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Wallowa County Voices



Craig Yaw
Enterprise

Farrier enjoys peace and quiet of county

ENTERPRISE — Craig Yaw moved his family from Molalla six years ago in the dead of winter, but that has a lot to do with why they stayed.

"It was wintertime, we came into a foot and a half of snow," he said. "There was hardly any people and we knew it was the spot to be. One way in and one way out."

A farrier by trade for 30 years, he also owns small businesses in Joseph — a laundromat, car wash and a couple vacation rentals.

Craig and wife, Kathleen, have three daughters.

He said his favorite thing about Wallowa County is the camaraderie of the community and community effort that breeds.

He doesn't expect to do a lot of "playing" during the summer, but he will have a lot of horseshoeing work to do.

"I'm just looking forward to getting through the summer and into the fall," he said. "Summer's work for us; fall's when we can take off a bit of time."

With his kids involved in the Wallowa County Fair, he said his favorite part of the fair is the junior rodeo.

Among the food vendors, he said his favorite are the hamburgers.

With the increased fire restrictions imposed by the Oregon Department of Forestry, Yaw said he's not worried.

"I'm not the worrying type," he said.

He believes his own experience would serve as a good example for anyone thinking about moving here.

"Come out in the winter and see how it is," he said. "And you've got to bring your job with you. But we just really enjoy the pace of life here. It reminds us of the Oregon Coast when we were kids in the '70s."

— Bill Bradshaw,
Wallowa County Chieftain

STORM LEAVES TRAIL OF DAMAGE



This photo, submitted by Nicole Bellows, of Lostine, shows unique storm clouds rolling through Wallowa County on Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022.
Nicole Bellows/Contributed Photo

Storm shatters glass, downs trees, damages buildings

By ANDREW CUTLER,
BILL BRADSHAW and PHIL WRIGHT
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — Bruce Eien said he remembers feeling a sense of déjà vu Thursday, Aug. 11, in the aftermath of the severe storm that rolled through Wallowa County.

"It looked like how people were walking around after 9/11 — in a daze," he said. "That's exactly what it was."

The Enterprise resident, who has family who live in Wallowa, where much of the damage from large hail was centered, was touring the county to look at the damage in the aftermath of the storm.

"We were driving around, checking on all of the people we knew," he said, "making sure they were OK."

Earlier in the day, the National Weather Service in Pendleton issued a severe thunderstorm warning for much of Wallowa County until 5 p.m. Aug. 11. The warning included 2-inch-sized hail and winds up to 50 mph. Camden Plunkett, a meteorologist for the weather service, said there were reports of baseball-sized hail in the county.

"For the hail that was received in Wallowa County, we are leaning toward tennis-ball sized hail up to 2½ inches," he said. "We did also have some reports of ping pong ball-sized hail about 1.5 inches in La Grande as well."



Bruce Eien/Contributed Photo

The windshields of several vehicles in Wallowa bear the damage Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022, from large hail stones. A severe storm that rolled through Wallowa County produced tennis-ball-sized hail, according to the National Weather Service office in Pendleton.

Staff at Wallowa City Hall, who were in town during the storm, said they saw and heard of even larger hailstones. Mayor Gary Hulse and City Administrator Carolyn Harshfield both said they heard reports of "baseball-sized hailstones."

Plunkett said his office did hear about multiple injuries as a result of the hail, something Eien said he's heard while he was in Wallowa as well.

"We are hoping everyone is all right," he said, adding the county also received "frequent lightning strikes."

Staff at Wallowa Memorial Hospital in Enterprise confirmed the hospital treated "multiple" patients for injuries from the hailstones. Staff also reported how unusual this was, with one commenting she has lived in Eastern Oregon more than 40 years and this was a first for her.

Hulse said Aug. 15 that the last report he heard was that there were six to 10 minor injuries, one of whom was hospitalized. He said he hadn't heard an update on that injury.

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County comes together to help storm battered community

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — When disaster strikes, Wallowa County comes together.

That's what happened during and after the hail and wind storm that struck Thursday, Aug. 11.

"That's one good thing we still have in this country," said county Commissioner Susan Roberts, who grew up on a ranch near Wallowa. "We have a lot of people who come together to help."

Sheriff Joel Fish said numerous individuals and businesses turned out to help their neighbors.

"People jumped in and stepped up to the plate last night to help people who couldn't board up windows," Fish said Friday. "There were so many people helping, I can't tell you who all helped and did things."

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Bentz explains his positions for local voters

Congressman holds town hall meeting in Enterprise

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Before taking questions from a group of about 30 Wallowa County residents on Thursday, Aug. 11, U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz gave a little of his background.

A third-generation rancher from Southeast Oregon, where his Texan grandfather settled, he went onto college at Eastern Oregon University, got a law degree at Lewis & Clark Law School and practiced law for 30 years, first in litigation and trial law, then on water, ranches and the reorganization of ranches.

The freshman Republican who served 12 years in the Oregon Legislature discussed the possibility that the GOP might retake control of the U.S. House during the November elections. But that comes with a challenge.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Basey Dawson, a member of the 2022 Wallowa County Fair court and of the Joseph FFA, introduces her market cow, MAGA, to U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz after Bentz's town hall Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022, in Enterprise.

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