

More visitors find Kam Wah Chung

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

More visitors are coming to the Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site, but a recent survey showed that additional growth is possible.

Don Merritt, the museum curator, shared with the John Day City Council and the Grant County Court that the study helped show the museum what can be done to improve their reach with tourists and how to better direct guests to local businesses and attractions.

The survey showed that 9,382 people visited Kam Wah Chung so far in 2019. The survey gave visitors an opportunity to note what would make their visit more enjoyable.

"I was having a conversation with someone in my office when I was typing up this presentation and they said 'Coffee shop? That's really silly. Everybody knows there's like five coffee shops in John Day,'" said Didgette McCracken, the Oregon State University Extension Open Campus coordinator, speaking at the county court meeting. "I said that was a good comment because we know there's like five coffee shops in John Day, but our visitors don't know what our amenities are."

Another common request that visitors made was to have a Chinese restaurant.

Comments like this have indicated how Merritt and volunteers at Kam Wah Chung can better inform people about what the area can provide.

With the survey showing that 63% of the visitors were over the age of 56, this prompted Grant County Commissioner Sam Palmer to ask what can be done to market to millennials.

"We knew that we had a gap in advertising and marketing," said Merritt. "In our front group we are working on a new Facebook page, we are currently developing a brand



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

Didgette McCracken (left) and Don Merritt (right) talk about Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site's increase in visitors, speaking at the Nov. 13 county court meeting.

new website and we want to market that as well. We are also working on grant money for extra marketing and funding."

Merritt noted the importance of marketing to people from out of state and internationally as well.

The amount of people visiting Kam Wah Chung has doubled in the last three years and the amount of visitors will continue growing with help from national and international television shows.

In other county court news:

- The court approved the revised contract between Community Counseling Solutions and Grant County. The state developmental disabilities office recently had some changes that they wanted passed into the county contracts.

- The court approved the Airport Runway Decoupling/Supplemental Project CatEx.

- The court accepted the Critical Oregon Airport Relief Program Grant agreement. This COAR grant will provide almost \$136,000 that will supplement other grant agreements

at a 9% match funding for the FAA eligible project cost. This is for the North Corporate Apron project.

- The court approved and signed a letter of support for an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board application. This will aid a study on empty subsurface aquifers that can be filled or refilled with water when there are heavy flows or can be pumped out later when there are low flows.

- The court approved an easement to the city of John Day for the sewer line near the fairgrounds. After discussion between the county and the city, it was made final that no land change hands.

- The court approved an amendment to reinstate the search and rescue line funds of \$14,000. Previously, the county closed three accounts that were no longer necessary for their services provided by the county. The search and rescue line was closed in error.

The two accounts that were cut and returned to the general fund were \$60,270 for the jail expansion and \$25,180 for the book mobile reserve.

OBITUARIES

Rod Paulson

Rod Paulson, 61, of John Day, Oregon, passed away on Nov. 10. Arrangements have been entrusted to Driskill Memorial Chapel. To leave an online condolence for the family, please visit driskillmemorialchapel.com.

Richard Courchesne

Richard Courchesne of Long Creek passed away in Bend on Nov. 13.

He was born May 3, 1946, in Berkeley, California, the third of five sons of William and Gail Courchesne. He graduated from El Cerrito High School.

In his youth, he was active in his church, sports, Boy Scouts and DeMolay. After high school, he attended the University of California, Berkeley, receiving a degree in social welfare.

He worked as a Probation Officer for Alameda County for 20 years. There he met Beverly Bouillez and they married in 1978. They lived on a small ranch in Vacaville, California, until 1987, when shortly after the birth of their two daughters; they purchased their ranch in Long Creek.

While ranching he also drove school bus for Long Creek School and later became an activity's bus driver for Grant Union High School and greatly enjoyed his trips around the state. He was a member of the Elks, Masons and the Grant County Stockgrowers Association.

Richard never hesitated to lend a hand to friends or family. He was a true people person. Richard was always smiling and waving at friends and strangers alike. He took great joy in his involvement and support of school activities, tending to his ranch and animals, and spending time with his two young granddaughters. His bright and infectious smile will undoubtedly be missed by many.

He is survived by his wife, Beverly, daughters Danielle (Lee Kramer) and Amanda, granddaughters Rylie and Hannah, brothers Alfred, Gaylord, Eric and Bill and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents.

A celebration of life will be held at the Long Creek Seventh-Day Adventist Church at 1 pm on Saturday, Nov. 23rd. Dinner will follow at the church's Friendship Hall.

Mona Lee Nodine

Mona Lee Nodine, 72, of Mt. Vernon passed away on Nov. 14, at Blue Mountain Hospital in John Day. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Arrangements have been entrusted to Driskill Memorial Chapel. To offer online condolences to the family, Visit www.driskillmemorialchapel.com.

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Hello Grant County,
Well, the holiday season has officially begun! Thanksgiving is next week and then only 27 days until Christmas! Are you ready?

Ladies, don't forget Ladies Night at Len's Drug Thursday, Nov. 21st from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM! The Annual Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner will be held at the John Day Elks Lodge from 1:00 – 4:00 PM. Home deliveries are available. Call 541-575-1824 if you would like one!

In Prairie City, A free Thanksgiving Dinner will be provided at the PBC Teen Center. Call 541-820-3696 for more information.

Check out the downtown John Day Businesses – Many will be participating in the Hometown Holidays decorating contest. Let them know you appreciate their efforts in making downtown look festive for the holiday season!

Friday, November 22nd there will be a Spaghetti Dinner & Silent Auction in the Seneca gymnasium. Proceeds will go toward a new Fire Station. Doors open at 5:00 PM.

There will be Holiday and Christmas Bazaars galore, starting with Christmas on the Prairie November 23rd and Santa Paws will be there as well!

The Black Friday Bazaar will be at the Canyon City Community Hall on November 29th. There will also be a Christmas Tree Lighting at The Corner Cup at 6:00 PM. Bring the kids to visit with Santa! This is what December is looking like:

Dec 5th – Light up a Life at Valley View Assisted Living – 6:00 PM

Dec 6th – The Carrie Young Memorial at the John Day Elks Lodge

Dec. 7th – The Blue Mountain Hospital Auxiliary Christmas and Keerins Hall Christmas Bazaars

Dec 14th - The Timber Trucker's Light Parade – The Chamber will have fire pits, cookies and hot cocoa 6 PM to 9 PM.

Be sure to check out what is happening at the Painted Sky Center for the Arts. They have a lot of great things going on!

If I missed anything it's because I didn't know about it! Sorry! Please let me know if you have any events going on so I can get them on our calendar.

This month's Chamber Board meeting and no-host luncheon will be Thursday, November 21st. The board meets at the Chamber office at 10:30. Everyone is welcome. Don Merritt and Didgette McCracken, will be sharing information from a survey that was done at Kam Wah Chung this summer.

Our speakers at the Luncheon will be Kurt Renstrom from Johnson Benefit Planning. Kurt works with the Bend Chamber of Commerce to offer Health Insurance to Small Businesses at a more affordable cost. Kathy Cancilla from the Grant County Health Department will also be sharing information from the 2019 Community Health Assessment.

Remember to Shop Local!
Tammy Bremner
Manager, Grant County Chamber of Commerce

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Last Week's Temps

John Day	HI/LO
Wednesday	59/40
Thursday	60/36
Friday	55/35
Saturday	54/35
Sunday	59/33
Monday	55/23
Tuesday	48/21

24/7 FORECAST
AUTOMATED: 541-575-1122
ROAD CONDITIONS: 511; TRIPCHECK.COM
NOAA WEATHER RADIO FOR JOHN DAY
162.500 MHZ

WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE WEEK OF NOV. 20-26

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Possible snow	Partly sunny	Sunny	Partly sunny	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Mostly cloudy
43	44	49	50	46	37	43
26	25	27	33	21	16	22