

INCREASE

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“I’ve been more fortunate than most, and I have no problem paying them more,” Willadsen said. “They have challenging jobs and work hard.” Fred Bell Jr., who owns La Grande’s Shortstop Extreme with his wife, Tara, said the minimum wage increase will not have a big impact on his business.

He explained only a small number of his employees are paid minimum wage. Bell said he views the minimum wage increase as a cost of living boost and is glad it will help workers.

Marco Rennie, the owner of Market Place Fresh Foods in downtown La Grande, said he opposes the state’s significant minimum wage increases because of



Photo by Dick Mason/EO Media Group

Ali Frank, the produce and chop shop manager at Market Place Fresh Foods in La Grande, cuts a watermelon Wednesday morning. Frank makes more than Oregon’s minimum wage, but a few employees at the market will receive a pay boost when the minimum wage increase July 1.

the effects they have financially.

“I don’t like it for business as a whole,” he said. “It will continue to be a strain.”

Rennie said he believes

the increases prevent young people from developing their full potential.

Rennie noted when he was growing up as part of the baby-boom generation, it was easy for teenagers

to get jobs, which allowed them to develop work ethics, values and skills that help them succeed in the workplace. But today, he said, the increases in the minimum wage combined with federal laws make it more difficult to hire teens for many jobs.

Market Place Fresh Foods has only a handful of employees who receive minimum wage.

“Most of them are college students putting themselves through school,” Rennie said.

Sorrels said she sees a touch of irony in the mandatory wage increase. She explained Oregon is one of the few states that requires employees, such as waiters and waitresses who receive tips, to also get mandatory minimum wage increases. But waiters and waitresses are less in need of wage increases because they often receive \$20 or more an hour in tips. Waitstaff

make up about 40% of Ten Depot Street’s minimum wage employees.

Sorrels also noted she cannot afford to give pay raises to deserving non-minimum wage employees, including cooks, because she is required to provide money that would have gone to them to other staff for their minimum wage pay boost.

Sorrels said she is considering addressing this by having customers pay a service charge in lieu of giving a tip. Money from the service charge could be used to provide pay increases to all of her employees. Sorrels said customers upset with service could choose not to pay the charge. Cities where many restaurants have service charges in lieu of tips include Portland, Seattle and Pullman, Washington, the restaurant owner said.

If a service charge at Ten Depot Street were put

in place, Sorrels said her customers still would have the option of providing a gratuity by depositing it in a tip jar.

Sorrels said the rising minimum wage increases she has to pay are taking a financial toll. She noted before the increases started almost four years ago she had a reserve fund she could draw upon for emergencies and to make building improvements.

“Because of the minimum wage increases, I have used up all of my reserves,” she said.

The minimum wage increases outside of non-urban counties that take effect July 1 will be 75 cents per hour. They will raise the minimum wage to \$13.25 inside the Portland urban growth boundary and \$12 per hour in about 15 counties in Western and Central Oregon, according to the Oregon Employment Department.

SALMON

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water quality and quantity, land use change, and habitat connectivity, said NRAC secretary and management plan technical writer Caitlin Rushlow. The plan also will provide a long-term vision for natural resources management to meet those challenges.

A \$35,000 grant from Meyer Memorial Trust in 2019 helped get the new effort off the ground.

“We know that much of the 1993 science is now outdated,” Jancaitis said. “But

there were some really wonderful things about the original plan that we want to maintain, including that it looks at the county and its landscape on a broad scale, and was meant to go far beyond salmon.”

The new Wallowa County-Nez Perce Tribe Natural Resources Management Plan is digital and computer-savvy. It lays out the county in hydrologic unit codes that correspond to named stream basins. The Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service and other state, federal and tribal agencies now map and store data

according to standardized HUC numbers. So this categorization helps share data and keep data updated. For example: Using the Imnaha River Basin’s HUC number (HUC 17060102), it’s easy to find up-to-date information about stream flows and temperature, water quality, irrigation, adjudicated water rights and much more.

Like the old plan, the new one will take the observations and experiences of community leaders and multigenerational landowners into consideration.

“The kinds of questions we’re asking people include what are the greatest nat-

ural resource challenges for the county, what opportunities do you see, and what accomplishments have you seen in the past 25 years,” Nesbitt said.

Last fall, Nesbitt interviewed four landowners, mostly in the Lostine and Wallowa areas. Rancher Dennis Sheehy of Wallowa said that his interview included a “pretty wide-ranging discussion” about county natural resources and land use.

The new plan will not have much for regulatory teeth, but it provides site-specific land-use planning guidelines.

“In so much as it informs people and developers, it has some regulatory use,” Nesbitt said. “For example, the planning commission director will run proposals for a development through the tech committee. They’ll look at what it says about that area in the new salmon/natural resources plan. Does the road need a bigger culvert? Is there an invasive plant problem? The technical committee will specify issues that need to be taken care of. The 1993 document has already been informing the county’s planning committee for a long time on conditional

use permits.”

The salmon plan and its successor are among the nation’s only natural resource planning documents at the county scale, especially those developed without a state mandate.

“Most of the natural resource plans I’ve found are for parks or state and federal lands,” Rushlow said. “There’s not much anywhere that includes this mix of private, county, state and federal ownerships at the county scale.”

“It’s been driven from inside the county,” Nesbitt said. “That makes it pretty unique.”

2 Wallowa County businesses reopen

Bill Bradshaw

EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE, LOSTINE — Deb’s Apparel, the longtime ladies apparel shop on Main Street in Enterprise, reopened June 15, after a two-month closure because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Owner Deb Kellermann said she doesn’t yet have a “grand opening” date set, as she’s waiting for some construction work to finish. She said she plans to rename it the Red Rose Boutique.

“I was going to just stay closed, but I decided I couldn’t stand not having anything to do,” she said.

Kellermann said she decided on the name in honor of her mother, the late Oretta Clegg.

“She loved red roses,” Kellermann said.

She said as she ponders retirement in a few years, she’ll keep all the favorite brands of clothing the shop has been known for.

“Maybe I’ll add a few



Photo by Bill Bradshaw/EO Media Group

M. Crow in Lostine is one of the Wallowa County businesses reopening after shutting down for the pandemic. The popular eatery and general store has expanded seating outside as well as its hours of operation.

more accessories,” she said.

And Lostine’s M. Crow is back in business after also closing its indoor service for the pandemic. But things are a bit different.

The popular eatery and general store in Lostine has reopened indoor seating, but customers need to adhere to social distancing, said manager Mike Junkin.

“We’ve reopened inside

according to COVID restrictions,” Junkin said.

The business also added picnic tables out front in an area formerly for parking.

M. Crow has also expanded its hours. The business is now open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

“We’re ready for summer and looking forward to it,” Junkin said.

Winding Waters revamps Joseph Clinic

By Ellen Morris Bishop

EO Media Group

JOSEPH — There’s a new look and new feel to Winding Waters Community Health Center’s Joseph Clinic.

A full remodel has made the interior of the clinic, snuggled between the Sports Corral and the Chief Joseph Days office on Main Street, brighter, lighter and more colorful.

For the staff, the most exciting parts include the new dental chairs and implements, a new digital X-Ray unit and a revamped bathroom.

Patients will find a spacious waiting area complete with local art, fresh paint and flooring throughout the building and, of course, that much nicer bathroom.

For the doctors and dentists, there’s a new retreat tucked in the back where they can compose notes, sip a fresh cup of coffee or just relax.

“During the COVID-19



Photo by Ellen Morris Bishop/EO Media Group

A dental hygienist attends to a patient in one of the new, bright dental areas in the revamped Winding Waters Clinic in Joseph.

shutdown, we had to close our clinic in Joseph,” said Winding Waters CEO Nic Powers. “We’d been thinking about doing a remodel. It seemed the ideal time. We took advantage of the required shutdown to make the space much more welcoming and effective.”

The work included fixing plumbing, replacing all of the dental furniture and equipment, and trans-

forming a cinderblock wall into a cheery expanse of art.

“We did a lot of work, including taking out walls and opening up the dental spaces so they were more light and airy. We added skylights. We did more than we planned at the start, but we’re getting great reviews from patients and staff alike. We’re thrilled to be taking care of people in Joseph again,” Powers said.



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