

## Walden urges changes to Blue Mountains Forest Plan

Walden writes to Forest Service about strong concerns he heard at town hall meetings in Eastern Oregon this month

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) has written to the U.S. Forest Service to urge changes to the controversial Blue Mountains Forest Plan revision. At town hall meetings in Eastern Oregon this month, Walden heard strong concerns from local communities that their needs and wishes were ignored in this plan.

In a letter to Regional Forester Jim Peña, Walden wrote, "The federally managed forests that span throughout Eastern Oregon provide significant economic and cultural benefits to local communities. In addition to the economic value these forests hold, accessing and utilizing these lands is a way of life for area residents. However, these forests are in poor condition and dire need of proper management that will restore forest health, reduce catastrophic wildfire, and sustain the economies in these rural communities. Unfortunately, it seems

that this plan falls short of meeting these needs of the forest and the communities."

"Over the past year, communities surrounded by the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests have expressed deep concerns with the direction of this plan. At all of my recent town halls and other public meetings in these communities, I heard from a variety of constituents and local elected officials who have found that this plan not only fails to meet the needs of their communities, but also fails to achieve the desired conditions for the forest as well," Walden continued.

In concluding the letter, Walden urged the agency to work with local communities to make changes to the plan, and invited the Regional Forester to Eastern Oregon to discuss the plan. "I hope that you will reassess the proposal and

engage with these local communities to develop a plan that accurately reflects existing forest conditions and outlines objectives that will reach the needed environmental and economic outcomes. I look forward to having you join me on the ground in Eastern Oregon to discuss this plan and other issues on our National Forests that so greatly impact Oregon's rural communities," Walden wrote.

Earlier this month, Walden heard strong opposition to the plan at town halls and other public meetings in Harney, Grant, Union, Umatilla, and Wallowa counties. For example, concerns have been voiced that the plan doesn't provide adequate timber production for the region and fails to restore forest health by allowing active management on more land. Last month, the Eastern Oregon Counties Association unanimously rejected the proposed plan.

## HHS senior nominated for medical leaders congress

Erica Nelson, a senior at Heppner High School, has been nominated to attend the Congress of Future Medical Leaders in Washington, DC on Nov. 14-16.

The congress is an honors-only program for high school students who want to become physicians or go into medical research fields. The purpose of this event is to honor, inspire, motivate and direct the top students in the country who aspire to be physicians or medical scientists, to stay true to their dream and, after the event, to provide a path, plan and resources to help them reach their goal, according to a news release.

Erica was nominated by Dr. Connie Mariano, the medical director of the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists to represent Oregon, based on her academic achievement, leadership potential and determination to serve humanity in the field of medicine.

During the three-day congress, Erica will join students from across the country and hear Nobel Laureates and National Medical of Science Winners talk about leading medical research; be given advice from Ivy League and top medical school deans on what is to expect in medical school; witness stories

determined students like Erica Nelson are our future and she deserves all the mentoring and guidance we can give her."

The academy offers free services and programs to students who want to be physicians or go into medical science. Some of the services and programs the academy plans to launch in 2014 and 2015 are online social networks through which future doctors and medical scientists can communicate; opportunities for students to be guided and mentored by physicians and medical students; and communications for parents and students on college acceptance and finances, skills acquisition, internships, career guidance and much more.

If anyone would like to support Erica and help her attend the trip, she will be selling personalized knit Mustang Blankets for \$45, or for an extra \$5 a personalized message will be added. The blankets will feature the Mustang logo, and are 63" by 63". For more information about the trips itself or about the blankets, contact Erica at 541-256-0766.



Erica Nelson

told by patients who are living "medical miracles"; be inspired by fellow teen medical science prodigies; and learn about cutting-edge advances and the future in medicine and medical technology, according to the release.

"This is a crucial time in America when we need more doctors and medical scientists who are even better prepared for a future that is changing exponentially," said Richard Rossi, executive director, National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists. "Focused, bright and

## BEO drawing winner announced



David Sykes was Bank of Eastern Oregon's Morrow County Fair & Rodeo drawing winner. "Dave was very happy to stop by the Heppner branch to pick up his Coleman Road Trip Grill and BEO camp chair," said a BEO spokesperson. "Congratulations from Bank of EO, David, for the lucky draw."

## Wildhorse Foundation grants include WCVED, Farm Foundation

The Wildhorse Foundation, a community benefit fund established by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) to support organizations in northeastern Oregon and southeastern Washington, has announced the awards for the second quarter of 2014. A total of \$202,855 was awarded to 25 recipients, bringing the total for 2014 to over \$407,000.

Locally funded projects include the Farm Foundation which received a \$6,000 grant for newspaper digitization; and the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group which received \$6,000 for establishment of a Heppner Pheasant Club brood house.

CTUIR has a long history of charitable giving. While the Foundation was formed in 2001, changes in the compact Wildhorse Resort and Casino made with the State of Oregon expanded their footprint in 2009. Prior to then, the Foundation could disburse grants to Umatilla, Morrow, Union and Wallowa Counties; they can now also allocate up to 30 percent of their funding to government bodies or charitable organizations in the Tribes ceded territory in Washington State (Benton, Walla Walla and Columbia Counties) as well as any Native American Tribal Government Agency or non-profit with its principal office and base of operation within the State of Oregon

and any national or regional Indian Organization. Over 1300 local and regional non-profits have benefited from over the \$7.5 million given by the Foundation since its inception. Because the Wildhorse Foundation's annual funding comes from a percentage of the Wildhorse Resort & Casino's net revenue, as the resort's business grows, so does the Foundation's annual grant total. In 2013, almost \$850,000 was distributed to 156 organizations in the Foundation's giving area.

The Board will consider awarding

grants to applications that cover the areas of public health and safety, education, the arts, historic preservation, gambling addiction services, salmon restoration, environmental protection, and cultural activities.

The quarterly deadlines for requests are January 1, April 1, July 1 and Oct. 1. For more information on Wildhorse Foundation guidelines or to receive an application, visit [www.wildhorseresort.com](http://www.wildhorseresort.com) and click on "Our Foundation" or call Tiah DeGroff at 541-966-1628.

## Morrow County Fair winners announced

The Morrow County Fair saw 200 people enter something in the fair this year. People brought out your handy work from art, photography, fruits, vegetables, flowers, crafts, baked goods, canning, quilting, needlework and of course all the "beautiful art work from all the very talented children in Morrow County," said Morrow County Fair Secretary Ann Jones.

The Wheat League Photo Contest had nine entries this year with winners as follows: first-Alex Carlson, Ione; second-Larry Lutchter, Heppner; third-Tami Rietmann, Heppner.

Junior Wheat League Muffins had 13 entries this year with winners as follows: first-Annabelle McDaniel, Heppner; second-Cami VanArsdale, Lexington; third-Hayley Akers of Boardman.

Wheat League Cake had nine entries this year with first-Nancy Miller, Ione; second-Shelley McCabe, Ione; third-Betty Christman, Lexington.

Mike Armato's Un-Ending Quest for the perfect loaf of bread: first-Betty Christman; second-Ann Spicer, Heppner.

Cup Cake Wars winners: first-Madison Palmer, Heppner; second-Eva Martin, Lexington; third-Annabelle McDaniel, Heppner.

Sweepstakes winners: Food-Yvonne Morter, Ione; Photo Adult-Alex Carlson, Ione; Photo Youth-Skylar Wightman, Boardman; Needlework-Lila Killingbeck, Boardman; Quilting-Keziah Birt of Boardman; Crafts-Phyllis Piper, Lexington; Kids 3-6-Esther Birt, Boardman; Kids 7-9-Zandra Masterson, Heppner; Juniors-Keziah Birt, Boardman; Canning-Kevin Murray, Heppner; Art-Shirley McNary, Ione; Fruits-Claude Birt, Boardman; Vegetables-Paul Beagle, Boardman; Flowers-Terry Tallman, Boardman.

Talent show winners for 2014: Ages 5-9: first-Mischa Meyer, Hermiston, going on to state; Ages 10-17: first-MaLinda Morter, Ione, going to state; second-Bridget Wizner, Heppner; third-Aimee Turrell, Heppner; Ages 18 & Up: first-Sam Fisher and Drion Donner, going to State.

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On the expansion at Tillamook Cheese and ConAgra foods, Neal said those expansions represented major expansion in production and jobs at the Port. "The Lamb Weston (ConAgra) project will allow them to produce one million pounds of French fries per year and hire an additional 100 employees," he told the Chamber. He said Morrow County now is the fifth-highest average wage county in the State of Oregon.

The Tillamook Cheese expansion added 40 new jobs and will allow the company to produce whey and lactose, a bi-product of cheese making, for marketing and export. Neil said the whey, among other uses, will be shipped to New Zealand and then to China where it will be used in the production of energy drinks.

In other developments at the Port Neal said wind tower parts for a wind farm in Washington are being transported by train to the port and then reloaded by truck to the site.

A \$30 million Novus Pacific project to convert waste products to synthetic gas to be sent to California, is in the works. Neal said the Port will bet

"green credits" for that project.

A new \$7 million CO<sub>2</sub> plant is breaking ground at Pacific ethanol that will have six new jobs and will handle the bi-product of grain ethanol.

Neal said Amazon, also known as VA Data, continues to build data centers at the Port, the latest being a 120,000 sq. ft. metal building with a different type of design. He said so far there is \$400 million invested in data centers at the Port.

To accommodate all the construction and expansion Neal said Umatilla Electric is building quite a few new substations in the area and that Bonneville Power is putting in a second substation because of demand.

Neal said the Port is working on a lease with the Corps of Engineers to develop 40 acres on the river with plans to develop a new park. "It has been a frustrating and interesting experience," he said. He was not sure how long it would take to get the lease approved.

On the old Kinzua mill site outside of Heppner which the Port owns, Neal said they are still working with DEQ trying to get a

clean bill of health on the property for development, a process he says has gone on for many years, involving lots of water and soil testing. "When we moved the bark material from the log yard that is all we needed to do. But turns out that is not all we need to do," Neal said. Adding that the DEQ keeps asking for more tests.

Speaking on the role of the Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) at the Port and in the county, Neal said the Port cannot compete in economic development without an enterprise zone. "The enterprise zone is a tool the state of Oregon gave us as an incentive to attract industry. We almost have to have a zone to compete. We used to have a low tax rate compared to other counties and we could show a lower tax rate than other counties," Neal said after Measure 5 was passed it, equalized tax rates among counties across the state, and made the Port less competitive. "This forced us to get a CREZ. If you are going to be in the game for economic development you need to use it," he said of the zone which replaces property taxes with lower "fees". He said he hopes to see the CREZ use those collected fees to improve

education and livability in Morrow County.

Neal pointed out that the highway that provides transportation opportunity for Boardman is also a "double edged sword". "People who work at the Port don't all live here." He said the Port provides 4,000 jobs for the area but that 70 percent of the workers live outside the county in places like Hermiston and the Tri-Cities.

"I am high on education and think we need to use the money for education, that and housing," he said. He pointed out that the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group has set up a program using a \$50,000 CREZ grant (see story this week's paper) to stimulate housing in the south county area. He said he is working with Blue Mountain Community College to try and get more training opportunity there for the actual jobs being created at the Port. "I have talked to the people managing the businesses at the Port and they tell me they need trained workers. I hope to work more closely with colleges on providing those workers locally. We need to fill those jobs from our own back yard," Neil said.

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