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LOOKING FOR A JOB? CHECK INSIDE FOR HELP

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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Wallowa County Voices



David McCullough
Enterprise

He wants to keep county's population low

ENTERPRISE — David McCullough has lived in Enterprise "much of the year," operating his business here and operating it all over the West the rest of the year.

McCullough runs Bio Resources doing wildlife surveys, permitting and "things like that all over the western U.S."

He's had the business here about 17 years.

McCullough recently shared his thoughts about living in Wallowa County.

What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

The weather, the people, the mountains, the streams; I like a lot of things about the county. I like the people a lot.

It's been 20 years since 9/11. How did it change your life?

It's a lot more difficult to ride on airplanes. It's certainly a lot more difficult to do things like that. There are a lot more wars we've been in that I think we don't need to have been in.

Are you concerned about the recent coronavirus spike?

I am. I've been concerned about it the whole time. That's why I'm wearing a mask right here. (He's been vaccinated.)

What do you think of government mandates on face masks and vaccinations?

I think it's great. I think it's awesome. We should all be vaccinated. There shouldn't be a person outside who is not vaccinated. (Government) requires vaccinations for kids in elementary schools ... and there aren't a lot of complaints about that.

As summer nears end, what was your favorite experience?

Hiking in the mountains.

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

Don't. Stay away. It's a beautiful place, but when you get too many people, it starts turning into something else. I don't want to sound like someone who says "Stay off my lawn," or now that I've got what I want, you don't get anything, but the more people there are it stops being what it was.

Chief Joseph Days court for 2022 named

Queen will be determined in the spring

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Three young Wallowa County girls were selected and introduced as the 2022 Chief Joseph Days court Sunday, Sept. 19.

Bailey Vernam, Mia Salerno and Maggie Zacharias will compete in the spring to see who is queen and who are the princesses for next year's Chief Joseph Days Rodeo. Their applications were reviewed

and they were interviewed to get this far. They said they'll do more interviews, public speaking, sell tickets — and display their skills as horsewomen in the spring before the queen is selected.

Vernam is the daughter of Shannon Vernam of Enterprise. She has previous rodeo royalty experience as the queen of the Elgin Stampede, she said.

Zacharias, the daughter of Luke and Merilee Zacharias of Joseph, was a princess for the Elgin Stampede.

Salerno, the daughter of Damian and Kristan Salerno of Joseph, is in her first experience as a mem-

ber of a rodeo court. "I'm brand new," she said.

The three were introduced during a thank-you dinner for volunteers who helped at this year's 75th anniversary Chief Joseph Days, which ran July 27-Aug. 1. The dinner was held at the Thunder Room of the rodeo grounds.

A farewell was made to the outgoing court of Casidee Harrod, Brianna Micka and Destiny Weeks. They served the unique function of two years on the court — all as queens — since last year's Chief Joseph Days was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
The Chief Joseph Days court for 2022 was introduced Sunday, Sept. 19, 2021. They are, from left, Bailey Vernam, Mia Salerno and Maggie Zacharias. The queen will be determined in the spring.

Next year's Chief Joseph Days will be July 26-31. The new court expects to serve just the usual one-year term. "Unless something crazy happens," Zacharias said.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Tim Melville, of Enterprise's Cornerstone Farms, drives a combine harvesting spelt Monday, Sept. 13, 2021, as Rabbi David rides along to ensure nothing that isn't kosher gets caught up in the harvest.

Hasidim find quality wheat for matzah; beautiful scenery in Wallowa County

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Why is this wheat different from all other wheat?

Because it can be made into matzah, the thin, crisp unleavened bread, traditionally eaten by Jewish people during the Passover seder — when a child will ask the first of four traditional questions from the Haggadah, — "Why is this night different than all other nights?" The answer is that it was the night the God had the angel of death "pass over" the homes of the ancient Israelites while they were still in bondage



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Kevin Melville, of Cornerstone Farms near Enterprise, left, and Samuel Porgesz, a kosher bakery manager from Brooklyn, New York, examine recently harvested spelt Monday, Sept. 13, 2021.

in Egypt. Since at least 2008, Orthodox Hasidic Jews from Brooklyn, New York, have traveled to Wallowa County to inspect and pur-

chase wheat — and this year, spelt — from Cornerstone Farms Joint Venture, one of the largest grain producers in the county operated by Tim and Audry Melville and their sons, Kevin and Kurt.

Samuel Porgesz, the manager of a kosher bakery in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, said the Hasidim have meticulous requirements to make sure the wheat they use is absolutely kosher for Passover under Jewish dietary laws.

"The kosher law is that whenever we start the harvest, it has to be under rabbinical supervision,"

Porgesz said. "Before we start the harvest, we make sure all the combines and all this equipment are clean of any previous grains. We want to make sure it's not contaminated with any other grains. The second it's harvested, it's always going to be under rabbinical supervision."

He's not a rabbi, but he knows what the rabbis will be looking for and makes sure conditions are ripe for their approval.

"I know the rules of what's supposed to be done," he said. "The rabbis inspect the grain before

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Manufacturing, hospitality among worst-hit industries

Editor's Note: This is the third in a five-part series by EO Media Group looking at the issue of the lack of workers for jobs in Central and Eastern Oregon — why workers are not returning to previously held jobs and how businesses are pivoting to function without being fully staffed.

By **JAYSON JACOBY, SAMANTHA O'CONNOR and ALEX WITWER**
EO Media Group

BAKER CITY — Tyler Brown's family owns one restaurant in Baker

Worker Shortage



THIRD IN A 5-PART SERIES

City that hasn't served a meal since before the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in Baker County.

But the Browns' challenges to keep enough workers to run their two other restaurants are so daunting that they can't begin to plan the reopening

of the closed business.

That's the Sumpter Junction restaurant, off Campbell Street near Interstate 84. The Browns closed the restaurant in March 2020. Inside rest the memories of customers who once frequented the restaurant, told quietly by a single butter knife resting on the edge of a booth table.

A newsstand is stacked high with Baker City Herald issues blaring the headline "Coronavirus Closures." They're dated March 14, 2020. It was three days before Gov. Kate Brown banned dining inside restaurants. It was the last paper delivered to

Sumpter Junction.

During much of the rest of that year, and continuing into 2021, the number of customers at Baker County's various restaurants was limited due to the county's COVID-19 risk level.

Those restrictions meant it wasn't feasible to reopen Sumpter Junction, Tyler Brown said.

Risk levels and restaurant limits ended June 30, but Brown said it remains a struggle to keep a sufficient workforce to operate Barley Brown's Brew Pub and Tap House, separate establishments, both owned by the family's Windmill Enterprises LLC, on Main

Street in downtown Baker City.

In fact, Brown said the situation has worsened in the past month or so since the governor required people to wear masks in most public indoor settings, including restaurants.

Brown said he has lost a couple employees who simply refuse to continue working while required to wear a mask throughout their shift.

"I know it's frustrating for everyone," he said.

Wearing masks isn't the only thing that discourages workers, Brown said.

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