

# Local superintendents react to Texas shooting

By JEFF BUDLONG  
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA COUNTY — An 18-year-old gunman killed 19 children and two teachers Tuesday, May 24, at a Texas elementary school after he barricaded himself inside a single classroom. Law enforcement officers eventually broke into the classroom and killed the gunman, who used an AR-style rifle.

The tragic incident again shined a light on mass shootings at schools in the U.S., and had Wallowa County school superintendents reaching out to parents and children to comfort them and answer questions as best they could.

Wallowa School District Superintendent Tamera Jones called the events in Texas “tragic.” She met with staff Wednesday morning, May 25, to discuss supporting students and to reinforce procedures in place to deal with similar situations.

“We do have procedures we practice with staff on what to do in various emergencies,” she said. “We met (Wednesday) morning and talked some things through, and I passed out the new emergency procedure manual.”

Jones said she had planned to pass out the manual — which covers everything from a missing student to a chemical spill — in the fall, but moved up the plans as a result of the shootings. The shootings may have occurred in a different state, but the fear of copycat crimes is always present, she said.

Staff spent the rest of the week making sure they were present for students and listening to any concerns they may have had.

Yearly training occurs for staff in the district and includes strategizing for various emergencies. A lockdown drill also is practiced during the school year.

“How do we avoid?” Jones said of the training. “Is it safer to lock down? Is it safer to hide? Or is it safer to flee?”

Jones will email scenarios to staff members to get them thinking about how they would deal with each situation. That can include how and where they would lock-down, how they would barricade doors, and how they would manage cellphones

or a student enduring a panic attack.

“The more teachers can feel comfortable making those decisions in a moment the better,” she said.

Jones is in her second year as superintendent at Wallowa, but has 21 years of administrative experience. She brought with her numerous practices to prepare for a variety of emergency situations. Staff members have a flipchart of emergency procedures to help prepare them for potentially dangerous situations.

Joseph Charter School Superintendent Lance Homan said his staff has taken part in active-shooter training “ALICE.” The program is divided into five steps:

- Alert
- Lockdown
- Inform
- Counter
- Evacuate

“We have a safe place that we walk our students to if something like that were to happen,” Homan said. “When we had a fire three years ago we used it to keep everyone safe.”

Homan said there has been

an emphasis in recent years on having safety measures in place to try to prevent issues like shootings from happening. That includes visitor check-in, cameras around the entire perimeter of the school and in hallways.

Both superintendents reached out to reassure parents and communities through email or social media. Enterprise School District Superintendent Tom Crane did not return multiple calls for comment.

Although staff may feel the burden of preparing for a variety of potential emergency situations, Jones believes making them as confident as possible is important.

The district added a prevention specialist to staff this year in light of challenges students of all ages are facing as a result of the pandemic and other stressors. Jones said when children experience trauma in their lives proactive support is necessary to allow learning to occur.

“It can happen anywhere and we have to keep that in mind,” Jones said. “When something like the shootings happens it makes us realize the importance of relationships with kids and community. That has to continue to be a priority for us.”

# ODFW extends kill permit for one Chesnimnus wolf

By GEORGE PLAVEN  
Capital Press

JOSEPH — The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has extended a kill permit for one wolf from the Chesnimnus pack in Wallowa County.

The original permit was issued April 29 for two wolves after ODFW confirmed the pack was responsible for preying on cattle twice between April 25 and 27 on a public grazing allotment north of Joseph, resulting in three dead calves.

Ranchers in Eastern Oregon can request a kill permit under the state’s Wolf Conservation and Management Plan if ODFW confirms two depredations in nine months. They must also be using nonlethal deterrents and remove all potential wolf attractants to qualify.

An agent for the producer, Tom Birkmaier, legally shot one wolf under the permit May 3. Since then, ODFW stated there has been one more “probable” depredation in the area and wolf activity and risk to livestock remains high.

According to ODFW’s own investigations, biologists have confirmed one other depredation by the Wenaha pack in Wallowa County; three by the Cornucopia pack and one by the Keating pack in neighboring Baker County; and one by the Desolation pack in Grant County.

“Evidence indicates wolves are testing cattle, with cattle showing signs of stress including breaking through a fence in one incident,” the agency reported.

ODFW extended Birkmaier’s permit through June 14 after it was set to expire on May 24. It allows him to shoot one additional wolf to protect his cattle in pastures where they graze.

“The producer continues to use nonlethal measures including moving their cattle to a different pasture and increased human presence,” ODFW added.

Biologists say killing another Chesnimnus wolf would not impact the pack’s breeding success. The Chesnimnus pack numbers seven to eight adult and yearling wolves, and their breeding female may still be in the den. None of the wolves have a working GPS or radio collar.

# Tour:

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## Top issues

Chief among those issues, according to Nash and others who attended, were wolf depredation on livestock and wildlife, drought, federal forest issues, grazing allotments and general predator discussions.

Ron Weiss, president of the Lane County group, was impressed with the tour.

“That was probably one of the best put-together ranch tours I’ve been to in the past 25 years,” he said in a telephone interview May 26.

Weiss said the issues that struck him the most were those surrounding wolves and the ongoing drought.

“We feel you’re getting run over the coals by the wolf predation situation. ... You guys are really getting (it) and we’ve got your back as an association,” he said.

Lane County, he noted, is well west of the north-south dividing line that separates federally protected wolves from those in the east that can be shot if caught harassing cattle. He said there are wolves in his area, but they’re not yet going after cattle.

“Right now, the wolves in Lane County are diminishing our elk herds,” he said. “They haven’t gotten to our cattle yet, but it’s just a matter of time.”

Weiss also was impressed with how Wallowa County ranchers are dealing with the drought and “keeping fat cattle” in its midst.

“We were impressed with how you guys run your ranches, especially under the



Ranchers from Wallowa and Lane counties gathered for a tour of cattle country in Wallowa County on Saturday, May 21, 2022. Here they stopped at the historic Dorrance barn. Steve Dorrance, a former county resident and descendant of local ranchers, holds a photograph of his family’s ranch at lower left.

drought conditions,” he said.

Kevin McCadden, one of the vice presidents of the Wallowa County Stockgrowers, showed the group his ranch on Alder Slope where he raises breeding stock, Gelbvieh-Angus cross Balancer bulls. According to the Gelbvieh website, Gelbvieh and Balancer cattle are well known throughout the beef industry for their maternal strengths and superior growth.

## Fostering unity

In addition to telling about his own operation, McCadden was eager to hear from the Lane County ranchers.

“It was interesting to listen to them and hear about their ranches where it’s pretty flat country,” he said. “We have different challenges.”

McCadden said he believes the greatest benefit to the ranch tour was to foster unity with producers from across the state and better understand the challenges each faces.

“Now we have a better understanding in what’s

going on in everybody’s operation, not just our neck of the woods,” he said. “As we become more aware of what everyone’s up against, we can become a more unified organization.”

Neither stockgrowers

group has yet decided if there will be a reciprocal visit from Wallowa County to Lane County. But the possibility is open.

“We can do that,” Weiss said of hosting Wallowa County in the future.

Todd Nash/Contributed Photo

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### Dr. Wes Baker

Dr. Baker has been with Winding Waters since the fall of 2018 after completing medical school and residency at OHSU. He now provides a multitude of services including primary care from birth to death, hospital and ER care, prenatal care and deliveries. Visit our website or scan the QR code to learn more!

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## NEW EMPLOYMENT AVAILABLE

Wallowa Lake Tramway is announcing a new employment opportunity for young individuals 14 to 16 years old as culinary arts apprentices at Wallowa Lake Tramway’s Summit Grill.

The positions will be on the mountain top at the Wallowa Lake Summit Grill and introduce the employee to a variety of skills pertinent to the culinary field. These skills are unbelievably valuable in the future, as employees in the food service industry are very much in demand and having these skills will put our trained apprentices in a great position to find employment as they venture forward in their academic life.

All employees will be working under the rules of the Oregon Employment Department for this age group and receive full wages and rewards. For more information and to discuss this opportunity with Wallowa Lake Tramway, call 503-781-4321, or you can find more information on [WallowaLakeTramway.com](http://WallowaLakeTramway.com) under the Employment section online.

We are excited about this new program and look forward to hearing from you.

We also have one lift attendant position open for immediate employment for 14 to 16 years old or over. If that is more in line with your interests, you can also call to discuss this opportunity.

# Wallowa Lake TRAMWAY