



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

An Idaho family enjoys a hike atop Mount Howard on Saturday, June 5, 2021, after riding the Wallowa Lake Tramway to the summit. From left are Seth and Mackenzie Bradshaw and their kids Bodhi, Knox and Quincy.

Tram:

Continued from Page A1

“Back in the day, almost the very first year, a bullwheel bearing went out and we had to evacuate three cabins,” Lockhart said.

A bullwheel is the big wheel that drives the cable, easily visible at each terminal.

The scheave wheels that support each cabin alone cost about \$1,000 each. Lockhart didn’t know the cost of the bullwheels.

“We have to keep track of our rates to keep up on this,” he said, adding that replacing the entire tramway is unlikely. “That’s probably not feasible because of the cash flow. So it’s important that we do this maintenance. We are the No. 1 attraction in Wallowa County and there’s a lot of people who factor that into when they come to Wallowa County. We’re finding that out, as will any accommodation person will tell you. It’s a common question they get asked when making reservations (for lodging). Or, the chamber could tell you that.”

Once, they had to evacuate the top because of high winds.

“It’s all about safety, from every operation we have from the lift to food service to everything else,” he said.

Evacuation is no easy task. Under the seats of each car is a cord that is used to let a rope down to the ground and passengers get into harness to be lowered to ground. Then they either walk to the terminal or, “if necessary, we bring a helicopter in,” Lockhart said.

He said the tram works with local first-responders when necessary. But such calls are rare.

“We haven’t had one in 20 years,” he said.

The only mishaps on the tram have been minor injuries suffered, such as a rider slipping upon getting into or out of one of the cabins. He said no loss/claim injuries have been filed in his time as a tram owner.

One thing that tram riders often wonder is how supplies reach the summit, particularly the Summit Grill. Outside are two large propane

tanks that would hardly fit in a cabin. Lockhart said there is a roadway up the back side of Mount Howard that comes up near Ferguson Ridge. Large items can be brought up that way. Most supplies, however, are brought up on the tram via a “boxcar” — an open, yellow car.

A road accessible only by all-terrain vehicle provides access to each of the towers that carry the cable.

Improvements made

Most of the improvements made by the current owners have been about maintenance, Lockhart said.

“Over the past three years, we’ve done some extensive remodeling,” he said, replacing parts where needed.

“We started a very aggressive maintenance program. We’ve taken every assembly off,” Lockhart said, and had a machine shop in Enterprise refurbish parts during the off-season.

“In addition to that, we’re replacing all the wheels,” he said. “Over two-thirds of those will be done this year.”

They also have made some additions to the attraction. When they bought it, there was only the terminal at the summit. Riders would go up, hike around, enjoy the view and ride back down. But the current owners poured a concrete slab, added a patio and the Summit Grill.

The grill, Lockhart said, has “Kind of a bistro menu. We don’t want people to feel they have to go someplace else to eat, so we’re pretty competitive.”

Improvements considered

The owners also are considering additions they can create. Already the tram does some catering to skiers.

“We take people up in the spring and they hike over to East Peak and do a mountaineering-type of skiing,” Lockhart said.

In the 1990s, they considered adding ski runs down the back of Mount Howard that would end near Ferguson Ridge Ski Area. However, when they did a master plan for the area — that would’ve included the ski runs — they got some local resistance. That, and the fact that an

environmental impact statement for the project would cost \$4 million — with no guarantee it would pay off — shelved the idea.

Lockhart hopes to be able to add interpretive tours of the mountaintop, including the history of the moraines, if they can find the right person to do the interpreting.

That could be happening soon,” he said. “But that’s a special person we’d have to find.”

There also has been discussion of campsites in the area, but those would depend on the markets, the economy and what the U.S. Forest Service says of the ideas, since two-thirds of the tram is on USFS land.

Local support

While the tram largely survives on tourist dollars, the owners don’t neglect the locals who support it. A planned “Business After Hours” event for Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce members is planned soon, as is a Father’s Day event for first-responders. Lockhart said they also want to honor educators and others who worked hard during the coronavirus pandemic.

“They worked extra hard here in Wallowa County, as compared with what was going on nationally,” he said of the educators. “They worked hard for our children — we put them first. There may be a few other groups, but there’s a limit as far as what we can do. We can’t ignore our businesspeople who were at risk, but at least they got some reward for their endeavors. We just feel we want to do something to say thank you.”

The future?

Lockhart has hopes for the future of the tram.

“There’s things we would like to see happen,” he said. “There’s a possibility someone besides me could think (more) about winter sports.”

But for now, they just want to keep improving what’s there.

“We’ve been going 50 years and we’d like to add a few more things,” he said. “We don’t know what the life of the lift is, so we’ll have to see.”

Marshal:

Continued from Page A1

Lifelong Wallowan

A lifelong Wallowan, Larm is the third generation to live in his house. He has five kids from his first marriage who were born while living there.

“I was born and raised here,” he said. “I spent all my life other than my four years in the service here and I really enjoy it.”

He said his father and grandfather both had long careers in Wallowa.

“My grandad used to be the section foreman for the railroad,” he said. “My dad worked as a grader at the sawmill until the mill went out in ‘61.”

When his mother died in 1963, Larm’s father worked at the school as a janitor. He died in 1973. Both parents died of heart problems, but Larm’s seems strong. But the muscle disease has changed his life unexpectedly.

“I ended up retiring a lot earlier than I’d

anticipated,” he said.

Gardener these days

These days he enjoys gardening. He raises pole beans, cabbage for sauerkraut, red beets to pickle (his wife, Anita, doesn’t like it, but her doctor recommended them), onions, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, Swiss chard and spinach.

Larm had to put up a deer fence because predators in the area have been driving the deer into town.

“It’s a heck of a note to raise your stuff and then have the deer eat it,” he said.

This year’s parade

This year’s Fourth of July Parade will be back to normal for Wallowa. Last year, during the depth of the coronavirus pandemic, the city was not allowed by the Oregon Department of Transportation to close off Highway 82 through town for the parade. But that didn’t stop feisty Wallowa. They held an impromptu parade that went down the highway, across town to

the truck route, back to the highway and around again.

This year, it’ll be the normal route starting at the football field at 2 p.m. and traveling down Highway 82 — which serves as Wallowa’s Main Street — to Storey Street, where the parade will take a left and disband.

This year won’t be Larm’s first experience in the parade. He recalls one “bad experience” when he was a child and his mom made him a clown costume — with no pockets. Someone was handing out long sticks of bubble gum.

“Someone I thought was a friend said he’d hold it,” Larm said, but then the “friend” showed his true colors.

“He didn’t give it back,” he said. “That’s one of those things that sticks in your mind.”

But he truly appreciates the meaning of Independence Day.

“I really honor the veterans and what everybody’s gone through to keep us free,” he said. “I was glad to be in the service.”

Modern Healthcare

Best Places to Work™

2020

Are you looking for a job that provides purpose in your daily life with a great starting wage and unbeatable benefits? Perhaps even an opportunity for advancement?

Check out our available job postings at www.wchcd.org/careers today.

True Value

BARGAINS OF THE MONTH®

While supplies last.

34.99

As Seen On TV My Foldaway™ Rechargeable Fan
Converts from floor to table fan. Three speeds. Included USB cable for charging. W 270 218 B6

SAVE \$5

M-F 8AM-5:30PM • SAT 8AM-5PM • SUN 9AM-3PM

Hurricane Creek Road Enterprise, Oregon 541-426-3116

WALLOWA COUNTY **GRAIN GROWERS**

BEHIND EVERY PROJECT IS A **True Value**®
Sale Ends 6/30/21

NOBLE *Fatherhood* GIVES US A GLIMPSE OF THE *Divine!*
~James E. Faust

Happy Father's Day!

To place an ad contact Jennifer Cooney TODAY!
jcooney@wallowa.com • 541-805-9630

Wallowa County **CHIEFTAIN**

209 NW First St., Enterprise • 541-426-4567 • wallowa.com

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO IT ALONE
There is strength in reaching out.

During COVID-19, we all need support. If you're struggling, there's a community that cares.

CONNECT WITH SOMEONE TODAY.

Call Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness at 541-426-4524.
Support is free and your information won't be shared.

WALLOWA VALLEY CENTER for WELLNESS
WVCENTERFORWELLNESS.ORG

in partnership with **Safe + Strong**