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

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

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 pres-

ent for students and

Homan



listening to any concerns they may have Yearly training occurs for staff in the district and includes strategizing for various emer-

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?"

gencies. A lockdown drill

also is practiced during the

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 lockdown, 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 Staff members have a flipchart of emer-

for a variety of emersituations. gency procedures to help prepare them for potentially dangerous situations. Charter Joseph

School Superintendent Lance Homan said his staff has taken part in activeshooter 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 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, biolo- GPS or radio collar.

gists 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

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



Todd Nash/Contributed Photo

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 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 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

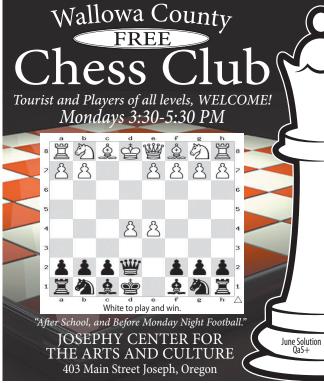
going on in everybody's operation, not just our neck of the woods," he said. "As we become more aware of what everyone's up against, we can become a more unified organization."

Neither stockgrowers group has yet decided if there will be a reciprocal visit from Wallowa County to Lane County. But the possibility is

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



http://www.wallowacountyhumanesociety.org/





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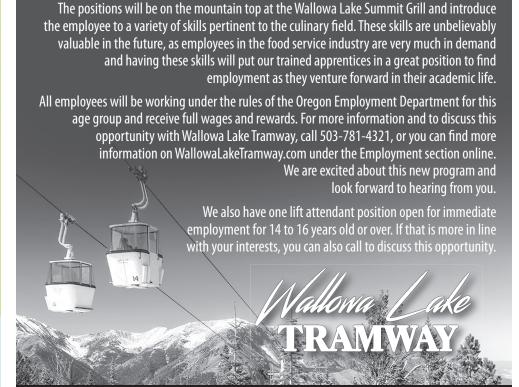


Enterprise

Joseph

Wallowa





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.