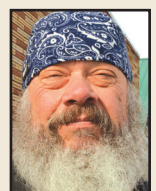




Wallowa County Voices



Harry DeVaux
Joseph

He enjoys riding near Imnaha

JOSEPH — Harry DeVaux just moved to Wallowa County last year — and he likes it.

He moved here in June from Stevenson, Washington, near the Columbia River about 30 miles east of Portland and Vancouver, Washington.

"I have a brother who has a small horse ranch on Tucker Down Road below Fergie and I committed to come over and give him a hand for a year or so and take a look around and see if I want to buy something here," he said. "I'm liking it."

Other than his brother here, he has no relatives in the county. His sons live in Portland and Vancouver.

DeVaux recently shared his thoughts about living in Wallowa County.

What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

I like the people, I like the slow pace here, I like that it speeds up every now and again, but it slows back down. In general, the feel of not having the crime of the city. And the Stubborn Mule, I reckon. Good food.

Are you getting cabin fever yet?

I do. I do a lot of forge work and leather work to keep myself occupied in the winter. I enjoy doing that, but it's kept me in the house for a while and I don't care for that. But I get out with my dogs as much as we can and I go down to Imnaha and ride horses, but it's a little too snowy.

What are you looking forward to once the weather warms?

The beauty that's naturally here. And going to visit with my boys and have them come here. We'll go riding down to Imnaha.

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

Stick through the seasons and see how you like it. It throws a lot at you.

— Bill Bradshaw,
Wallowa County Chieftain



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Enterprise Elementary School students line up to head to an assembly — wearing their face masks — Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022. Earlier that day, the Oregon Health Authority announced it would rescind the mask mandate for public schools and other public places March 11.

Masks off

Schools expected to go along with March 11 mask removal

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA COUNTY — Schools and other indoor public settings will no longer require people to wear face masks Friday, March 11, about two years after such mandates were first ordered because of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a press release from the Oregon Health Authority.

Earlier in February, the OHA announced that the general indoor mask requirement would be lifted by March 31, with the option of lifting it sooner if conditions improved enough. Feedback from school districts around



Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Interim Principal Landon Braden hands a face mask to second-grader Skylynn Adams at Enterprise Elementary School in September 2021. The state's requirement to wear masks indoors will be dropped March 11.

the state indicated that preparations for the transition could be completed earlier.

The OHA then announced a change Thursday, Feb. 24, as hospitalization numbers drop and are projected to reach levels below those at the start of the surge in the COVID omicron variant, the press release said. At

the time, the mandate was set to be lifted on March 19.

Then, on Feb. 28, Gov. Kate Brown announced that Oregon, California and Washington would lift their mandates simultaneously at 11:59 p.m. March 11.

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Indoor mask mandate to be lifted March 11

By GARY A. WARNER
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon will drop its indoor mask mandate on March 11, more than a week earlier than announced last week.

Gov. Kate Brown said Monday morning, Feb. 28, that Oregon, California and Washington would lift their mandates simultaneously at 11:59 p.m. March 11. The new date includes ending mask mandates in schools. The order will affect over 51.2 million people from the Mexican border to the Canadian border, about 15% of the national population.

The move comes on the two-year anniversary of the first case of COVID-19 reported in Oregon, on Feb. 28, 2020, in Washington County. Working with California and Washington was crucial to having a unified timeline for the change in mask policy, Brown said.

"As has been made clear time and again over the last two years, COVID-19 does not stop at state borders or county lines," Brown said in a statement. "On the West Coast, our communities and economies are linked. Together, as we continue to recover from the omicron surge, we will build resiliency and prepare for the next variant and the next pandemic."

The move by the three states comes after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention late last week called for new guidelines to determine risk that would allow for the loosening of restrictions for 70% of the country's population where coronavirus is posing a low or medium threat to hospitals. However, the map released by the CDC showed much of eastern, central and southwestern Oregon remained in the 30% of population areas that remain at high risk.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Washington Gov. Jay Inslee issued similar statements Monday morning with the same date and time for dropping indoor mask mandates.

The new date is the second time in two weeks that health officials have moved up the date for lifting

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Foster parents needed in NE Oregon

By LISA BRITTON
Baker City Herald

Foster families are needed in Northeastern Oregon, and an event is scheduled in March for those who would like to learn more about foster care.

And it will be virtual, so people can join from anywhere.

The session will be Wednesday, March 16, from 6-7:30 p.m.

To register, go to <https://everychildneoregon.org/>. Click on "Upcoming Events" and search by county to find the event.

The official title is "Virtual Explore Fostering — Every Child NE Oregon."

During the discussion, a panel of experienced families will share their stories about providing foster care.

"To share their experiences, and why they got started," said Tammie Blessing, resource family retention and recruitment champion for Districts 13 and 14, which includes Baker, Union, Wallowa, Grant, Harney and Malheur counties. "Having families talk about it is our best recruitment tool."

This "Learn About Foster Care" event is sponsored by Every Child, Oregon Department of Human Services and GOBHI (Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc.).



Contributed Photo

Kala and Terry Linville have been foster parents, and adopted their daughter, Evey, in 2021. Foster families will share their experiences during a virtual event on March 16, 2022. Anyone interested in learning more about foster care is encouraged to join.

Those three organizations, Blessing said, represent different parts of the foster system.

GOBHI focuses on "treatment foster care," while Every Child provides volunteer opportunities to support children in the foster system and families that provide care.

"We're trying to offer the whole spectrum of what's available to people interested in fostering," Blessing said.

She hopes to spur interest from Eastern Oregon counties, where foster families are urgently needed.

"Statewide there's a need, but we continue in those six eastern counties to need homes," she said.

The numbers

Blessing said District 13 (Baker, Union and Wallowa counties) had a total of 54 children in foster care and 36 resource homes at the end of January.

As of Jan. 1, 2022, there were 5,393 children in foster care in Oregon — the fewest in 16 years, according to the Oregon Child Welfare Division.

The reason for the low number, Blessing said, is "family first" legislation, which has the

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