Grande to Enterprise. It is only good for six hours once removed from its ultra-cold source.

The Pfizer vaccine has a couple main differences from the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine that 1,000s of Wallowa County residents have received. It has been approved for individuals as young as 16, while the Moderna vaccine was approved for those as young as 18. There also is a shorter wait time between first and second shots with the Pfizer vaccine — 21 days, as opposed to 28 days for Moderna. Parents who wish to have their

16- or 17-year-old vaccinated can contact the hospital at 541-426-5437 to set up an appointment. The Wallowa County Health Care District website, wchcd.org, has a link to information about Pfizer's emergency use authorization, as well as a parental consent form.

"Also on that page is a link to the Oregon Health Authority's FAQ regarding vaccinations of 16 and 17 year olds," Pace said. "It's a really good resource."

As of Monday afternoon, about

See Vaccine, Page A15



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chi

Joseph Mayor Belinda Buswell, right, reads the resignation letter submitted by city Administrator/Recorder Larry Braden during an emergency City Council meeting Friday, April 16, 2021, at the city library. Braden cited unspecified "harassment" as his reason for resigning. City Administrative Assistant Jamie Collier takes notes at left.

Joseph's Braden resigns, citing 'harassment'

City plods on seeking replacement, preparing budget

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Citing "constant harassment from members of the current City Council," Joseph City Administrator/Recorder resigned by letter to council members read publicly Friday evening, April 16, in an emergency City Council meeting at the city library.

The type of harassment or specifically who it was from was not specified in the letter. Braden was not present at the meeting and was not available for comment.

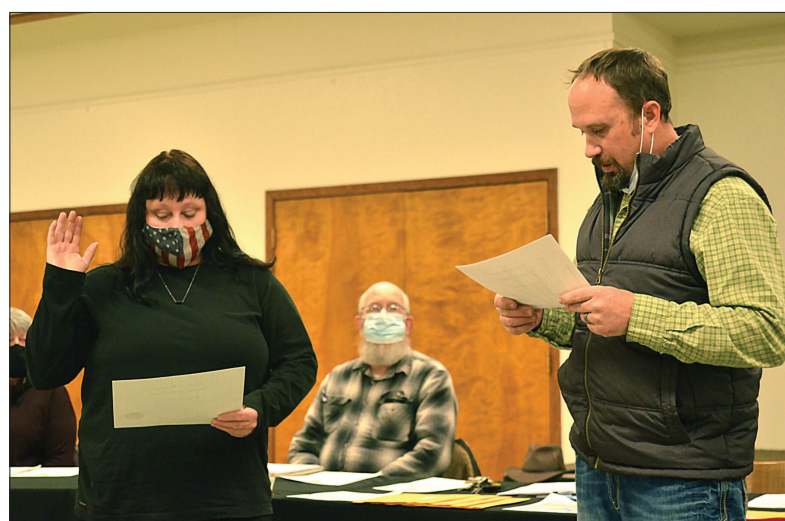
Mayor Belinda Buswell, who read Braden's letter aloud, and the council members all said they had no idea from whom the alleged harassment was coming.

The resignation comes just over two weeks after a heated exchange at the April 1 City Council meeting, during which Braden cited confusion over the role of the mayor and the city administrator, and his role in the day-to-day function of the city.

"It's very frustrating for me to do my job," Braden said in that meeting. "We currently are not compliant with the city charter. We are not compliant with the council rules and almost every single aspect of my employment contract has been violated. Doing my job in a functional, efficient manner is almost impossible right now."

Braden's departure leaves a critical hole in the staffing of the city. He served the city of Joseph for just over two years.

"Now, we are right in the middle of budget season and we need to get something in place to assist you (Administrative Assistant



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Joseph City Administrator Larry Braden, right, swears in the new Mayor Belinda Buswell, before the City Council meeting Thursday, Jan. 7, 2021, as Councilman Steve Bartlow watches. Braden resigned as city administrator Friday, April 16, 2021.

Jamie Collier) at City Hall until we can get this job posted and filled," Buswell said after reading the letter.

But the major issue may be the harassment Braden alleged. Buswell initially suggested she could be of help to Collier, having worked as city recorder until July and being familiar with many of the workings of City Hall. However, others were uncomfortable with that suggestion.

"I actually feel that given the nature of the letter, it sounds like there's some harassment from City Council members, I'm not sure that I'm comfortable with giving access," Councilwoman Lisa Collier said. "I don't feel like giving anybody that power right now. I feel like the council, we need to sit down with (city Attorney) Wyatt Baum and say, 'OK, what do we do?' Because we could play a whole bunch of different scenarios. What if we get the harasser actually in there, and then what? What kind of stuff would Larry have in

his office?"

Collier emphasized she wasn't pointing any fingers.

"I'm not blaming anybody," she said. "I feel that we have to move forward, but there's somebody or an individual on the City Council who is the reason why we don't have our city administrator. I think we need to look at that. Maybe not tonight, but I feel uncomfortable appointing people when we don't even know who we're dealing with obviously."

The council agreed to have Baum begin an investigation into the alleged harassment. Baum was not available for comment Monday.

Although she'd initially offered to help at City Hall, Buswell quickly withdrew her offer, understanding the discomfort council members expressed.

Councilors suggested reaching out to various community members, including those through-

See Braden, Page A10

CHIEF JOSEPH DAYS

Court earns awaited honors

Casidee Harrod, Brianna Micka, Destiny Wecks to share role of queen

By ELLEN MORRIS
BISHOP
For the Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — After a year marked by the cancellation of Chief Joseph Days in 2020 due to COVID-19, Chief Joseph Days officially awarded a Triple Crown of equal honors to its the Honor Court for the 75th Anniversary Chief Joseph Days.

The coronation took place Saturday, April 17, in the CJD Thunder Room.

Casidee Harrod, Brianna Micka and Destiny Wecks will share the role of queen and all other associated duties equally. The three made up the 2020 court, but were never officially crowned. Instead, they agreed to serve as a co-equal honor court, staying on as a court for the 2021 Chief Joseph Days.

They are looking forward to reigning over the rodeo and other festivities July 27 to Aug. 1 in Joseph.

"It's been really nice," Harrod said. "It's been a lot more relaxed, and a lot less stress. It's fun."

"We're really happy to do this," Micka said. "It's worked out really well and we've formed some really deep friendships."

"In normal years," Wecks said, "we'd have just finished the riding competition. We'd be stressing about, 'Did I ride hard enough? Did I speak well enough?' But today, we just got together and we were laughing and listening to music. It's been fun. We have some great memories."

While COVID-19 has reduced the number of rodeos across Oregon and the nation for 2021, the court will still represent Chief Joseph Days in a number of events, including upcoming rodeos in Asotin, Washington, April 23-25, and Riggins, Idaho, on May 1-2.

"We're going to try to go to as many rodeos as possible," Wecks said.

At the coronation ceremony, 2019 CJD Queen Rylee Wilcox joked that she had been the longest reigning queen in CJD history. Because the 2020 Rodeo was canceled, and there was no 2020 coronation, Wilcox's official title as CJD queen

See Honors, Page A15

