

County invests in improving cybersecurity

Current county systems nearing obsolescence

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Two major technology purchases were approved Wednesday, June 1, by the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners — a cybersecurity system and a new telephone system.

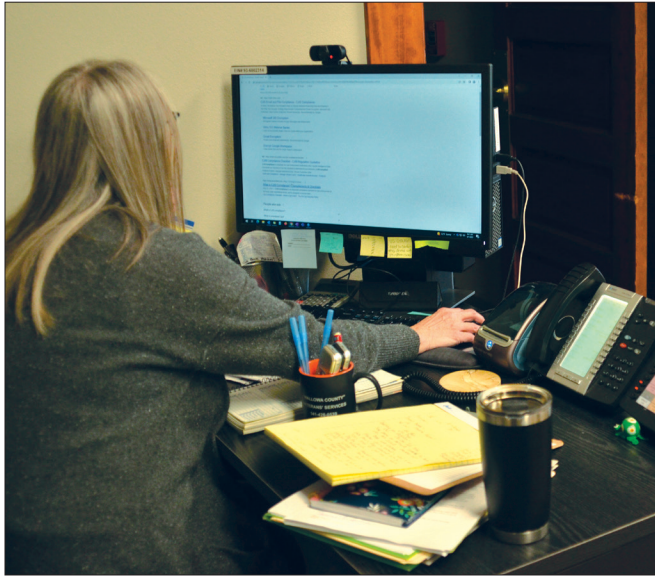
Both systems were approved because the technology used is becoming outdated, said Stacey Fregulia, information technology director for the county.

Cybersecurity

Fregulia told the commissioners she recently went to an Oregon Government Information Technology conference, where representatives of counties and cities in the state go to learn more about vendors, security issues “and things that are happening in society today.”

She became familiar with a system called Darktrace. Drew Staudacher of Darktrace attended the commission meeting via Zoom, but deferred to Fregulia on her presentation.

Fregulia said that for more than a month, there has been a Darktrace device on the county network in a trial run testing everything. She said Darktrace has an artificial intelligence element built into it to monitor the traffic on every computer workstation, switches and all elements of the network to determine what is normal



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Tera Elliott, administrative assistant for the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners, works on her computer alongside the phone system in the courthouse. On Wednesday, June 1, 2022, the commissioners voted to add a new security system for the computers and to upgrade the phone system.

activity and what is not.

“When it goes outside its normal path, say, someone put a virus on your computer, if that all of a sudden spikes and is out of the normal processes of where it would normally send emails or have normal traffic to some other person’s IP (internet protocol) address in another country or another city or somewhere that’s outside of the normal scope of where it normally works in, it’ll shut it down,” she said.

Once Darktrace’s Antigena element shuts the system down, it flags whatever anomaly caused the shutdown and issues an alert so the system administrator can see what is happening and determine if the activity is acceptable or not.

During the trial run, Darktrace has detected a few anomalies.

“During that time, there has been a few things it has picked up that are out of normal, one being Dropbox because of the file sizing,” she said.

Dropbox has been flagged, though it didn’t shut the system down, she said.

“This only happens once or twice a month and I was able to say, ‘This is OK.’ But what if it was our finance department or IT department, it would say, ‘No, wait a minute. You guys don’t do this,’ and it would shut that down. It would flag it and you’d come back and look at the logs and see who did it,” Fregulia said.

She emphasized the importance of improving the cybersecurity of the county systems.

“This is another step into the cybersecurity infrastructure that will help the county,

in a sense, because we can’t hire someone to come in and go through those logs and monitor them 24/7,” she said. “We just can’t afford it. This, however, cuts down the cost of bringing those cybersecurity/IT-type issues in and lets you see it.”

Fregulia said it would cost at least \$80,000-\$100,000 a year for an IT expert to monitor and protect the county’s computer systems.

“With that being said, Darktrace, where it’s just monitoring for a shutdown, is just \$12,000 a year,” she said.

Adding the Antigena autonomous response element brings the total to \$20,071 a year. That’s a 40% discount from the regular price the county can get if it approves Darktrace by June 15.

Commissioners Susan Roberts and John Hillock each said they’ve had trouble with Dropbox. Hillock said he’s had difficulty opening documents related to the East Moraine Forest Management Plan. He and Roberts both said they need to review the plan this week. Commissioner Todd Nash was not present June 1.

Fregulia said Dropbox should be workable and it may be a problem with the commissioners’ computers that she will look into.

When Hillock asked where the county will get the money to pay for Darktrace, Fregulia said it already was in her department’s budget, “just in case.”

The commissioners agreed the county needs the cybersecurity Darktrace offers and voted to approve the plan.

New phones approved

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Stacey Fregulia, information technology director for the county, reminded commissioners during the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners meeting June 1 the county’s current telephone service provider, Mitel, will end support for software in June 2023. The company has set a date of 2026 for total withdrawal.

Fregulia has investigated several different companies and found Matrix Networks, which specializes in hardware and software support for Mitel systems. It was Matrix that brought this to her attention after the county was informed last summer on Mitel’s end-of-life cycle. “Not only do we have to get new software support, now we have to get a whole new phone system,” Fregulia said.

She said many businesses are pushing toward the cloud platforms because of a greater demand caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated use.

Fregulia sat through demonstrations of several phone systems and many were too costly.

“The other problem with it is we have our Justice Center and our DA’s (district attorney) offices that have to be CJIS (Criminal Justice Information Service) compliant,” she said. “That is,

any information about witnesses, arrests, things like that ... have to be secure and confidential. You can’t have those going over platforms or clouds of any sort without security.”

Matrix’s Ring Central was the only system she witnessed that was both CJIS compliant and cost-effective.

To implement Ring Central will cost \$6,953.41 with an annual fee of more than \$11,600. The 63 phones belong to Matrix, so the company will maintain them.

At present, the county pays more than \$25,000 a year.

The commissioners approved the Matrix plan.

“We get better service and pay less money,” Commission Chairwoman Susan Roberts said.

Other business

The commissioners also approved:

- The modification of a grant agreement for a change in funding from the USDA Forest Service. The original agreement was for \$6,600. The modification adds another \$6,600 for a total of \$13,200 to help law enforcement on national forest land.

- A services agreement with Paige Sully as county counsel.

- A request by Scott Siebe for an easement to extend a culvert on Reavis Lane near Enterprise.

IN BRIEF

Bridge work brings lane closures

Motorists can expect lane closures on Oregon Highway 82 at Bear Creek Bridge starting Monday, June 6. There will be single-lane access controlled by an automated traffic signal.

The contractor, HP Civil, Inc., will begin work on foundations for the new bridge. The lane reduction will last through summer and is needed to accommodate excavation along the riverbank for the new bridge foundation and abutments.

As part of this work, the contractor will be drilling vertical shafts into the bedrock then filling them with rebar and concrete. In August, the contractor will begin work on the new bridge abutments and river embankment retaining wall.

At the end of summer, the contractor will reconstruct the existing roadway. Both lanes will then be open until work resumes in 2023. Abutment construction will be com-

plete and girders will be set in spring of 2023. The remainder of the new structure will be completed fall 2023.

For more information, visit the project webpage: OR 82: Bear Creek (Wallowa River) Bridge.

Soroptimists taking scholarship applications

ENTERPRISE — With the intention recognizing and encouraging the continued educational pursuits of an outstanding woman of Wallowa County, the Soroptimist Continuing Undergraduate Scholarship will be awarded to any woman seeking a two- or four-year degree.

The \$5,000 scholarship will be paid to the school the selected woman is attending after receipt of a verification of enrollment, according to a press release.

The successful applicant must be a Wallowa County woman seeking a degree who is enrolled at an accredited college/university, vocational or technical program; has completed one

year of undergraduate studies; and is enrolling in the fall of 2022.

The application deadline is June 30. Applications should be mailed to Soroptimist, P.O. Box 127, Enterprise, OR 97828.

For more information, call 541-263-2276.

Concert series opens June 9

ENTERPRISE — Locals and visitors to Wallowa County will once again enjoy a variety of live music every Thursday on the shady lawn of the county courthouse in Enterprise.

The Wallowa Valley Music Alliance has been presenting this event since 2006. Everything from folk songs to brass bands will delight audiences as they pause for some relaxing outdoor time with family and friends.

Musicians from all over the Pacific Northwest will grace the courthouse stage this summer. The opening concert on June 9 will feature Wallowa County’s own Jezebel’s Mother (Carolyn

Lochert and Janis Carper) with special guest from Bellingham, Washington, Tracy Spring. All three artists are accomplished songwriters and performers, and feature some wonderful vocal harmonies.

Concerts run from 5:30 to 7 p.m., and are free and open to the public. Picnic blankets and lawn chairs are encouraged.

The Courthouse Concert Series schedule can be found at wvmusicalliance.org.

— *Chieftain staff*

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V. Gene Martin November 24, 1941 - March 12, 2022

Gene Martin was born in Poplar Bluff, Missouri. He lived on his grandpa’s farm, and showed an independent streak at an early age. He ran wild along the Mississippi and Black rivers, riding a mule to school, and skipping that as often as possible. He learned to drive an old Willys Jeep with blocks on the pedals so he could reach. He always said that a lot of his athletic skills came from running with his hounds and jumping over the cottonmouths and copperhead snakes that hid along the trails.

Later he lived with his mother in Corbett, Oregon, and attended school there. He excelled in all sports and rode his bike on the old Columbia River highway from Crown Point down to the falls -- with no brakes, of course. He left home there and went to the Spokane, Washington, area, attending school at Cheney where he lived with the Gamon family, and graduating from Medical Lake High School. During this time he worked for the railroad, setting ties with the tie gang, and traveled all across the United States. His co-workers called him hermano grande, or big brother.

He was very active in FFA, raising and showing Black Angus and working with dairy cows. He went on to attend college at Tri-Cities on a track scholarship, where he ran the 400, high jumped and played football. After that he moved to Elgin where he worked in the newly opened Boise Cascade sawmill for several years before transferring to northern California. He claimed the move from Elgin to the San Francisco area in the early 1960s was culture shock, since Elgin didn’t have hippies.

His entire life his love of the outdoors and all things Jeep led him on many adventures, including traveling the famous Rubicon trail over the Sierras many times. He claimed to have driven most of the Jeep trails between Canada and Baja, Mexico. Working in northern California as a licensed psychiatric technician, he moved around several facilities for the mentally challenged, a job he held many different times in his life.

He also was involved in the Big Brothers organization where he met former actor Fred McMurray, and cartoonist Charles Schultz. Later he tired of the hustle and bustle of the cities, and moved back to his old hunting grounds in Joseph.



Gene was the first certified corrections officer in Wallowa County, and also rode with Search and Rescue. He continued to “go jeeping” and hunt around the Wallowas.

He met his wife Sharon in Joseph and they were married at Hurricane Creek Grange Hall -- he claimed it was “the farthest he’d go” for a wedding.

All his life Gene worked with kids. He coached many sports and loved kids of all ages. His children were always bringing home friends who became part of his extended family. He loved his kids -- Tim, Dan and Andrea, and was very involved in their lives and sports training. He taught them to love the outdoors and all the creatures that inhabit it (and Jeeps).

He was a proud grandpa to Darian, Jericho, Samantha, Braeli, Mason and Makaeli. He was also a lifelong St. Louis Cardinals and Kansas City Chiefs fan, and was proud of watching every Super Bowl.

Gene passed away at home, where he wanted to be, on March 12, 2022, after an extended period of health problems. Contributions in his memory may be made to the Gene V. Martin Memorial Fund at Community Bank.

A celebration of life/open house will be held on Father’s Day, June 19 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Hurricane Creek Grange hall. Please drop by and share a memory of Gene with his family. Written memorials would be appreciated too. Refreshments will be served.