

# Enterprise Elementary Playground updated in honor of student

Chieftain staff

ENTERPRISE — In commemoration of Daniel Hanson, a fund in honor of his love for play was set up and dedicated to adding more equipment to the current Enterprise Elementary School playground. Daniel was set to enter kindergarten in Enterprise but died in an accident in 2020.

What began as adding a few pieces of play equipment soon sparked the idea of adding equipment more appropriate for preschoolers and young elementary students.

Ideas soon became plans, and plans became action. With Damiana Maxwell and

Sara Hayes, early intervention specialists with InterMountain Education Service District guiding the project, the addition to the current playground shifted its focus to a truly inclusive playground for all ages and abilities.

Key elements of the playground plan included smooth surfacing and transitions to allow for even walking and assistive equipment. Equipment was selected from input of elementary students and staff, occupational therapists, physical therapists, playground design consultants and other key experts to ensure all elements were included in the design.

With tremendous gener-



Contributed Photo

**A rendering of what the finished playground in Enterprise will look like. It is being improved in memory of Daniel Hanson.**

osity from the community, \$14,000 was raised and given toward the playground project in memory of Daniel, who attended the Enterprise Col-

laborative Preschool. Local grant awards of \$38,000 and fundraising efforts have been contributed so far, including financial support from

Enterprise Education Foundation, Lion's Club, Wallowa County Local Community Health Partnership, Pacific Power and an organized can drive.

Another \$135,000 in grant and monetary awards within Eastern Oregon have been awarded or are pending including: the Wildhorse Foundation, the Ford Family Foundation, Lewis & Clark, Oregon Community Foundation and InterMountain ESD. The generosity of Wallowa County shines through with donations including that of Rahn's Sanitary in providing storage space for the new equipment and Enterprise Electric

in the use of machinery.

The project broke ground July 5 with the installation of the new equipment to be the week of Chief Joseph Days. The project team remains hopeful all construction will be concluded by the first day of school in August, accessible for students during school hours and the community before and after school hours. The inclusive playground will allow for children and adults of all ages and abilities to enjoy what Daniel cherished most, play.

If interested in more information or in contributing to the project, please call Maxwell at 541-531-9535 or Hayes 541-263-0690.

# County commissioners discuss work needed on Upper Imnaha Road

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The Upper Imnaha Road has some treacherous areas that the county is being asked to fix, the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners discussed at its meeting Wednesday, July 20.

Commission Chairwoman Susan Roberts addressed an email she'd received from Elizabeth Kelley of Diamondhead Ranch on Upper Imnaha Road who asked the commissioners to consider repairs to the road. Roberts had forwarded a copy of Kelly's email to the other commissioners.

At least two of the commissioners said they had visited the site and agreed it needs work, particularly to accommodate today's larger vehicles, and it should be either rerouted or the problem area blasted through.

"That road was built somewhere in the '20s when vehicles were not very big," Roberts said.

Roberts said in 2011, the county had engineers look at the road and at that time, they estimated it would cost \$30-40 million. She estimated it would have gone up consid-

erably since then.

"I'm not exactly sure what we can do about it," she said. "I do know that the people on the upper river can take care of themselves."

"It isn't anything we can do immediately," Commissioner Todd Nash said. "Those agencies move extremely slow and to blast that stuff — it's really normal for rocks to roll off those hills into those waters. It's been happening for millennia. But for a human to do that, oh my gosh."

Roberts spoke to a lady who said the rumor she'd always heard is that no one wants to take on the road project and that it would entail blasting out rocks that might fall into the river and possibly hurt fish.

"She said, 'I have no idea if this is true, but if it is, I would like to believe that the safety of the community — kids on buses and visiting tourists — would be a priority.' It would be for the three of us, but it's not for National Marine Fisheries," Roberts said.

She believes the Nez Perce Tribal Fisheries wouldn't object because fish could adapt to any changes in the river.

Nash agreed, saying tum-

bling boulders down into the streambed would provide more areas where the Chinook can spawn.

Roberts explained this to the lady and the county would be willing, but they come up against a federal agency "that absolutely prohibits that."

Commissioner John Hillcock brought up the question of how to fund such a project.

Nash has been in touch with the National Marine Fisheries Service, which objected to any potential blasting that would disrupt the Imnaha River and the fish there. He said he had a county employee look at it and blasting an area was considered, but that would mean debris going into the river.

He suggested all the agencies involved should visit the site to see what could be done.

"I was politely blown off — and come to think of it, it wasn't all that polite," he said.

Roberts emphasized that the road repair isn't a matter of just a county decision.

"There are multiple federal agencies involved," she said.

Nash said he still wants a site visit by multiple agencies. "Certainly the human-safety factor has to outweigh

the conditions in the stream — you would think," he said.

### Other business

In other matters, the commissioners:

- Were told by Nash that the River Democracy Act was scheduled for a hearing the next day but it had been pulled from the docket. "That's good news," Nash said. In the past, the commissioners have expressed their opposition to the bill that would add nearly 4,700 miles of rivers and streams in Oregon to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The commissioners see it as more federal intrusion into local matters and tying up private and public land alongside those streams.

- Raised the tipping fees at the Ant Flat Landfill by \$10 a ton. This affects primarily large loads, such as those dumped by disposal services. The commissioners agreed in December to raise the tipping fees July 1. The delay gave solid waste disposal companies time to adjust their own rates.

- Enacted a 2% cost-of-living pay increase for all county employees.

- Promoted William "Billy" Wells to chief dep-

uty with the Wallowa County Sheriff's Office. He replaces Fred Steen, the last chief deputy, who retired Jan. 6, 2021.

- Rehired Jeremy Dodd as a 911 dispatcher, who had been on medical leave.

- Promoted Susan Moody from a 911 telecommunicator to 911 sergeant.

- Hired Larry Wightman as a maintenance worker with the county Public Works Department.

- Hired three temporary youth workers with the Department of Youth Services: Angel Castro, Gage Gordon and Brice Harmon.

- Approved a resolution to appoint Steve Anderson to the county's local public safety coordinating council.

- Approved an easement for Zippy Fiber Northwest to do work on and around utility poles along Hurricane Creek Road.

- Approved an easement for Ed Powers to install a water line across road three-quarters of a mile south of Wenaha Bridge.

- Approved occupancy agreements for Winding Waters Medical Clinic, Umatilla Morrow Head Start and Community Connections of Northeast Oregon at the Wallowa County Community Service Center. The agreements are routine annual contracts. Roberts said this year is for the usual one year but she hopes to increase it to five years each next year.

## IN BRIEF

### Haunt Camp returns to Josephy Center

JOSEPH — Haunt Camp is back, starting Wednesday, July 27, at the Josephy Center for Arts and Culture.

The Halloween-themed creative outlet is free for students going into the ninth through 12th grades. Participants will design and build a haunted house to open Halloween weekend.

The class is taught by J.R. Rymut, who spends half the year building film sets and museum exhibits in Los Angeles. Rymut devised Haunt Camp as a way to introduce teens to creative skills used in the entertainment industry. Last fall, they ran the Creature Creation Workshop that taught sculpting, molding and casting special-effects makeup.

While the time schedule is still to be announced, it is to be flexible to accommodate school sports, work and summer vacations.

For more information, go online to [www.hauntcamp.org](http://www.hauntcamp.org) or follow @hauntcamp. Rymut can be contacted directly by email at [hauntcamp@gmail.com](mailto:hauntcamp@gmail.com).

### ONPA to host governor forum

ENTERPRISE — The three leading candidates in the race to become Oregon's next governor will appear live at a forum Friday, July 29, hosted by the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association.

Republican nominee Christine Drazan, Democratic nominee Tina Kotek and unaffiliated candidate Betsy Johnson are all scheduled to debate starting at 2 p.m. in Welches.

The forum is moderated by Pamplin Media Group President Mark Garber.

Questions will come from editors of newspapers across Oregon.

The debate will be livestreamed on the Wallowa County Chieftain's website, beginning at 2 p.m. July 29.

### Weer honored by Soroptimist International

ENTERPRISE — Maria Weer of Building Healthy Families received the Soroptimist International Ruby Award on June 21 from the Soroptimists of Wallowa County.

The Ruby Award of \$500 is given each year to a local woman who has made a significant difference in the lives of women and girls in Wallowa County.

Weer has been with Building Healthy Families for 14 years. During that time, she has built programs and positive relationships across Eastern Oregon. While her work has reached beyond women and girls in our community, she has been able to build, manage, and expand training and educational programs that support girls and women.

Examples of her work include Girls on the Run of Eastern Oregon, collaborating with schools and partners to support Girls Circles, supporting teen mothers through

the Alternative Education Program/Early Head Start and working with Building Health Families staff to provide home visits, mentoring, parent education, and tangible resources to mothers and their families across our communities.

For more information about how Soroptimist improves the lives of women and girls, call Sue Wagner at 541-426-6423.

### Two honored by Soroptimists

ENTERPRISE — The Soroptimists of Wallowa County recently announced the winners of two scholarship awards.

Hannah Schmidtke was honored with the 2022 Fellowship Award. The Fellowship Award is a \$2,000 award presented to a Wallowa County woman practicing her business or profession who is continuing her education through a postgraduate (Master's or Ph.D.) program.

Schmidtke seeks to continue to learn, grow and develop a professional career as an influential educator and role model within her community. To that end, she is seeking a master of arts degree in elementary education, at Western Governors University. Schmidtke has served as a volleyball and

basketball coach in Wallowa County, a substitute teacher and will start a position at Joseph Charter School this fall.

Gracie Niezen won the 2022 \$5,000 Continuing Education Scholarship.

Niezen is currently attending OHSU School of Nursing/Eastern Oregon University. She intends to earn a bachelor of science degree in nursing, which is a three-year program located on the Eastern Oregon University campus in La Grande, and has completed two years of prerequisite coursework toward this degree. Niezen was inspired by her parents, a special education teacher and a volunteer firefighter, to pursue a service-related career. She has always been interested in nursing and did a long-term job shadow at Wallowa Memorial Hospital during her senior year in high school.

— Chieftain staff

## M. CROW

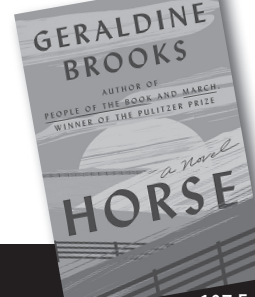
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