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## Wallowa County Voices



**Peggy Reeves**  
Joseph

### Often a snowbird, she'll stay this year

JOSEPH — Peggy Reeves has found a new home in Joseph after decades elsewhere in Oregon.

She's lived in Joseph for only a year, moving here after a year in Enterprise to be close to her daughter and son-in-law. Prior to Enterprise, she lived in Bend for many years, having worked there in a CPA office for about 25 years.

She has many favorite things about Wallowa County, particularly the people and the scenery.

"Except that it's cold in the wintertime," she said with a laugh.

She doesn't have any big plans before summer ends. She usually joins her daughter and son-in-law spending the winter in Florida, but doesn't think she will this year.

"I don't think I'm going to go this year," she said. "I'm going to stay here and do very little snow shoveling."

She doesn't plan on any winter sports.

"I'm retired from that, too," she said.

Reeves expressed strong concerns for the victims of the hailstorm in Wallowa.

"We just missed that by a hair," she said. "I'm glad our church — the United Methodist Church — has been able to help by sending things down there and helping when they can."

Closer to home, Reeves is pleased with the sidewalk work being done in Joseph.

"I think that's wonderful," she said. "We need to have places for people to walk. We have a lot of visitors. ... There's so much to do here."

The rain the county has experienced has allayed her concerns for wildfire season.

"You just do the best you can," she said.

When it comes to others who might consider making Wallowa County their home, Reeves acknowledges that the county is bound to grow.

"You can't get away from that," she said.

— Bill Bradshaw,  
Wallowa County Chieftain

# 53,000 ACRES AND CLIMBING

## Double Creek Fire, state's largest fire, was active on Labor Day

Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The largest wildfire in Oregon was an active one on the Labor Day holiday.

Fire activity increased on the southern end of the Double Creek Fire near Freezeout Road, and firefighters and task forces from the State Fire Marshal implemented structure protection and activated sprinklers installed around homes in the area.

The Double Creek Fire has burned 53,539 acres, according to the Tuesday, Sept. 6, update. The blaze is still zero percent contained, and there are 580 personnel assigned to fight the fire.

According to a press release from the Type 1 overhead team that's managing the Double Creek Fire, tactical firefighting aircraft were not able to assist firefighters on the ground Sept. 5 due to gusty northwest winds and an inversion over the area. Firefighters will spend Sept. 6 evaluating the fire along the Freezeout Road, and State Fire Marshal resources will continue to protect structures in the area.

"They're not calling it contained, but they have a lot of control lines in place," said Brentwood Richardson, a public information officer with the Type 1 team in Joseph.

He said Sept. 6 that a high-pressure ridge was coming in that afternoon and thunderstorms were expected Sept. 7-8. A red flag situation would be from 6 p.m. Sept. 6 through 8 p.m. Sept. 7, meaning the potential for rapid fire growth.

"They're doing a good job of holding the fire east of the (Imnaha) river," he said.

One of the concerns is finding a place to construct bulldozer lines as firebreaks in the Imnaha Canyon country, since the ridges there run north to south. Dozer lines would best be constructed on east-west ridges, of which there are few in the area.

State Fire Marshal task forces will also support firing operations along the Imnaha River. Fire crews will continue dozer and hand line construction above the powerline along the Imnaha River corridor and continue firing operations to keep up with fire spread to the north.

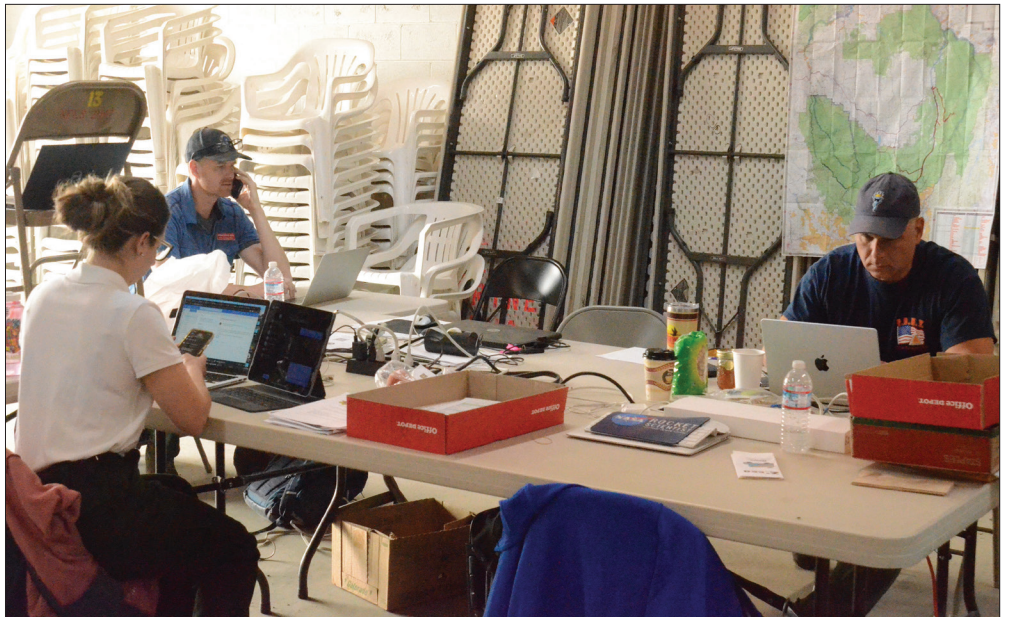
On the north end of the Double Creek Fire, firefighters will scout for opportunities to construct a control line. State Fire Marshal resources will develop a structure protection plan for the town of Imnaha.

The Double Creek Fire, which was caused by lightning, is a "full suppression" blaze,



Inciweb/Contributed Photo

A very large air tanker provides active fire suppression on the Double Creek Fire in Wallowa County on Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2022.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

The Thunder Room at the Chief Joseph Days Rodeo Grounds in Joseph has been turned into a command center for the Double Creek Fire and the Eagle Cap Wilderness fires nearby.

which means officials are trying to douse it as soon as possible.

Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 evacuations have been issued by the Wallowa County Sheriff's Office. A Level 3 "Go Now" is in

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### MORE INSIDE

Two local restaurants took it upon themselves to help battle the wildfires in Wallowa County, but not on the fire line — by feeding some 300 firefighters. **Page A3**

## Wallowans urged to submit damage info

### Residents gather for emergency meeting on storm damage

By BILL BRADSHAW  
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — Wallowa residents whose property was damaged in an Aug. 11 hailstorm were urged to quickly fill out forms giving as much detail as possible on what would become their claims during an emergency meeting of the Wallowa City Council on Thursday, Sept. 1.

More than 100 Wallowa residents turned out to hear what local, state and federal officials are trying to do to help them rebuild in the wake of the hailstorm that left many buildings and vehicles seriously damaged.

"We need more information on your needs," said Kathleen Cathey, a field representative for U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden.

Cathey advised residents to complete the forms distributed at the meeting as soon as possible, as there is a two-week deadline to get them in. However, if the forms aren't complete, she said, additional information can be added later.

### Elected officials helping

Wallowa County Commissioner John Hillock was pres-

ent at the meeting and noted that state Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athens, and state Rep. Bobby Levy, R-Echo, are actively seeking help for the community. Mayor Gary Hulse said he had contacted the state Office of Emergency Management two days after the storm, and that afternoon he heard from Gov. Kate Brown's office. Hulse also has asked for a public information official to help him and the city's recorder, Carolyn Harshfield, field the many telephone calls they've been handling since the storm.

Cathey said that as Hulse and Harshfield are trying to answer questions over the phone "for 850 people, one every 15 minutes, somebody's going to get missed." She agreed support was widespread.

"You have captured the attention and support of everybody in Oregon," she said.

### Contractors ready

Construction contractors also were there to offer advice and prepare to repair and rebuild homes.

Will Lehr, of Enterprise, who previously lived in Wallowa, is a recently retired general contractor who was organizing other contractors to come to the aid of Wallowa.

Several contractors cautioned residents not to be taken in by those who may promise more

than they would deliver.

"We'd rather underpromise and overperform," one of the contractors said. "That way we'll be friends with you."

Lehr assured those in attendance that each of the about 10 contractors present was proficient in at least one area of construction. Another contractor noted that since he is primarily a roofer, if there's someone who largely focuses on siding it would be best to subcontract to that contractor.

"That way we'll get it all done quicker," he said.

An insurance agent also urged property owners to make sure any contractor they deal with is licensed in Oregon. Some may be licensed in multiple states, but it's critical they also be licensed to work in Oregon.

One member of the audience asked if the nearby Boise Cascade mill in Elgin could be prevailed upon to sell plywood at cost to residents. Hulse said the mill already had donated a considerable load.

The contractors also addressed the concerns of property owners who are overwhelmed by the detailed paperwork and bureaucracy of dealing with insurance companies.

"That's our job," Lehr said. "We know how to do that."

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## Moisture, cooler temps boost yields

### Growers relieved at passing of last year's drought

By BILL BRADSHAW  
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA COUNTY — As summer winds down, so does harvest time for small-grains producers. Growers this year are increasingly finding their harvest much more bountiful than last year.

The main reason for this, many say, is the increased moisture this past spring.

Tim Melville, of Cornerstone Farms Joint Venture near Enterprise, said Wednesday, Aug. 31, that with all the moisture last spring, the crops are far from the "disaster" of last year.

Last year's drought and higher temperatures meant some of his dryland wheat yielded only 7-12 bushels per acre.

"We shouldn't have cut it, but we did," he said. "It cost more to cut it than we got out of it."

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