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## Wallowa County Voices



**Amy Meredith**  
Enterprise

### Don't bring stoplights to county

ENTERPRISE — Amy Meredith moved to Enterprise in January 2015, brought here by "a relationship."

She moved here from Boise, Idaho, where she'd lived for 28 years after living in other cities in Oregon and Washington state, including Elgin and La Grande.

"As a kid, my parents moved quite a bit," she said. "I graduated from high school in Idaho and stayed put."

She works as a certified public accountant in a small practice here doing payroll and tax returns for local contractors.

She recently shared her thoughts about living in Wallowa County.

#### What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

No stoplights — not a one in the whole, entire county is our claim to fame. Going back to Boise now, and Wallowa County's a lot more peaceful. Going into Boise and you can just feel your blood pressure going up. It's peaceful here.

#### What are you looking forward to in 2022?

A trip to Kauai (a Hawaiian island) and I hope for COVID being over. I hope for no more variants and that COVID just comes to an end.

#### Did you make a New Year's resolution?

Not this year. I like to joke that when you're pretty close to perfect, there's no reason. Honestly, I quit smoking and quit vaping in 2021, so that covered me for the new year.

#### Have you broken it yet?

It's four months and counting and I'm still going strong.

#### What do you think of the return of the Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race?

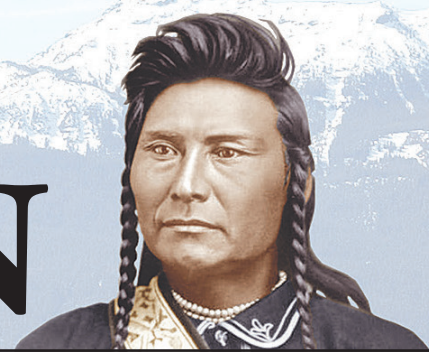
We helped on that two years ago and I'm happy to see it come back. This time of year, I get busy (as a CPA), I have my head down and don't notice. We were involved running stuff into the camp two years ago and might do it again if they call on us.

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

If you come to a place because you love it, don't change it. ... We don't have this and we don't have that, but don't come here and expect that's going to change. And don't bring stoplights.

— Bill Bradshaw  
Wallowa County Chieftain

# WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



## Andersons gear up for ECX

### Morgan Anderson set to run sixth race, while her father gets on the sled for a second time

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Both Morgan and Craig Anderson are set for another run at the Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race, which returns at noon Thursday, Jan. 20, after a year away due to COVID-19.

"It's so nice. I've done no other big race yet (besides the ECX, but) it's definitely one of my favorite races to go to," said Morgan Anderson, an Enterprise High School graduate.

Though just 22, Anderson is already a veteran when it comes to running the Extreme. This will be her sixth time competing in the ECX, and her second time taking to the path in the 200-mile race, the longest and most grueling of the four to be run this weekend.

"I did the junior race my first year, then the 31-mile race three times, then the 200 and now the 200 again," she said. "I kind of skipped the 100. Someone offered me the dogs and I said, 'Why not?'"

#### Getting ready

The younger Anderson has spent most of the last five months training in Pinedale, Wyoming, training for the race with fellow ECX racer and family friend Clayton Perry. In fact, most of the dogs she'll be running with in the race this week belong to Perry.

"At this point, we've been training dogs since the beginning of September," she said.

Getting the dogs' endurance built up for a 200-mile race starts before there is snow on the ground. Anderson said at the beginning of training season, rather than a sled, they used teams of 16 dogs and would pull an ATV four-wheeler.

"We would go five miles," she said. "We call four-wheeler training the weight training. It's off and in neutral, or a lower gear."



Wallowa County Chieftain, File  
**Morgan Anderson and her 12-dog team start the 200-mile race of the 2020 Eagle Cap Extreme. The race returns this week after a year's hiatus due to COVID-19.**



Contributed Photo  
**Craig Anderson, left, and his daughter, Morgan Anderson, will both compete in the Eagle Cap Extreme this week.**

The early stages are not run at a high speed, with Anderson saying they would go about 5-8 mph.

"Once snow hits, we can start getting more distance and more speed going," she said.

Top speed, she noted, is about 16 mph. It's a pace Anderson's group will maintain for short stretches, with the average closer to 8-10 mph.

The heavy training days are long, for racers and dogs alike. Late last week, Anderson

and Perry went on about an 85-mile training run. They took off at about 11 a.m., ran until about 7 p.m. rested until about midnight, then finished the final stretch, getting back about 4:30 a.m.

The training days are wearing, but Anderson had a team largely of younger racing dogs — seven of them are "puppies" that are about 1½ years old — and their energy does rub off.

"As soon as we started getting them dressed," they're excited, she said. "They are always way more hyped than I am."

#### A family affair

Meanwhile, her father, Craig, will be running in the ECX for the second time. He said he entertained thoughts of running the 100-mile race, but settled for the 31-mile race, which was the distance he ran previously.

A combination of items resulted in Craig competing — previously volunteering for the race, acquiring more sled dogs, the proximity of the race to his hometown of Enterprise and his daughter racing among the reasons.

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## Elected officials assess position

By BILL BRADSHAW  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Government leaders are generally upbeat as 2022 presents new opportunities, although some of them are a bit daunting for Wallowa County and its four incorporated cities.

#### The county

One of the biggest issues the county commissioners and mayors mentioned was affordable housing.

"Decent, long-term and available housing is probably the biggest issue facing the county in the next year or so," said Susan Roberts, chairwoman of the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Todd Nash agreed, saying he wants to improve the "extremely low workforce housing inventory."

Commissioner John Hillock also agreed about the housing problem, saying it is a "statewide problem."

Nash said the county is a mixed bag in some areas.

"We boast the highest high school graduation rate in the state, one of the lowest violent crime rates in Oregon and we have extremely high-quality

health care and health care facilities," he said.

But there are areas where life in the county can be improved.

Nash said that 45% of county residents live with household incomes below the poverty level and that school-age and young-adult demographics remain very low. He also wants to see value added to the county's natural resource-based economy.

A cattleman who largely deals with natural resource issues on the board, he wants to see both the timber and cattle industries improved.

"I hope to align goals with the Forest Service and establish long-term sustainable timber harvest and reauthorization of vacant/closed grazing allotments," he said.

Roberts agreed, saying the county isn't doing as well in those areas as it once was.

"We are not thriving as well as we were prior to changes in federal forest policies 30 years ago but the community has been working to fill that gap," she said. "It is a bit more difficult to entice firms to the end of the road in a frontier county. However, we are blessed in that we have many people here who keep trying."

Other issues Roberts said she hopes to see addressed include the codification of county ordinances, orders and resolutions and make them searchable for the public; update the county's internal policies; and improve broadband connectivity.

"There's lots of administrative work to get done," Roberts said. "I have made a list."

Hillock sees going ahead with

renovating the Wallowa Lake Dam as a major project, now that funding has been secured. He also said that since the county has a new asphalt plant, he hopes to see additional paving and patching projects funded by federal dollars as they become available.

A business owner himself, Hillock was positive about the economy.

"The county economy, in general, has been good; construction is up, tourism is up," he said. "Ag was mixed with the hot weather cutting yields and the cattle market continues to struggle. My fears are that rampant inflation will raise costs for construction materials, lumber products, fuel and fertilizer. These increases in costs could cost us jobs and reduce the amount of work that can happen at our school remodels."

But it's not all bad, he said.

"On the flip side, we are a community of resilient individuals, and we will survive," he said.

The commissioners agreed that, for the most part, the county has done a good job handling the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but that has been somewhat hindered by higher levels of government.

"There are confusing rules, mandates, regulations, etc., that make handling the disease and its variants difficult, but the county medical teams and emergency staff did an excellent job maintaining the health of the community," Roberts said.

"The county handled COVID-19 well," Nash added. "Businesses went out of their way to

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## Warnock replaced at Dean Oregon Ranches

By BILL BRADSHAW  
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA COUNTY — A new ranch manager for the Bob Dean Oregon Ranches in the Upper Imnaha area has arrived in the county, as the outgoing manager B.J. Warnock has submitted his resignation notice, according to Sheriff Joel Fish and Warnock.

Fish said in an email Friday, Jan. 14, that his department's criminal investigation into possible animal neglect is continuing.

"I am interviewing all those involved and/or collecting statements," Fish said. "This will take time as I have many other duties and am short staffed."

Warnock said in an email earlier this month that "When we began gathering (cattle) in September, there were 1,613 mother cows on summer range."

He acknowledged bovine casualties during the recovery efforts, even though he and his crew were assisted by neighboring ranchers.

"Despite the efforts of our crew and the community, 10 cows have been found unrecoverable," he said, adding that "1,548 Dean Oregon Ranches mother cows were successfully gathered by Dean Oregon Ranches crew before the snow. After the snow, 34 mother cows have been gathered through the joint efforts of our crew and the community. Of those, 26 were

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