



The deadline for What's Happening items is 5 p.m. Friday. Call the Eagle, 541-575-0710, or email editor@bmeagle.com. For meetings this week, see our list in the classifieds.

Thursday, Jan. 30

Grant County Republican Central Committee meeting

• 5:30-7 p.m. The Outpost Pizza, Pub & Grill, John Day
Special guests include circuit court judge candidates John Lamborn, Jim Carpenter and Rob Raschio who will speak and answer questions. The meeting is open to the public.

Grant School District Student Investment Account meeting

• 6 p.m., Grant Union High School library
Everyone is welcome to provide input.

Saturday, Feb. 1

Blue Mountain Mule Deer Association dinner

• 4:30 p.m., Grant County Fairgrounds
The event begins at 4:30 p.m., and dinner is at 6 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 8

Wyatt Simmons benefit dinner and silent auction

• 5 p.m., Mt. Vernon Community Hall
The event benefits Wyatt Simmons, a 6-year-old boy from Mt. Vernon, who is receiving treatment for kidney cancer in Portland. For more information, contact Allison at 530-520-0472.

Saturday, Feb. 15

Sweetheart shoot

• 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Kimberly Rock Products pit
A fundraiser for the Grant County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue, the shoot will also feature a raffle, baked goods and concessions. Lunch will be available. For more information, call 541-934-2143.

Sunday, Feb. 16

Prairie City Seniors potluck

• 1-3 p.m., Prairie City Senior Center
All are welcome to enjoy music, dancing and food. The Old Time Fiddlers from Grant and Harney counties will provide music.

Saturday, Feb. 29

Seneca PTA bingo fun night

• 5-8 p.m., Seneca School gym
Food and prizes will be available. For more information, contact Jessica Moore at 541-620-1640 or Dana McLean at 503-798-3249.

10 years ago

Stick horse rodeo on tap

Cowboys and cowgirls of all ages are invited to family fun event, at the annual stick horse Rodeo and Chili feed, Saturday, Jan. 30, in the Seneca School Gym. The chili feed, which begins at noon, costs \$3 a person, for a bowl of chili and corn bread.

The rodeo action starts at 1 p.m.

Four events will be featured: Bronc riding, barrel racing, pole bending and the Calcutta barrel Race.

Participants are encouraged to wear their best rodeo duds, but boots and spurs must be left in the bunk house. Only gym shoes are allowed on the gym floor. Entry forms are at the school office and library, and requested back by Jan. 28. There's a fee of \$2 per event (maximum of \$15 per family) in the following age groups: Preschool-kindergarten; Grades 1-3, 4-6, 7-12 and adult.

Rodeo entries will be accepted during the chili feed, until 12:45 P.M. Participants are encouraged to bring their own stick horses; the school has a few available on loan. The event is sponsored by the Seneca School PTA.

10 years ago

Ready Set Sled

The Grant County Snowballers are getting ready to tout the state's premier snowmobile region with a bigger and better Seneca Poker Ride next month.

Now they just need a little more of the white stuff.

"We're ready to go, but we need a lot more snow — so start dancing," joked Anthony Kodesh, Snowballers president.

The Seneca Poker Ride is set for Feb. 7, 2009, and organizers expect to see more snow by the time of

OUT OF THE PAST



Eagle file photo

From 10 years ago: The Grant County Snowballers are getting ready to tout the state's premier snowmobile region with a bigger and better Seneca Poker Ride next month.

the ride. They have a contingency plan just in case. If there's not enough snow in Seneca, the ride will be based at Huddleston Snow Park instead.

The event, in its fifth year, includes two Poker Ride courses — 65 miles and 30 miles round-trip — that start and end in Seneca. There also will be a radar run, with participants sledding against the radar gun on a track about 600 feet long.

This year, as a lure to more participants, the Poker Ride offers a bigger purse — \$2,000 total, with individual awards ranging from \$800 for first place to \$50 for 10th place.

Participants can buy a poker hand for \$10 at Seneca, or in advance at locations including Doug's Automotive, John Day Polaris, the Forest Service office, the Grant County Chamber of Commerce and other businesses.

You don't even need to ride to play a hand, Kodesh said.

The event also will include a raffle, with prizes at 3 p.m.

Organizers want to sell 200 poker hands, and they hope the larger purse and greater variety of individual prizes will help pull in about 100 new participants.

The Poker Ride is one way the Snowballers hope to promote snowmobiling in Grant County to tourists who would enjoy the area's attributes and support local restaurants, motels and other businesses.

The Snowballers got help this year in the form of grants from major sponsor Les Schwab and the county's transient occupancy tax, which is used to promote tourism.

John Bastian, a past president of the Oregon State Snowmobile Association, said the event is being publicized in Bend, Pendleton and elsewhere.

"This is a plus all-around for the whole county," he said.

Kodesh said snowmobilers generally plan at least one weekend getaway a season, and some do even more.

When they do, he said, "we want them to pick Grant County, not McCall (Idaho)."

The biggest draw is the area's groomed trail system, thanks to the Snowballers.

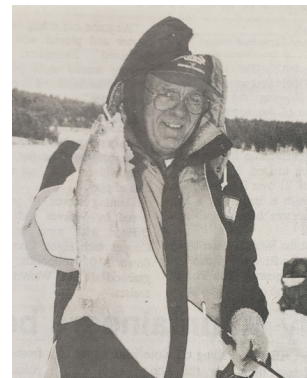
Grant County has more than 800 miles of groomed snowmobile trails, with the club doing the work on more than 500 miles.

"The largest trail system in the state is right here," said John Bastian.

Members don't take the summer off, either. In addition to their monthly meetings and community service activities, the Snowballers do trail maintenance on forest roads that, come winter, will be prime snowmobile routes.

"We have a great cooperation with the Malheur National Forest," Bastian said.

Lindy Bastian, past president of Snowballers, said that once people try snow-



Eagle file photo

From 25 years ago: Larry Bass, of Prairie City, hoists a fat, healthy rainbow trout he caught recently while jigging the chilly depths of frozen Phillips Reservoir. Bass was actually fishing for perch when the trout struck his jib. And no, Bass caught no bass that day.

mobiling in Grant County, they'll want to come back. Recently, a fellow from Halfway brought about two dozen people to the area to snowmobile because he had enjoyed it so much when he attended the OSSA state convention in 2007 in John Day.

The organizers know tourism is not the only solution to Grant County's economic challenges. However, they say it can be an important part.

"We already have all sorts of things going on here to attract people in the summertime," said Kodesh. "We're ready to bring them in for the winter. This is nothing but a win-win for the area."

When they're not promoting their rides, the Snowballers keep busy with community service activities. They participate in the Festival of Trees each year, and help with food drives and other activities. They also offer snowmobile safety, training and youth rider programs, and help the Sheriff's Office with wintertime search and rescue operations.

The club has about 70 family memberships, but more are welcome.

National Stalking Awareness Month

Contact the Grant County Victim Assistance Program at 541-575-4026 or Heart of Grant County at 541-575-4335

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