



Ellen Morris Bishop/For the Wallowa County Chieftain

Rachael Eschler spruces up the interior of the Harley Tucker Arena's north grandstand area with a new coat of white paint in preparation for rodeo crowds.

Volunteers:

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the head groundskeeper and also ran the head gate for timed events for many years at the Bremerton Rodeo.

"I've worked with the livestock here in the past," he said. "Then Terry (Jones) asked me if I'd drive the water truck, and of course I said 'yes.'"

Many local volunteers have rodeo in their blood. Gary Prout and his brother, Max Prout, grew up in Wallowa County. As Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, they helped clean up the rodeo stands and grounds after each show. Their uncle, Wick Prout, was president of the Chief Joseph Days Board of Directors, and was also the grand marshal in 1975.

"We never thought of not volunteering," Max said. "We don't come here to work. We just come here to have fun in the sun and the smoke."

Max Prout volunteers as rodeo grounds caretaker during the summer.

Gary Prout and his wife care for the vintage red Chief Joseph Days stagecoach and also keep and care for team of horses that pulls it. From 1886 to 1908 this stagecoach carried passengers from Elgin to Joseph, making it a part of Wallowa County history. The Prouts transport both coach and horses not only to the arena for CJD and to Joseph for the CJD Grand Parade, but also to about a dozen events around the Northwest where the CJD stagecoach appears.

Gary and Max also apply their considerable carpentry skills to maintenance of the Harley Tucker arena and other facilities. When the new bathrooms had to be completed in time for the rodeo four years ago, Gary and Max finished the job. This year the two brothers constructed a major renovation to the beer garden and spectator stands at the east end of the arena.

The complex job of organizing the big Saturday morning Grande Parade falls on volunteer Pearl Sturm's shoulders.

"I love doing it," she said. "But sometimes it gets real hard, getting everything laid out, keeping it all organized."

Strum said she expects this year's 75th Chief Joseph



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Gary Prout installs a sprinkler to help keep dust under control in the livestock pens at the east end of the Harley Tucker Arena.



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CJD director and volunteer grounds manager Mike Warner tugs a sprinkler into place to control dust in the Harley Tucker Arena on Tuesday, July 20, 2021.

Days parade to be one of the biggest — and, of course, best.

"I'm still getting entries," she said on July 19.

Always a need

There's plenty of room for more volunteers to help make next year's Chief Joseph Days another outstanding success, CJD President Terry Jones said.

"We're always looking

for people to help, including people to help with ticket sales or taking tickets at the gate, or something like that," he said.

People with special skills, whether with livestock or carpentry or other things, are always welcome, he noted.

"We all get paid the same," Jones said. "It's pretty easy to write out the paychecks for the staff when it's all over."



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Rachael Jones spruces up the livestock pens that will hold sheep for Mutton Busting and other livestock.