

Knox retiring after 12 years at chamber



By Bill Bradshaw

ENTERPRISE — Visitors will only have until the end of April to see Diane Knox's smiling face greet them at the offices of the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce in Enterprise. After that, she'll be out in the woods enjoying her retirement.

After 12 years as the chamber's administrative assistant, Knox is stepping down.

"There's other things I want to do," she said. "I have family I want to go see and there are different projects I haven't gotten to because I'm too busy here."

She said Thursday, March 31, she hopes to do more hiking, huckleberry-picking and looking for more mushrooms, in particular.

"You know, get out in the woods more, no longer sitting at a desk," she said.

Knox's background

Having moved to the county in 1986, Knox's retirement plans take her back to what she spent most of her working life doing. For 20 years, she worked for the U.S. Forest Service in wildlife management, as a silviculturist and in reforestation. Her Forest Service work was mostly here, but also in the John Day area.

After leaving the Forest Service, she spent a couple years working for the Wallowa County Nursery before landing the chamber job.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Diane Knox, administrative assistant at the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce, left, works at her desk as chamber Executive Director Jennifer Piper looks on Thursday, March 31, 2022. Knox will be retiring at the end of April.

The job

Knox said that although she prefers to be outside, she's found her work at the chamber interesting.

She said she's liked "working with different members, the different businesses and getting them to work more on our web page, putting more about their businesses because we've enhanced our website so they can have a better description. They can put a photo gallery for them displaying their businesses and working with them trying to promote them."

That doesn't mean she's necessarily a computer guru. "I don't know if I'd go that far, but I know enough

to get where I need to be," she said.

The most interesting part of the job, Knox said, has been meeting all the different people who stop in to learn about what the county has to offer.

"I've been working with a lot of visitors, giving them ideas of where to go and what to go see in the county, promoting all the local businesses that we have here so that they can find them," she said. "Different people want different things. Sometimes we'll promote the barn tour, sometimes businesses at the lake, hiking trails and telling them where to get more information, etc."

She said she's visited

with not only people from elsewhere in the country, but from foreign countries, as well.

"People come here from all over the world and that's pretty cool," she said. "I've had people in here from Australia, South Korea, China, France, Germany, Austria, Sweden, the United Kingdom, all over the world."

Wallowa County has several features the foreign visitors find intriguing, Knox said.

"I've seen a lot of them come for Hells Canyon, because it's the deepest canyon (in North America)," she said. "One of the things that they really pick up on

is that, especially the people coming from out of the country. They (also) want to know about Wallowa Lake and I have them check out the lake. I always explain to them that the lake was formed by glaciers and still has the intact moraines, which is pretty cool because a lot of them don't have those anymore."

She also tells them about the Wallowa Mountains and the tram up Mount Howard.

Personally, it's that diverse terrain Knox finds so intriguing about the county.

"You can go down in the canyon country and up to high elevations," she said. "That's what I really like about it, all that diversity."

A replacement?

Chamber Executive Director Jennifer Piper said Knox won't be easy to replace.

"Diane is what has kept everything running and has been a tremendous help and resource to me and getting myself established in this role," said Piper, who has been in her post since December 2020. "She has very big shoes for someone to fill. ... I'm making it sound a little bit intimidating, but we're excited to find the next person as the chamber continues to evolve in a new phase of the organization. We know the right fit is out there. I just really appreciate everything that Diane has done in my time at the chamber and prior to my time. She's given a lot to this organization."

Knox dismisses the difficulty in replacing her.

"There's a lot of talented people out there," she said. "Just have to find the right one."

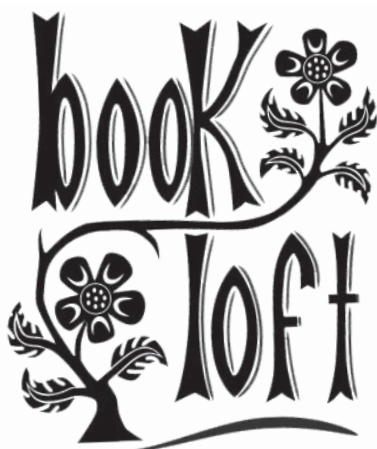
Piper said she hopes to have someone on board before Knox leaves so Knox can show her replacement the ropes.

"That is the plan," Piper said March 31, adding that, "We do have strong applicants and plan to move forward the first half of April."

Will Knox miss working at the chamber?

"Yeah, I'll miss it," she said. "But I've worked all my life, so I'm ready to retire."

Bill Bradshaw is a reporter for the Wallowa County Chieftain. Have a business tip? Contact him at 541-398-5503 or bbradshaw@wallowa.com.



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CLUES ACROSS

- "Let's get this show on the ___"
- Covered up
- Greeting to a matey
- R&B star India. ___
- Exalting poem
- Leia's twin
- Designation for the Nelson-Atkins Museum's ~19-foot-high shuttlecocks
- 2009 Miranda Lambert song about a cheater
- Scared
- Game spelled by removing "w" from "Twister" and rearranging the rest
- "Birds of ___"
- Third-smallest country
- Prefix for "dynamic"
- Group of whales
- "You serious?"
- 2021 WNBA champs
- Roster of people hoping to be admitted
- The ___ (New York City borough)
- Donkey, biblically
- Far from excitable
- West African currency units
- Understands
- Ultimately became
- "You couldn't find any more?"
- Mo. when the new year festival Quviasukvik starts
- All-out brawl
- Game with Reverse cards
- Sports stat that's a hint to the initials and meanings of 15-, 18- and 36-Across
- In-flight guesses: Abbr.
- Rowboat tool
- Lightsaber fight
- Given a new hue
- Pig's place
- Fried okra, e.g.

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		60						61			62			
		63							64			65		

CLUES DOWN

- Uncooked
- Gold, in Spanish
- Route for a plane
- India's capital territory
- Amber Ruffin, for "The Amber Ruffin Show"
- Inactive
- "I accept your offer!"
- Organisms in birdbaths
- Labor leader Dolores
- Signs off on
- Thus far
- Failed to
- Religious ceremony
- Grindr, e.g.
- To's counterpart
- Silicon Valley location named for a tree business
- "Don't worry ..."
- Annoy
- ___ latte
- Piece in an opera
- Vases with bases
- Authorities' rules, for short
- "There, it should work now"
- Oct. 20 zodiac sign
- Author Moody or Bronte
- Wooden strip
- Didn't stay colorfast
- Kept for another season
- Tool for making yarn by hand
- This, in Spanish
- Japanese wrestling form
- Clarified butter in biryani
- Mexican money
- Novelist McMillan
- Aspiring attorney's exam
- Scottish no
- "Acid"
- Music holders in cases
- French yes

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