

Forecast

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Historical gem

It's been about 140 years since Kam Wah Chung & Co. opened its doors to Chinese and American customers in John Day, and about 45 years since the former general store and Chinese herbal clinic — preserved as it was in 1955 — was opened to public tours as a museum.

The official tourist season at Kam Wah Chung runs from May 1 through Oct. 31, seven days a week, with a maximum of eight tours of eight visitors per day, Merritt said.

The average is seven tours, but three days last year saw more than 100 people show up, and about half of them were unable to accompany a tour guide in the historic stone building.

Hundreds of visitors are turned away each year, Merritt said, but they are still able to learn from the exhibits in the interpretive center on the opposite side of Canton Street. This particularly impacts visitors who are passing through and international visitors who have limited time.

This year, Merritt will introduce a pilot program allowing a limited number of visitors to set a date and time to tour the historic building. With the current system, tickets are often gone by 9 a.m., he said.

Merritt said the staff does not formally track where tourists come from, but based on queries last June, about 20 percent came from China. About 60 percent are Dutch, drawn to Eastern Oregon by a reality-TV game show called "The Mole," he said. This year, the Philadelphians Tour Group of Gresham will include Kam Wah Chung on their tours to Eastern Oregon.

OPRD doesn't advertise the heritage site, but Travel Oregon promotes Kam Wah Chung heavily, Merritt said. Informal surveys indicate



Eagle photos/Richard Hanners

Historic cooking supplies in the kitchen at the Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site.

about 60-70 percent of visitors learned about Kam Wah Chung by word of mouth, he said.

Two new RV sites at Kam Wah Chung will help OPRD attract seasonal park hosts to help with operating the heritage site, Merritt said. One couple is returning after nine seasons. Hosts camped at Clyde Holliday State Park in the past, he said.

New additions

Local residents were the source of two new features at the heritage site. Friends of Kam Wah Chung authorized the purchase of a hydraulic monitor from Isa Larkin. The heavy cast-iron water cannon, which was used by placer miners in the early years of the gold mining boom here, will be the centerpiece of a future outdoor exhibit.

A 50-page scrapbook donated by the family of Charlie and Cecille Lewis contains memorial service cards and ceremonial dimes, news clippings and historical photos about Kam Wah Chung and the John Day Chinatown.

Charlie Lewis, who was a close friend of Ing Hay and lived to 104, wanted the museum to have the scrapbook after he died. He kept it on his bedstand at night, Merritt said.

In addition to sample napkins Ing Hay handed out for the Fourth of July, the scrap-

book contains photos of Chinatown buildings and two residents — Tall Sam and Monkey Tom.

Last year, Eric Brand, a student of Zhongzhen's in Hong Kong who is fluent in Chinese, discovered a 300- to 500-year-old medical book in the curation building. Owned by Ing Hay, it may be an original copy of a book written by one of the founders of Chinese medicine, Merritt said.

Archaeological finds

Last year's subsurface imaging project at the heritage site led by Chelsea Rose, an archaeologist at the Southern Oregon University Laboratory of Anthropology, turned up a number of unexpected findings, Merritt said.

Data from the ground-penetrating radar was compared to historical photos in order to identify possible Chinatown-era buildings, including a temple, two more general stores, a laundry and numerous residences.

Remains of at least 10 structures were revealed, including one close to Canton Street, Merritt said. Two important findings were that the radar found no significant mining impacts in the area, which could have seriously disturbed artifacts, and that the discovered features appear to be near the surface, he said.

Rose and a group of 15



Tincture bottles, animal parts and a mortar and pestle sit on a table in the apothecary section of the Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site.

undergraduate and graduate students will return to the heritage site July 11-15 to dig a trench where the temple is believed to be and at the site near Canton Street.

The findings will influence planning for the heritage site. An earlier master plan is defunct now that it's known key properties can't be acquired by the state, Merritt said. It's possible the only location for a new interpretive center is where the Gleason Pool sits now, he said.

A lot of design will go into the new center before it opens its doors at least four years from now, Merritt said. In addition to housing curation facilities and existing exhibits, the new center could feature a "virtual reality" room that would simulate the interior of the Kam Wah Chung



A Chinese shrine sits behind the historic wood cookstove in the kitchen at the Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site.

building.

Merritt said OPRD has the equipment and staff to create a three-dimensional digital image of the interior of the historic store. That data could be used to create murals that would accompany displays of items currently stored in the curation building. He cited exhibits at the Museum of Chinese in America, in New York City, as a model. It's even possible to stream the data into 3D goggles for children and people with disabilities.

Funding for the interpretive center will come from OPRD, which is primarily funded with lottery dollars, and donations. In 2006-2007, donors contributed the \$2 million needed to build the exhibits at the interpretive center, furnish the curation building and pay for the high-tech security and fire-prevention systems inside the Kam Wah Chung building.

Presentations

A public archaeology day

will be held at Kam Wah Chung on July 13 with displays of artifacts found both in the ground and inside the store. Archaeologists will give talks, and visitors will be given a chance to screen for artifacts, Merritt said.

Three talks on Chinese archaeology will be presented at the Canyon City Community Hall: July 11, Adrian Praetzelis, a professor emeritus at Sonoma State University; July 18, Priscilla Weagar, a well-known textbook author retired from the University of Idaho; and July 25, Ben Bronson and Chuimei Ho, a husband and wife team who have written about Chinese-American history.

The Oregon Museum Association will hold a conference in John Day on Sept. 15-17. Merritt said about 50 people will attend during Kam Wah Chung's busiest month. Snowbirds passing through the area boosted visitor numbers to 1,645 last September, he said.

Harvey

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Harvey noted that forests around Paradise, California, last year were "thick with fuels." He called last year's inferno "the most preventable disaster we have ever had."

A 40-year-old law, the 1976 Federal Land Policy Management Act, provided the first congressional mandate for coordination between local and federal governments. The act states that federal agencies "shall" coordinate, Harvey noted. Words matter, he said.

Supporters of the coordination process saw progress when it came to the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision. The Forest Service typically spends too much time developing plans, he said, and officials are upset when locals oppose their plans.

But locals opposed the Forest Plan for 15 years, he said. They kept telling the Forest Service the plan doesn't work. It had become "so convoluted it was worthless," he said, but Forest Service officials were afraid to do anything because of environmental lawsuits.

During the objection process, Forest Service officials from Washington, D.C., came to local meetings expecting harsh treatment. Instead, they encountered a friendly crowd, and they listened, Harvey said.

"By the grace of God, they opened their eyes," Har-

vey said, and the Forest Plan was withdrawn. Locals had won the battle but not the war, he said. There are good people in Washington now, and maybe local land managers will listen to them, he said.

County governments were reduced to a single comment during the objection process, which did not sit well with them, Harvey said. A better approach is to use the coordination process to ensure local needs are adequately addressed throughout the land management process, he said.

Harvey didn't advise simply invoking coordination. The first step is to draft a natural resource plan as a guideline. If written correctly, state and federal agencies must take it into consideration, he said.

Judy Kerr noted that a natural resource plan for Grant County brought to the county court in September 2015 was based entirely on the Baker County plan. A court ruling, however, prevented it from being put on the May 2016 ballot.

The county must also establish a Natural Resource Advisory Committee to advise the county court, Harvey said. The county court should appoint the committee members, he said, and he advised against relying on a single person for that role. Baker County whittled down its advisory committee to 13 members after some of them weren't willing to commit themselves to all the hard work, Harvey said.

Committee members could be recruited to attract professionals and diversity. Past Forest Service employees dissatisfied with the agency would make good committee members, he said, but he advised against establishing an unauthorized citizens committee or appointing any current federal employees, which could create a conflict of interest.

Jim Sproul said Grant County had a natural resource plan and committee, but it had been "drug through the dirt." He said the plan was backed with good documentation and was a good starting point. It has been a tough four years, he said, and it was a blessing to finally see everything come together the way it is.

Most people don't understand coordination, Dave Traylor said. Many people think, if people in New Jersey don't have a say, it's not coordination, he said.

People in other states have the right to provide input on land management planning here, Harvey said, just as people here have the right to provide input there. But people here don't do that, and wouldn't expect them to come here. They're not familiar with our needs, he said.

The pendulum for public land management has swung, Harvey said. Even environmentalists agree about the overabundance of forest fuels, and locals need to push back in an organized way to make the changes they want to see, he said.

Grant

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The coalition would retain ownership of some individual fibers in each cable that could be used by public institutions, including schools and local governments. The Grant Education Service District would be the internet provider for the public side of the network.

The application for the ReConnect grant is due May 31, and the John Day City Council will vote on the application May 14. The city has been acting as the coalition's fiscal agent until it further establishes itself.

Ortelco has been an independent company since 1914 and began deploying fiber to homes and businesses in 2005. Its past success in obtaining USDA funding along with its engineering and construction personnel makes the joint application stronger. The joint effort will also streamline the



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

Brandon Smith, a John Day city councilor and Grant County Digital Network Coalition board member, explains the board's recent decision to partner with Ortelco for a federal grant application during the council's April 23 meeting.

permitting process, Green told the city council.

The proposal was presented to the city council and Grant County Court last week. Green told the court it was a 40-year investment — which is the lifespan of the aerial cable.

Communications technology rapidly changes, and fiber provides the most capacity of any commercial technology, Green said. So the county must build up to meet the demands of changes in 10, 20 and 30

years from now.

Negotiations continue between the coalition and Ortelco, including discussions about the legal structure needed to create a public-private partnership between an intergovernmental agency and a for-profit company.

If all grant applications are successful, construction of the expanded network could begin next year and possibly be completed by 2021, Green told the city council.

Court

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of Columbia v. Heller, which recognized that an individual's right to possess firearms is not connected to service in a militia, and McDonald v. Chicago, which invalidated that city's handgun ban.

According to the resolution, "Grant County Court will not authorize or appropriate governmental funds, resources, employees, agen-

cies, contractors, buildings, detention centers or offices for the purpose of enforcing any element of such acts, laws, orders, mandates, rules or regulations that infringe on the right by the people to keep and bear arms."

That includes:

- Registration requirements for existing lawfully owned firearms.

- Prohibitions, regulations and/or use restrictions related to ownership of semi-automatic firearms, including those with the appearance or

features similar to fully automatic firearms or military "assault style" firearms.

- Prohibition, regulations and/or use restrictions limiting hand grips, stock, flash suppressors, bayonet mounts, magazine capacity, clip capacity, internal capacity or types of ammunition available for sale, possession or use.

- Registration and background check requirements beyond those customarily required at time of purchase prior to December 2012.

- Restrictions prohibiting the possession, carry or transport of lawfully acquired firearms or ammunition by law-abiding adult citizens or minors supervised by adults.

The resolution also acknowledges provisions of existing laws, including prohibiting possession of firearms by certain felons, individuals who are ruled mentally ill and certain individuals convicted of domestic violence; possession of machine guns, short-barreled shotguns, silencers and bump-type stocks; possession of unlawfully concealed firearms; possession of firearms by a minor; and possession of firearms in public buildings.

Notice

Grant County Taxpayers

The third installment of the 2018-19 property tax is due Wednesday, May 15th, 2019 by 5:00 p.m.

Payments may be made at the Tax Collector's Office at the Grant County Courthouse in Canyon City, or the payment may be mailed and postmarked no later than May 15th, 2019. Please remember that delinquent taxes accrue interest at the rate of 16% per year. If you have any questions, please call the tax office at 575-0107 or 575-0189.

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BARGAIN MATINEE IN () Adults \$7 ALL FILMS \$6 ON TIGHTWAD TUESDAY

MOVIE SCHEDULE MAY 3 - MAY 9

AVENGERS: ENDGAME (PG-13)		
The Avengers assemble once more in order to undo Thanos' actions and restore order to the universe.		
FRIDAY	(3:45)	7:30
SAT & SUN	(12:00) (3:45)	7:30
MON - THURS		6:30
UGLY DOLLS (PG)		
Animation. The free-spirited Ugly Dolls discover who you truly are is what matters most.		
FRIDAY	(4:15)	7:20
SAT & SUN	(12:30) (4:15)	7:20
MON - THURS		7:20
BREAKTHROUGH (PG)		
When her son drowns in a lake, a faithful mother prays for him to come back from the brink of death and be healed.		
FRIDAY	(4:00)	7:10
SAT & SUN	(12:15) (4:00)	7:10
MON - THURS		7:10

\$9 Adult, \$7 Senior (60+), Youth