

Essentially no change to Wallowa County's mental health authority

Elimination of a middleman the main difference between county and state running mental health

By **RONALD BOND**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — In May, the Wallowa County commissioners voted to hand over the county's mental health authority to the state level at the Oregon Health Authority.

What does that really mean for Wallowa County? Very little, according to Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness Executive Director Chantay Jett, saying it essentially just eliminates a middleman.

"That's just it. Nothing really changes. Honestly, there is really no changes,"

she said. "It's positive. It takes out the county, who has had a big administrative burden (on) them.

"The service delivery doesn't change. The relationship with Oregon Health Authority doesn't change. And how we are held to compliance standards does not change."

In fact, Jett said what the county's basic service in being a mental health authority was to be a "holding tank" for funding to be sure the center was in compliance.

Even the communication stream with the state will not change.

"We are still reviewed in the same way. It was a pass-through of the funds having the counties be involved and having the county serve as the mental health authority," she explained. "Now it just takes out that middle person, and we are just dealing now directly with the state."

Jett explained in an email what happened when a county transfers control to the state.

"A county government that chooses not to operate or contract for a community mental health program (CMHP) is not a local mental health authority (LMHA). The term LMHA becomes moot, and OHA takes responsibility for direct oversight of the Community Mental Health Program," Jett wrote. "In this case, OHA is contracting

directly with Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness, a private nonprofit to continue functioning as the local Community Mental Health Program."

She cited Douglas, Klamath and Curry counties as having made this move in the past decade, with positive results.

"I haven't spoken with them directly, (but) we sit in a lot of state meetings together," Jett said, referencing the other counties. "I haven't heard any negative comments from them regarding contracting from OHA. This has come up in conversation, just not direct conversation. It seems to work fine."

The center assists about 900 people in Wallowa County on an annual basis, Jett said.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

THURSDAY, JUNE 17
MOMMY AND ME: MOVE & EXPLORE: 9-10 a.m. Josephy Center for Arts and Culture. Parent participation play sessions — move and explore with music, dance, song, stretching and story. Wear comfy clothes and bring a mat and water bottle. Suggested donation: \$5 per family.

SATURDAY, JUNE 19
WALLOWA COUNTY FARMERS MARKET: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Main Street in Joseph near Stein's Distillery. Crafts, produce, homemade goods and some live music will be on tap for visitors. www.wallowacountyfarmersmarket.com, 541-426-0795 or search for "Wallowa County Farmers Market" on Facebook.

TUESDAY, JUNE 22
BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP: 6 p.m. Wallowa Memorial Hospital conference room. Support, share resources, celebrate milestones and listen to speakers talk about topics relating to mastectomies and breast cancer. Everyone is welcome. Virtual link available. Preregistration required. 541-426-7919.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23 — THURSDAY, JUNE 24
IN A LANDSCAPE: CLASSICAL MUSIC IN THE WILD: 6-9 p.m. Wallowa Lake State Park. Outdoor concert featur-

ing a 9-foot Steinway grand piano on a flatbed trailer. Music is transmitted to concert-goers via wireless headphones. Bring your own lawn chairs. Tickets are required due to limited capacity. tickets@inandscape.org

THURSDAY, JUNE 24
THE NEZ PERCE STORY — A WEEKLY DISCUSSION: 1 p.m. The Josephy Center. A summer-long introduction to the wawana band of the Nez Perce Indians who made the county home for millennia before settler arrival: How did they live? When and why were they forced out? Who were Old and Young Chief Joseph? Where are the Nez Perce now? The discussions will take place on the second floor of the Josephy Center building, right next to the permanent Nez Perce display. No fees, but donations will be appreciated. For questions, call Rich at 541-432-0505.

FRIDAY, JUNE 25
WOODLANDS & WATERSHEDS FESTIVAL: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wallowa County Fairgrounds. Celebrate, play, listen and learn about what makes our little corner of Oregon a wonderful place to live. Sponsored by Wallowa Resources and Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center this family-oriented event provides opportunities for all ages to learn about our county through fun and engaging hands-on activities.

SATURDAY, JUNE 26
MOUNTAIN HIGH BRONCS & BULLS: 3-7:30 p.m. Wallowa County Fairgrounds. Big names, big close up experience and big fun. Bull riders combined with ranch saddle broncs, plus the wild horse race and mutton busting for the little ones. Free admission.

ONGOING
A.A. online meetings: oregonadistrict29.org.
Building Healthy Families: 541-426-9411.
Community Connection: 541-426-3840.
Enterprise Public Library: 541-426-3906.
Fishtrap: 541-426-3623.
Hurricane Creek Grange: 541-605-8233.
Josephy Center for Arts & Culture: 541-432-0505.
Wallowa Public Library: 541-886-4265.



June 25th - 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Pick up your free bag of activities at the following locations:

- Wallowa Library - 201 E 1st St., Wallowa, OR 97885
- Wallowa County Courthouse Gazebo - 101 S River St., Enterprise, OR 97828
- Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center - 103 N Main St., Joseph, OR 97846

We have made the hard decision to host the Woodlands & Watersheds Festival in a "TO-GO" format one more year, but we are excited for the fun bags that we get to hand out to families! On June 25th, come to one of the above locations and get your free bag of activities and goodies that you can take home with you. While you're there, sign up for our raffle to win some amazing gift baskets full of locally purchased goodies!

- Many exhibitors participating!
- Amazing raffle prizes for the family (free to enter)
- Ice cream cone gift certificates for kids (while supplies last)
- Additional virtual program with guest speakers and performances by local musicians, courtesy of OK Theatre
- Three locations for easy access!

For additional information, please contact Jessica Tomasini at jessica@wallowaresources.org. Bags are first come, first serve, one per family. Quantities are limited. Only one entry per family for the raffle.



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MASON FERRE
Mason Ferre had a huge week for Joseph as the Eagles won four times in seven days. He scored 21.25 points per game in the four wins, was the team's leading scorer three times, and highlighted his performance with a 28-point effort in the Eagles' 75-44 home win over Enterprise.

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