

Race Central brings course home to public

Progress tracked via GPS to the race website

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The centuries-old practice of using dog sleds for transport in snow-covered terrain has met the 21st century at Race Central for the Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race at Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise.

Starting Thursday, Jan. 20, as the race kicked off at Ferguson Ridge Ski Area east of Joseph, racers equipped with Global Positioning System trackers relayed their progress back to Race Central and from there to the race website at <https://www.eaglecapextreme.com>.

“We’ll be able to watch them — it’s updated every 10 minutes — and we’ll be able to see where the mushers (are) on the course,” said volunteer Sherry Murphy, pointing out the computer screens set up at the Cloverleaf.

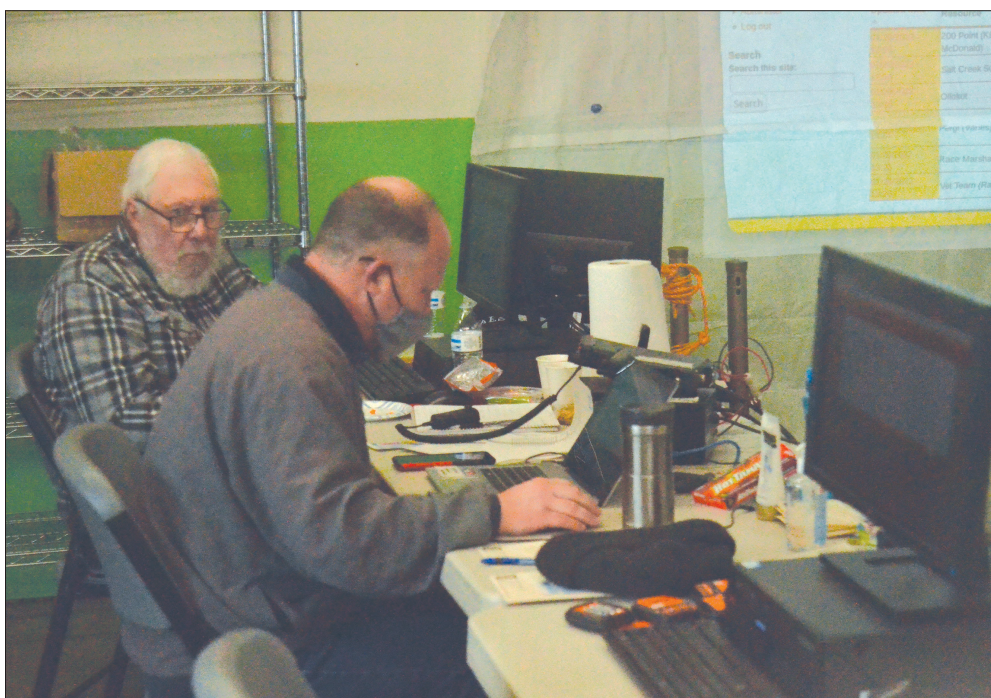
She was one of six who were there to greet anyone interested.

“We’re here to provide information for mushers’ families, the public, our volunteers and for anybody who’s interested in getting some information on the race,” she said.

In the back room — the communications room — was a more technical setup where volunteers kept in radio contact with other volunteers and tracked the mushers’ GPS signals. Communications volunteers Dave Sanford and Michael Abernathy were so busy with their jobs they didn’t have time to speak.

Murphy said some of the information the public can see at Race Central includes live videos of the Ollokot Campsite, including a rest tent.

“The 100s and 200s are required to spend a 6-hour time resting themselves and their dogs before they con-



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Dave Sanford, left, and Michael Abernathy keep track of the mushers’ progress at Race Central at the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise on Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022, just after the start of the Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
A televised view of Camp Ollokot where mushers and their teams rest is seen on a computer screen at Race Central at the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise on Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022.

tinue on their journey or start back,” she said. “People can get an idea of what it actually looks like up there. We have a crew who stays up there to provide meals and checks on the dogs to make sure that everything is going perfectly OK and check their feet and their breathing and all of that kind of stuff.”

The progress that the communications crew

tracked was displayed on the race website, volunteer Paige Sully said.

Murphy said this year’s race — after having to cancel last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic — was short on volunteers. In addition to the six in the front room selling souvenirs and showing the view screens of live action on the course, four were at work in

the communications room. Of course, they would rotate with others during the course of the race, which was to conclude Saturday.

“We’re short out in the field, at the safety checks and the checkpoints and on the snowmobiles,” Murphy said. “All of those things are needed to keep the race safe. We’re just very short (on volunteers.)”

IN BRIEF

Groundhog Day Dinner to fund scholarships

ENTERPRISE — A Groundhog Day Dinner will be hosted by the Wallowa County Fair Board on Wednesday, Feb. 2, followed by Bingo, according to a press release.

The combined event, which will be held at the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise, is a fundraiser for scholarships the fair board awards.

Dinner of pancakes and sausage will begin at 5:30 p.m. Bingo starts at 6:30 p.m.

The dinner is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 10 years old and younger.

To learn more, contact Annett Conner, fair office manager, at 541-426-4097 or by email at wallowacountyfair@gmail.com.

Trice to give virtual Maxville presentation

JOSEPH — Gwendoline Trice, founder and executive director of the Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center in Joseph, will give a virtual presentation on Maxville from 6-7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 3.

According to a press release, Trice will discuss the history of the Maxville — a former logging town north of Wallowa — the current work of the interpretive center in Joseph and the future expansion and planned purchase of the 240 acres that includes the original Maxville city township.



Trice

Register for the free event

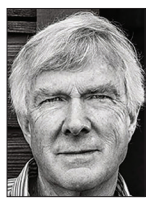
at <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/>.

The event will be hosted by the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture and Beyond Toxics.

Brown Bag hosts John Frohnmayer on philosophy, sport

JOSEPH — John Frohnmayer, one of Wallowa County’s newest residents, will discuss his passions — philosophy and sport — at noon Tuesday, Feb. 1.

The retired attorney and former chairman of Oregon Humanities and a director of the National Endowment for the Arts, has written a book about skiing, rowing and golf and some aspect of philosophy.



Frohnmayer

In COVID times, the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture has produced its always-popular Brown Bag programs on art, culture and community via Zoom. The

events are still free for all participants, and include the opportunity to question and talk with the presenters.

For more information go to the josephy.org web page, or call Rich Wandschneider at the center, 541-432-0505.

Wallowa County population still increasing

WALLOWA COUNTY — Wallowa County’s population had a growth rate during the last year that put it in the middle third of the state’s counties, according to a Portland State University report.

The state’s population increased by 0.54% to 4,266,560, PSU’s Population Research Center showed. Eastern Oregon counties, including Wallowa, had a combined increase of 0.45%. The eight counties — Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa — had a combined population as of July 1, 2021, of 190,444.

In Wallowa County, the

increase was 0.43%, or 32 people, to a total of 7,433. Its growth rate was fifth among the eight counties, and overall was 22nd in the state.

Neighboring Union County had the lowest growth rate in the state, as it actually saw a population drop of 1.62%, or 434 people.

Broken down by city, Enterprise has a population of 2,080. Joseph’s population has moved to 1,158, and Wallowa is at 799. Lostine, the only other city named in the study, has a population of 242.

The breakdown by age shows the county with 1,406 youths under the age of 18, who make up 18.9% of the population. Adults 18-64 account for just more than half (50.2%) of the population, or 3,730 people. And adults 65 and older make up 30.9% of the population, or 2,297 people.

The county has the fourth-highest rate of individuals 65 and older, and is tied for 25th in terms of its youth population.

— Chieftain staff

Commissioners OK amended lease for solar project

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Another step forward was taken for a new solar energy project just outside of Enterprise on Wednesday, Jan. 19, as the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners approved an amended lease agreement for the project.

The agreement is for a lease for Ryan Sheehy’s Fleet Development to transform an unused 2.5-acre corner of the county’s former asphalt plant site at Fish Hatchery Lane and Homan Lane into a solar power farm that would provide energy to local customers through Pacific Power’s grid. Sheehy’s Wallowa County Community Solar has been working for more than three years on planning a 360-kilowatt community solar project on the industrial-zoned county land.

The original lease was approved in late 2020. Sheehy recently asked county counsel Paige Sully to request of the commissioners that the county sign an agreement with Community Bank to make the project collateral so he can obtain necessary funding for the project.

“This is a situation where we would assign the lease to Community Bank, but it would only take effect upon defaulting the loan agreement between Community Bank and Wallowa County (Community) Solar,” Sully told the commissioners. “By virtue of the lease being assigned to them, Community Bank would accept all obligations of the lease agreement, they would assume all of the Wallowa County Community Solar’s obligations to the county in the event that they were to take possession of the lease agreement.”

Sully said she does not believe such a foreclosure

is likely. “I see very little risk in that occurring,” she said. “This is necessary for Wallowa County Community Solar to move forward. ... I recommend that you approve it.”

Commissioner Todd Nash asked for some clarification on just what would be foreclosed upon in such an event.

Sully said that should such a foreclosure occur, it would be for the lease and the bank would likely sell the project to a new contractor who would want the lease and be subject to its provisions.

As the commissioners considered a vote on the matter, Commissioner John Hillock abstained, as his business, Enterprise Electric, has done some work on the project and he wouldn’t want it to appear as a conflict of interest.

The other two commissioners voted to approve the amended lease agreement.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Tabled consideration of a Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund Grant that they were supposed to review and approve. The agreement on the grant — which is for \$500,000 — had some concerns Sully recommended resolving before the commissioners sign it. Since the agreement had not yet been returned by the state, the commissioners tabled the agreement until the next meeting.

- Rehired Wesley Garth as a reserve deputy with the Wallowa County Sheriff’s Office.

- Hired Darla (Dee) Peterson as a mobile recycler in the Solid Waste Department.

- Acknowledged the retirement of Marjorie Rogers as a 911 dispatcher.

- Accepted the resignation of Hailee McClure from the county Department of Youth Services.

A novel that takes place in Wallowa County.

Churlish Badger

by Paty Jager

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Building Healthy Families would like to recognize all of the groups and organizations that make the Holidays in Wallowa County special. The Cities for the holiday decorations and celebrations, the Elks for their Giving Tree and Christmas Baskets, and anyone else who supported families and helped them make their holidays memorable. We are thankful for all of you!

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