

Hailstorm pounds Wallowa County

By **ANDREW CUTLER**
and **PHIL WRIGHT**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — Bruce Eien said he remembers feeling a sense of déjà vu Thursday, Aug. 11, in the aftermath of the severe storm that rolled through Wallowa County.

“It looked like how people were walking around after 9/11 — in a daze,” he said. “That’s exactly what it was.”

The Enterprise resident, who has family who live in Wallowa, where much of the damage from large hail was centered, was touring the county to look at the damage in the aftermath of the storm.

“We were driving around, checking on all of the people we knew,” he said, “making sure they were OK.”

Earlier in the day, the National Weather Service in Pendleton issued a severe thunderstorm warning for much of Wallowa County until 5 p.m. Aug. 11. The warning included 2-inch-diameter hail and winds up to 50 mph. Camden Plunkett, a meteorologist for the weather service, said there were reports of baseball-sized hail in the county.

“For the hail that was received in Wallowa County, we are leaning toward tennis ball-sized hail up to 2½ inches,” he said. “We did also have some reports of pingpong ball-sized hail about 1.5 inches in La Grande as well.”

Plunkett said his office did hear about multiple injuries as a result of the hail, something Eien said he’s heard while he was in Wallowa as well.

“We are hoping everyone is all right,” he said, adding the county also received “frequent lightning strikes.”

Staff at Wallowa Memorial Hospital, Enterprise, confirmed the hospital treated “multiple” patients for injuries from the hailstones. Staff also reported how unusual this was, with one commenting she has lived in Eastern Oregon more than 40 years and this was a first for her.



Nicole Bellows/Contributed Photo

This photo, submitted by Nicole Bellows, of Lostine, shows unique storm clouds rolling through Wallowa County on Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022.

Eien said around 4 p.m. the power went out in Enterprise and about the same time, his wife received a text from her parents in Wallowa.

“We lost everything,” he recalled the text saying. “We immediately got in the car. We didn’t know what that meant.”

Eien said as they reached Wallowa, the damage sharpened into focus — cars with shattered windshields, downed trees and homes with severe damage.

“There was a tree that hit a house, some trees in front of the high school went over,” he said. “Telephone lines, power lines went down.”

Power remained out for 887 customers in Wallowa into the early morning hours of Aug. 12. According to the Pacific Power website, 887 customers were without power following the storm. The outage was first reported shortly before 4 p.m.

Power also was out to about 13 customers in the Minam area. The outage was also reported shortly before 4 p.m.

As of 8:45 a.m. Aug. 12, the Pacific Power outage map showed power remained out but was expected to be restored before 10:30 a.m. in both locations.

Power was out in other parts of the county, according to Pacific Power’s Twitter feed.

More than 5,300 customers in Enterprise and Wallowa were

without power late in the afternoon. The cause of the outage was severe storm damage, according to the utility’s Twitter feed. Power was restored in Enterprise and Joseph before 8 p.m. on Wednesday.

Plunkett said the storm was a perfect chain of events to cause the large hailstones.

“We had really strong updrafts and then we had really strong wind shear that allowed an organized supercell thunderstorm to develop,” he said.

The storm took about 90 minutes to pass through the county, Plunkett said, and once it crossed into Idaho, the storm weakened significantly.

Plunkett said the expected 50 mph wind gusts did not materialize.

“We did not have any confirmed wind gusts in Wallowa County,” he said.

There were reports of 60 mph gusts at the La Grande/Union County Airport.

Plunkett said there is not a lot of data available on supercells in Wallowa County.

The last recorded event was a tornado with a rating of EF2 that hit June 11, 1968. EF means “enhanced Fujita scale,” and a 2 on the scale means gusts of three seconds of 111-135 mph. The Western Regional Climate Center, he said, reports that tornado came with golf ball-sized hail.

Prairie Wood seeks air permit renewal

By **STEVEN MITCHELL**
Blue Mountain Eagle

PRAIRIE CITY — Prairie City’s newly reopened sawmill is applying to renew an air quality permit.

Prairie Wood Products sawmill holds a permit that expires in early December and has applied for a five-year renewal, according to a public notice from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

The proposed permit does not increase the sawmill’s emission limits, according to DEQ.

In the public notice, the DEQ noted that Prairie Wood filed a timely renewal application, and the current permit remains valid until

the state decides.

Under the permit, the facility would be required to monitor air contaminants by using federally approved monitoring practices and standards.

Among other conditions, the permit caps Prairie Wood at releasing no more than 74,000 tons of greenhouse gases per year, according to DEQ.

Generally, DEQ points out, a facility’s actual emissions are less than the maximum limits established in a permit. Nonetheless, the level of actual emissions can increase to the capped limit.

The public can submit written comments regarding Prairie Wood’s pending renewal for an air quality permit to Nancy Swofford, DEQ’s air

quality permit coordinator.

Comments can be sent by mail to Oregon DEQ, 475 NE Bellevue Drive, Suite 110, Bend, OR 97701 or by email to eraipermits@deq.oregon.gov. To be considered, comments must be received by 5 p.m. Sept. 9.

Those looking for additional information can reach Swofford at the same email address or by phone at 541-633-2021.

To read the full public notice, go to the DEQ website at <https://tinyurl.com/4hky3ba3>.

The draft permit and related documents are available for public review at the Grant County Public Library in John Day. The address is 507 S. Canyon Blvd.

Fire ravages Pendleton Flour Mills

By **JOHN TILLMAN**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Tony Flagg’s career with Pendleton Flour Mills began as vice president of grain operations in 1983. He was instrumental in developing the grain elevator at Mission for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

“I ran grain operations at Pendleton Flour Mills until I merged and acquired myself out of a job in 2003,” he said.

Pendleton Flour Mills and its elevators partnered with other companies to form Grain Craft in 2014. Northwest Grain Growers, Walla Walla, assumed Grain Craft’s lease on the Mission elevator from the tribes in June 2016.

Flagg moved back to Pendleton from retirement in Florida on the Fourth of July this year.

“The fire is quite a tragedy,” he said. “The business has been around for 112 years.”

On Wednesday, Aug. 10, fire tore through the mill. Fire departments around the region responded to help Pendleton Fire Department take on the blaze. There were no reports of injuries, but Pendleton Fire Assistant Chief Tony Pierotti reported silos were at full capacity of finished grain, so the fire fuel load was extreme.

Flagg assessed the impact of the fire on local businesses. He said he expects more of a negative effect on grain growers than on truckers.

“If growers can’t sell as much grain locally, it might actually help truckers,” he said. “They’ll get more long hauls to the river, and fewer short hauls to Pendleton and Mission.”

Local growers, however, are likely to be hurt by the disaster.

“Short-term, there should be a negative impact for growers,” Flagg said. “They had three main market alternatives before the fire: United Grain (Corp.), Northwest Grain Growers and Pendleton Flour Mills (now

Grain Craft). Three made for a more competitive market. Eliminate one, and competition is reduced. Pendleton Flour Mills offered a good price, but smaller volume than the export buyers.”

Flagg noted this year’s crop already is big.

“It was a challenge to find a home for physical storage even before the fire,” he said.

Flagg pioneered ground storage as president of United Grain, which exports to Asian markets.

Grain Craft, the largest independent milling company in the U.S., on June 21 announced its parent company entered into a deal for Redwood Holdings of Baltimore to acquire Grain Craft. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed, baking-business.com reported.

Redwood Holdings has invested in longstanding, family-owned businesses across a range of industries. Grain Craft will continue to operate as an independent business following the transaction, the company reported.

WHAT’S HAPPENING

THURSDAY, AUG. 18 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

SATURDAY, AUG. 20 Grant County Farmers Market

• 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., South Washington Street, Canyon City

Locally-grown produce and other items for sale in an open-air setting every Saturday from mid-June through mid-October.

Quilt of Valor giveaway

• 11 a.m., Clyde Holliday State Park, east of Mt. Vernon on Highway 26

The Grant County Piece-makers Quilt Guild will host a cookout and quilt giveaway to honor Grant County veterans. Guild members will begin serving hamburgers and hotdogs with chips at 11 a.m. At 1 p.m., veterans will receive handmade quilts during the Quilt of Valor ceremony in gratitude for their service. The cost for lunch is \$8 for non-veterans, while veterans eat for free. Tickets will be sold for a chance to win a quilt or a gift basket worth more than \$400. All proceeds go to the guild to help make more quilts.

Family Movie Night

• Dusk, Grant Union Junior/Senior High School, 911 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day

A free series of fami-

ly-friendly movies screened outdoors on the football field at Grant Union. Tonight’s selection: “Clifford the Big Red Dog.”

THURSDAY, AUG. 25 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

SUNDAY, AUG. 28 Silvies Sunday Slam

• 11:30 a.m., The Retreat and Links at Silvies Valley Ranch, 11 miles south of Seneca on Forest Road 3930

Couples date: Any two people play for \$50 each (husband/wife, boyfriend girlfriend, father/daughter, mother/son, etc.). Sunday Slams, open to all Grant and Harney County residents, include golf, cart, range balls and a hotdog lunch. Check-in at the gatehouse starts at 11:30 a.m., with the first tee time at 1 p.m. Call 800-SILVIES to sign up.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 1 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 4 Silvies Sunday Slam

• 11:30 a.m., The Retreat

and Links at Silvies Valley Ranch, 11 miles south of Seneca on Forest Road 3930

Labor Day weekend: Wear your biggest, brightest belt buckle, and you and your partner play for \$50 apiece. Sunday Slams, open to all Grant and Harney County residents, include golf, cart, range balls and a hotdog lunch. Check-in at the gatehouse starts at 11:30 a.m., with the first tee time at 1 p.m. Call 800-SILVIES to sign up.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 8 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 15 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 22 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 24 Monument Buckaroo

Festival and Harvest Auction

• Noon to 7 p.m., Monument Senior Center, 269 Main St., Monument

Food, music, games, more food and auctions mark this fifth annual fundraiser for the Monument Senior Center. The festivities begin at noon with a 4-H booth serving tacos and registration opening for the live and silent auctions. At 1 p.m. there will be live music along with horseshoes, cornhole, face painting and other diversions, with prizes for the kids. The live auction starts at 3 p.m. At 5 p.m., a dinner of salmon and elk with all the trimmings will be served, followed by a dessert auction at

6. The cost for dinner is \$20 per person or \$35 per couple. Children 6-12 are \$7.50, and kids under 6 eat free.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 25 Silvies Sunday Slam

• 11:30 a.m., The Retreat and Links at Silvies Valley Ranch, 11 miles south of Seneca on Forest Road 3930

The last Sunday Slam of the year is a couples date: Any two people play for \$50 each (husband/wife, boyfriend girlfriend, father/daughter, mother/son, etc.). Sunday Slams, open to all Grant and Harney County residents, include golf, cart, range balls and a hotdog lunch. Check-in

THURSDAY, SEPT. 29 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

Do you have a community event you’d like to publicize? Email information to editor@bmeagle.com. The deadline is noon Friday for publication the following Wednesday.

Thank You
to Everyone that
helped make the
**2022 Prairie City
Fiber Fest**
a Success!

A Special Thanks to:
Grant Union FFA &
Strawberry Riders 4H Club
(Leaders, Kids & their Parents!)

Thank you to all of our Volunteers: Bob Shive, Jessi Brunson, Cindy Brusch, Diane & Ed Higbie, Ethelyne Kauth, David Kebler, Cathy Lewis, Nancy Nickel, Patty Ross, Jen Smith, Teresa Trulock and Mary Jones.

Thank you to the Vendors, Workshop Instructors and Attendees.

A Huge Thank you to our Sponsors: Chester’s Thriftway, Huffman’s Family Foods, Grant County Chamber of Commerce/Transient Room Tax Fund, Travel Oregon/Eastern Oregon Visitors Association, Business Oregon, Grant County Economic Development, Oregon Trail Electric Co-op, The City of Prairie City, Grant County Fair, Sally Bartlett/Prairie Sun Bakery and ER Printing & Graphics.

for up-to-date information visit:
www.PrairieCityFiberFest.com

Mark your Calendar: July 29 & 30 for the 2023 Prairie City Fiber Fest!
Workshops Friday July 28 through Sunday July 30 • Shopping Saturday & Sunday!

COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Grant County is now Recruiting Volunteers to serve on the COMPENSATION BOARD as required by ORS 204.112. This board shall include three (3) members of the community who have knowledge of personnel and compensation management.

Applications are due by Wednesday, August 31, 2022. Obtain an application to volunteer in person at 201 S. Humbolt, Canyon City; on the website at grantcountyoregon.net/search “volunteer application;” email to gccourtadmin@grantcounty-or.gov or call 541-575-0059.