

Wolf Creek Grange feeds Thanksgiving dinner to community members

BY DICK MASON

The Observer

NORTH POWDER — North Powder has a generous community, one that sometimes is a bit too generous — at least for some. That's something Cecilia Lovely, the head cook for North Powder's Wolf Creek Grange's annual community Thanksgiving dinner on Sunday, Nov. 20, knows firsthand.

One of the donated turkeys Lovely cooked for the dinner weighed a cumbersome 50 pounds.

"It was so huge we had to cut it in half," Lovely said, because the big bird would not fit into Wolf Creek Grange Hall's ovens.

Handling the large turkey was one of the challenges the cooks for the grange's dinner, which has been conducted almost every year for at least 60 years, confronted while preparing the annual feast, which was free and open to the public.

The cooks lost more than a few hours of sleep preparing the meal in the days leading up to it, but not their sense of humor. This was apparent on Nov. 20

Another Thanksgiving meal in Union County

Faith Center invites the community to a free Thanksgiving dinner with food, family and fellowship on Thursday, Nov. 24, beginning at 3 p.m. in the Next Gen building, 10208 S. D St., Island City. Doors open at 11 a.m. for those who would like to cook together. For details, call Brooke at 541-663-6589.

as the cooks made last-minute preparations for the meal. "We have so many things going on that I'm not sure where I'm at," Lovely said with a laugh.

Bringing the community together

Despite a few speed bumps, the Wolf Creek Grange Hall opened for its Thanksgiving dinner 20 minutes early with a bountiful selection that included turkey, ham, rolls, mashed potatoes and gravy and, of course, pies.

Barry Princevalle, of North Powder, was among the more than 40 people who came.

"It is so fun to get together and see old friends," he said.

Jeff Nielsen, who came to the dinner with his wife, Wynn, said the annual Thanksgiving dinner

is symbolic of what Wolf Creek Grange does.

"It brings the community together," he said.

Nielsen noted that the annual Thanksgiving meal has enormous historical significance for the Wolf Creek Grange, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2021. He said it is believed the grange has been conducting its Thanksgiving dinners since it moved in 1957 to its present location, a building that previously housed many businesses including a meat market and mercantile store. He said the

site is a far cry from its original location near Wolf Creek, 8 miles northwest of North Powder, that was destroyed by a fire in the early 1940s.

Liz Robinson, a volunteer who helped prepare the dinner, said one of the best things about it is that it gives all people the chance to enjoy a good Thanksgiving meal.

"Not everybody is able to cook," she said.

Robinson said the Wolf Creek Grange members and the other community members who assist with the Thanksgiving dinner program share a common trait.

"We are all community oriented," she said. "We will do whatever we can to help people in the community. That is what we are here for."

Fauna Ferenbach, the program director and lecturer for Wolf Creek Grange, said the annual Thanksgiving dinner is



Fauna Ferenbach helps serve at the Wolf Creek Grange's annual Thanksgiving dinner on Sunday, Nov. 20, 2022, in North Powder.

Dick Mason/The Observer

symbolic of what makes North Powder special. Ferenbach moved to North Powder six years ago from Portland. "I found a sense of community I had never felt in my life," she said.

A job well done

Lovely said one of her favorite things about being part of the community Thanksgiving meal is seeing its effects.

"Watching everyone enjoy the meal makes us feel appreciated," she said.

Lovely is the head cook for all

Wolf Creek Grange's meals.

"She always does an amazing job," said Linda Dixon, a member of the grange.

Dixon said Lovely's knowledge of cooking is second to none.

"She absorbs knowledge and then shares it," she said.

Lovely noted that many of those helping to prepare the meal are of an age in which they no longer have big families to cook for.

"It is nice to be able to cook a big meal and then go home and put your feet up," she said.



Dick Mason/The Observer

Liz Robinson, left, volunteers in the kitchen at the Wolf Creek Grange's community Thanksgiving meal on Sunday, Nov. 20, 2022, in North Powder.



Dick Mason/The Observer

About 40 people took advantage of the annual community Thanksgiving meal at the Wolf Creek Grange in North Powder on Sunday, Nov. 20, 2022.

Traffic

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"We wanted to preserve the work by Anderson Perry," he said.

The walk-behind machine is typically used to paint parking spots — in straight lines — but this county crew was able to draw the curved lines dictated in the plans.

Now on hold until spring, these initial markings will be turned into a full-fledged design to help teach youngsters to be safe while riding bikes or walking.

The design was created by parent Kate Rockwell with the help of Marlow Stanton, ODOT senior traffic design engineer.

Discussion for the project started in May 2021, prompted by Angela Lattin, who was BELC director before moving to Pendleton in the summer of 2022.

"Without her efforts up front, this may not have ever happened," Nickens said of Lattin.

An initial grant of \$2,500 was awarded from the Transportation Safety Office of the DMV to cover materials for mobile bike rodeos and traffic garden items, such as stop signs, traffic cones, crossing guard equipment and ramps.

Community partners donated work throughout the process — Anderson Perry provided survey markings, Baker City swept the area, and Baker County did the striping.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

A Baker County crew — Dan McQuisten, right, Eli Witham and Jeff Martin — painted stripes on the blacktop at the Baker Early Learning Center on Oct. 29, 2022, for what will eventually be a traffic garden to help teach bicycle and pedestrian safety.

The design will be striped like a road — white outside lines, and yellow dotted lines for lanes of traffic. It includes straight sections, curved areas and a roundabout.

The plan also includes artistic details

to be added by students from Eastern Oregon University, who will earn a stipend from Eastern Oregon Head Start.

Nickens said the initial grant expired Sept. 30, 2022, before all the work was completed, but it was renewed until

Sept. 30, 2023.

Partners

The traffic garden is a project of numerous community partners, including Baker School District, Intermountain

ESD, Eastern Oregon University, EOU Head Start, Building Healthy Families, Oregon Department of Human Services, Saint Alphonsus-Baker City, Baker County YMCA, Baker City Police Department, Baker County Sheriff's Office, Baker County, Baker City, The Trailhead and ODOT.

Bike trailer

This isn't the first focus on bicycle safety in Baker County.

Prior to the pandemic, Baker School District partnered with The Trailhead to receive a grant from the Wildhorse Foundation for two enclosed trailers outfitted with bicycles and tricycles.

Before that, Community Connection had received a grant from the Jump Start program to request a trailer with bicycles to teach skills at local schools. That program was for one year, before the trailer moved to another community.

"The school district valued the program so much that they looked for funds to continue the program on their own, so they applied for and received the grant from Wildhorse," Nickens said. "The problem is that shortly after that award, everything was shut down with COVID restrictions and the trailers sat essentially unused for a period of time."

Now, when the traffic garden is complete, children will have a safe place to practice using bicycles.

Elk

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"We butchered it ourselves, cleaned the skull, boiled and bleached and pressure washed it," she said. "A lot of people helped me, and everyone had a lot of fun. At least we still have the meat."

Gyllenberg said she and her boyfriend had been preparing what's known as a European or skull mount of the bull at his

home at 810 D St. in Baker City. (A European mount includes the bare skull, without the hide, and the antlers.)

On Friday morning they planned to boil the skull one final time.

Then she got a text from her boyfriend. He was asking if she had taken the skull and antlers. "I thought he was kidding," Gyllenberg said.

She hadn't taken the trophy. But it was gone.

Sometime between about 8 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 17, and 6 a.m. the next day, someone stole the skull and antlers from the property. The trophy was outside, behind a fence. No one was home during the night, Gyllenberg said.

Because the antlers aren't visible from the street at night, she suspects the thief or thieves saw the trophy during the day and returned under cover of night.

Although the loss of the trophy is disappointing, Gyllenberg said she's especially bothered that whoever is responsible took the item that has sentimental value while leaving other things that have more obvious monetary value.

That includes the power washer she had used to prepare the skull, as well as bird-hunting decoys and other items.

"It's kind of sick," she said. "It makes you wonder if (the tro-

phy) was taken to hurt the person who owned it. You can buy another pressure washer."

Gyllenberg said she's not optimistic that she'll ever recover the skull and antlers.

But she said anyone who has information about the theft can

call her at 541-519-2702.

"We still have the memories of the hunt, but we don't have the trophy," she said. "I just think it's sickening to know that someone could ever take something they didn't even work to get."

Ski

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The road to the ski area, which is about 34 miles northwest of Baker City, has been plowed and sanded.

Anthony Lakes is celebrating its 60th birthday this winter.

The ski area officially opened on Jan. 12, 1963.

Anthony Lakes will commemorate the birthday with Throwback Thursday on Jan. 12, 2023, when lift tickets will be \$2 for ages 13 to 69, and \$1 for ages 7 to 12.

From Jan. 12-22, visitors are invited to bring their most mem-

orable photo from Anthony Lakes and pin it to the "Through the Years" wall display.

The resort's main birthday celebration will take place Saturday, Jan. 21.

Events include the Anthony Lakes Cup, a dual slalom race presented by the Anthony Lakes Ski

Racing Association, live music by the Greenneck Daredevils from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., and other events.

Skiers and boarders are invited to wear 1960s-style gear and attire.

Snow reports and other information is available at anthonylakes.com.

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