

April 26, 2017

To the members of the Oregon Library Association,

On April 25, 2017, the Legislative Committee of the Oregon Library Association was informed that the county library in Wallowa County is due to be closed. For those who are not familiar with it, Wallowa County is located in the northeastern corner of Oregon, with a population of roughly 7,000. The county public library operates two branches in the towns of Troy and Imnaha, and the library website states that they circulate 3,300 average each year, with 2,200 people accessing its services. The library has been in existence since 1964, when it was created by a vote of the people. It maintains several outreach programs, including "Training Wheels", "Leap into Literacy", and the "Up & Away Afterschool Programs". If you would like to read more about the library and its services, you can access their website here:

http://co.wallowa.or.us/community_services/library/index.html

The cities in Wallowa County are served by city libraries in Joseph, Enterprise, and Wallowa, and this closure will not affect these libraries. The services that the county library provides, however, are unique and very important to the people living in the smaller communities. The county is more than 3,000 square miles, and many families will be negatively impacted by this closure.

At this time, we are trying to find out more information about what transpired to get to this closure decision. From what we understand, the Budget Committee made a recommendation to the County Commissioners, and this decision was announced in the last day or two. There has not yet been a public hearing, as required by law, so we hope that the public will have a chance to comment. Representatives from OLA will be monitoring the situation and hope to attend a public hearing. I will let you know what I can as the situation unfolds, and we are hopeful that public involvement and comment will help bring this to a better resolution, but as we understand it now, the Wallowa County Library is being closed as of June 30, 2017.

Thank you,



Elsa Loftis
President, Oregon Library Association