

Local groups win Oregon Arts Commission grants

Chieftain staff

SALEM — Two Wallowa County organizations are among the 55 projects awarded a total of \$221,535 through the Oregon Arts Commission's FY2022 Arts Build Communities grant program, the commission announced Friday, Feb. 11.

The program targets underserved audiences in Oregon, the announcement stated.

"This program provides financial support to arts and other community-based organizations for projects that address a local community problem, issue or need through an arts-based solution," said Arts Commission Vice Chairman Harlen Springer, who led one of two review panels. "Local citizens employ creative thinking and collective response to identify a local need and provide an arts-based solution."

The grants also spark and leverage many other investments and resources, serving as a catalyst for greater economic and civic impact, Springer said.

In recent years, ABC projects attracted more than \$600,000 in additional investment, much of it representing salaries paid to artists and others as well as products and services purchased in the funded communities. The grants are made possible

through a funding partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

This year's projects include:

- Fishtrap Inc. of Enterprise, which will receive \$3,000 to support the 14th year of Fishtrap's NEA Big Read. Requested funds will be used for presenter honorariums, purchasing books and supplies and promotional efforts. Just last month, Fishtrap received another \$10,000

Arts Learning Funding grant to support young writers.

- The Josephy Center for Arts and Culture in Joseph will receive \$3,000 to support "Rez Ball and More," an exhibit featuring Nez Perce Indian athletes and contests through art; and a three-on-three basketball weekend with high school boys and girls from the Colville, Lapwai and Umatilla reservations and local Joseph, Enterprise and Wallowa schools. Some

50 students and coaches will play ball and socialize with students and coaches from other schools.

Requested funds will be used to offset Tamástlikt expenses in copying material for exhibit, paying artists and writers to prepare materials for exhibit, curating the exhibit, travel and other expenses for athletes and other costs associated with ball games and related activities.

Bike playground fundraising reaches halfway mark

Another \$100,000 needed for Wallowa project

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — The supporters of the Wallowa Bicycle Playground project have about half of their funding committed and are working on a variety of fundraisers to acquire the rest, said chief proponent Ron Pickens.

"We've got a lot of great forward momentum," he said Thursday, Feb. 3.

Pickens, a prevention coordinator and alternative school teacher with Building Healthy Families in Enterprise, spearheaded last year's project to refurbish the Enterprise Skate Park. Since then, he became interested in seeing a similar project built in Wallowa, where he lives.

The project is expected to accommodate bikes, scooters, roller blades and skateboards in a colorful space that kids can play in, Pickens said.

He approached the Wallowa City Council and received its support — and a donation of \$1,000 — Nov. 16.

The playground is planned for a site owned by the Wallowa School District and he has received approval from the district and support from the city.

The project is budgeted for about \$200,000, Pickens said. He is now work-



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Ron Pickens and a group of enthusiastic Wallowa youths stand atop a hill in the middle of what could become the town's bicycle playground next year. From left are Mali Wilson, Noah Wenke, Tony Owings, Pickens, Maddex Kendall, Hunter Reeves, Cayden Ence, Josia Surber and Aleigh Weaver.

ing on several projects to raise money for the bike playground, most of which include raffles.

- Two bicycles have been donated by a local individual who purchased them in La Grande — a Trek 820 and a Precaliber 20. Raffle tickets for the bikes cost \$3 for one, \$5 for two or \$10 for four. The drawing for the bicycles will be held in April.

- A raffle for a plane ride to the Minam River Lodge for a breakfast for two goes for \$25 per ticket. That drawing will be May 4.

- A Traeger barbecue that was donated by Ace Hard-

ware in Enterprise also is up for a raffle. Those raffle tickets cost \$3 for one, \$5 for two or \$10 for four. The drawing will be March 17.

- Sales of caps with "Wallowa Bicycle Playground Project" and the project's logo emblazoned on it go for \$20. The logo was designed by students at Wallowa and at the Alternative School and also will appear on sweatshirts and a sign at the park.

Pickens said the plan is to have students do the actual drawing in the raffles.

Donations to support the project or to purchase raffle tickets can be made by

contacting Pickens at Building Healthy Families at 541-426-9411 or via email at rpickens@oregonbhf.org.

Pickens said that beginning in early March, he plans to start working with youths in Wallowa on more fundraisers.

He said he hopes to see the playground opened by the end of August.

"Our game plan is to continue to receive donations up until the park opens, but we hope to have all of it secured by mid-May," he said. "We've got great traction, but still we've got to make some headway."

IN BRIEF

Ceramics classes scheduled

JOSEPH — Two ceramics classes will begin Feb. 24 at the Josephy Center for Arts and Culture in Joseph, according to a press release.

Foundations of Ceramics for Beginners will be held from 10 a.m. to noon and Ceramics: Intermediate will run from 6-8 p.m. The classes run through April 21 and cost \$195.

The beginners' class focuses on the fundamentals of handbuilding in this

eight-week session. It is for beginning students ages 18 and older.

The intermediate course is for students with clay making experience in the past few years, ages 18 and older.

They will be taught by Pamela Beach.

Three Saturday open studio sessions also will be held March 5, April 2 and 23 from 1-4 p.m. There is no class March 24.

Proof of COVID vaccination is required.

To register, visit <https://josephy.org/event/ceramics-intermediate-2022-02-24>.

— Chieftain staff

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Joseph-to-Elgin trail gets another \$18,000 in grants

Chieftain staff

ENTERPRISE — Another \$18,000 grant to go toward the 63-mile trail-with-rails between Elgin and Joseph has been received from Cycle Oregon by the Joseph Branch Trail Consortium to help fund construction of a covered gazebo, as well as landscaping, at the trail's soon-to-be-built western trailhead in downtown Elgin, according to a press release Tuesday, Feb. 8.

The grant follows two other grants to the nonprofit group that total more than \$272,000: an Oregon State Parks grant to fund construction of the first Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant trail section and the trailhead (that will also serve as a pocket park in Elgin) and a grant from the Oregon Department of Transportation that will fund development of a detailed plan

for the next 15-mile segment between Elgin and Lookingglass.

The trail has been in the planning stages for about 10 years, the Chieftain reported in November, and will eventually offer a nonmotorized alternative transportation route to Highway 82 in the form of a trail that will run beside existing railroad tracks in the railroad right-of-way owned by the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority. With one end in Elgin, the other will terminate 63 miles later in Joseph.

City officials at each end of the proposed trail are eager to see it accomplished, anticipating both economic and health benefits. Elgin, with a population around 1,700 people, currently has no accessible trails from downtown, according to a press release announcing the grants. Joseph, with roughly 1,000 people, also will bene-

fit from the trail, as will Wallowa, Lostine and Enterprise.

Brock Eckstein, who is city administrator of Elgin and interim city administrator for Joseph, said in November there is a "time cap" of December 2024 to get the Elgin trailhead/pocket park and the first short section of trail out of town constructed, as well as the planning for the next first 13 miles refined.

"We're just taking it piece by piece until we get the whole thing done," he said.

"We are seeing some impressive momentum building for this exciting project, and this new grant from Cycle Oregon is definitely part of that," Gregg Kleiner, the project coordinator for the consortium, said in the Feb. 8 release. "The trail will be open to bicycles, and the trailhead will feature a bike maintenance station and an e-bike

charging station, so it's a perfect fit for Cycle Oregon, and we're very grateful for their enthusiastic support."

The Cycle Oregon grant and previous small grants from the Schwemm Family Foundation and the Roundhouse Foundation also are supporting development of the trailhead/pocket park.

More information about the consortium and membership can be found online at <https://www.josephbranchtrail.org/membership>.

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