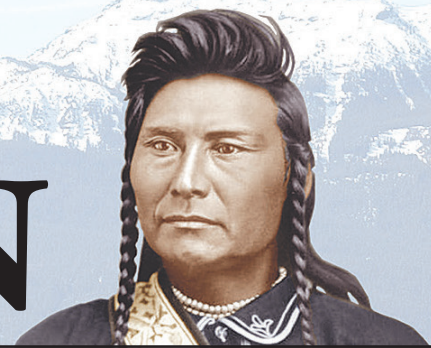




# WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



137th Year, No. 48

WALLOWA.COM

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

SUNDAY, MARCH 13



Don't forget to turn clocks ahead one hour.

## Wallowa County Voices



Leo Arenas  
Enterprise

### A great place for family, business

ENTERPRISE — Leo Arenas and his wife, Audra, moved to Enterprise 20 years ago because they thought it would be a great place to raise a family and operate a business.

And they've been successful at both. Their oldest son graduated from Enterprise High School a couple years ago and they have another son and two daughters still in school here.

Their business, El Bajio Family Mexican Restaurant — soon to become Leo's Bar and Grill — has catered to those here with a taste for Mexican food for those two decades.

"We moved to Enterprise to start a little business and to support the whole community," he said. "I'm really happy with everybody in the county. Everybody's so friendly. ... It's a great place to raise kids."

He recently shared his thoughts about living in Wallowa County.

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

Everybody who supports everybody. ... I love the small community in Wallowa County.

#### Are you getting cabin fever yet?

I don't mind being indoors.

#### What are you looking forward to once the weather warms?

My favorite thing is playing in the lake, taking my kids to the lake. It's such a nice lake we have.

#### What do you think of Russia's invasion of the Ukraine?

I don't know yet. ... If we stick together, we should be OK.

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

When people move to the county and to a small town, they have to be ready coming from the big city. You can go hiking around. You don't have to worry about gangsters and drugs here. You have peace and quiet in Enterprise.

— Bill Bradshaw,  
Wallowa County Chieftain

# NO TO DEVELOPMENT

Crowd opposes 'hospitality project' on land near Iwetemlaykin

By BILL BRADSHAW  
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Overwhelming public opposition to a planned "hospitality project" on a parcel adjacent to the Iwetemlaykin State Heritage Site on the southern edge of Joseph led the property owners to withdraw a request for a zoning change for the project before the Joseph City Council on Thursday, March 3.

More than 70 people crowded into the Joseph Community Events Center for a public hearing on the zoning request. More than 60 signed up to give comment during the hearing, although only about 30 actually spoke. Many declined to speak, saying their points had already been made by others. Another half-dozen or so provided comment by letters.

Only two of the com-



Photos by Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

More than 70 people crowded into the Joseph Community Events Center for a public hearing Thursday, March 3, 2022, before the Joseph City Council. The vast majority were opposed to a zoning change requested by Greg Hennes and Ben Gates to develop a hospitality project near Iwetemlaykin on the edge of town. Because of the opposition, Hennes and Gates withdrew their zoning change request.

ments — both by letter — were in favor of the project.

#### The project

Local hotel owner Greg Hennes and his partner, architect Ben Gates, were requesting a zoning change from R-2 residential to commercial to allow for the project. It was to include a public bathhouse and sauna, an observatory, cabins, a guest lodge with kitchen facilities and workforce housing, according to the documents filed with the City Council prior to the meeting.

Hennes and Gates gave

a presentation to the council and those in attendance on their plans for the project. They emphasized that the project would bring capital into the Joseph community, provide jobs at the facility and in construction, provide indirect spending by the construction team, attract visitor dollars, bring in lodging tax revenue and provide positive community health outcomes.

Hennes noted that the 3.23-acre parcel had previously been subdivided into three lots that could've allowed more

homes than what he was planning.

"As many as 22 homes could be built on the site," Hennes said. "Instead of building what's allowed in the residential zone, we're proposing a sensitively designed project made possible by the requested zone change and we're looking to blend it into the land, add amenities for the community and help tackle the workforce housing (needs). So here you'll see a commercial building on Main Street, second-story workforce housing and possible parking, a public bathhouse and

sauna and cabins. Rather than building on top of the hill ... we're arranging to build along the east edge to preserve the natural landscape of the hilltop."

He said he planned to hire locals and use local contractors on the project.

Gates emphasized how the project includes workforce housing, something Joseph — and Wallowa County — is in need of. He said since early in his career, he's been involved in numerous projects to build affordable housing.

"I have a real passion for building affordable housing," Gates said.

The pair cited Wallowa Lake Lodge as an example of such a project that blends in well with its background, saying their project would do likewise. They also said they were involved in restoring the Minam River Lodge and showed photographs of their work.

#### The opposition

But the owner of the Wallowa Lake Lodge was one who disagreed with Hennes' and Gates' plan, saying it would create a dangerous traffic situation at the north end of the lake similar to that which exists by the lodge at the opposite end of the lake.

See Project, Page A5



A 3.23-acre parcel on the southern outskirts of Joseph was slated for development until overwhelming public opposition to the project led the owners to withdraw their request for a zoning change Thursday, March 3, 2022, at a Joseph City Council meeting. The parcel is located next to the Iwetemlaykin State Heritage Site.

Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

## State Legislature votes to end farm overtime exemption

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

SALEM — The Oregon Senate has approved a bill passed March 1 by the House to end the agricultural overtime exemption, sinking attempts at compromise sought by farm organizations.

House Bill 4002, which passed the Senate 17-10 on Thursday, March 3, phases out the overtime exemption over five years while providing tax credits to temporarily compensate farmers for higher labor costs.

"Oregon's agricultural workers should not be excluded from the same protections afforded to other workers," Sen. Kathleen Taylor, D-Milwaukie, said.

The bill now goes to Gov. Kate Brown for her signature or veto.



Wallowa County Chieftain, File

The Oregon Senate on Thursday, March 3, 2022, approved a bill passed by the House two days earlier to end the agricultural overtime exemption, sinking attempts at compromise sought by farm organizations.

Farm groups wanted to amend the bill so that state money would instead go directly to farmworkers, supplying them with higher

overtime wages after 40 hours per week while allowing growers more flexibility in scheduling.

"We need to love the

farmers as much as the farmworkers," Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, said.

The amendment would represent a true "victory," as

farmworkers wouldn't face capped work weeks or job losses from automation or farm closures, Knopp said.

"That means for certain farmworkers would get the overtime," he said.

However, the Joint Committee on Farm Worker Overtime rejected that amendment and the House refused further consideration of the proposal.

The Senate likewise voted down motions by Republican lawmakers to send the bill to the Senate Rules Committee or Senate Finance and Revenue Committee to seek a bipartisan solution.

"I think I had a better plan. I will be advocating for that plan in the next session," said Knopp, who sat on the Joint Farm Worker Overtime Committee.

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