



Shane Proctor, right, helps distract a bull after a rider is thrown during the eighth annual Shane Proctor Bull Rider School in Nespelem.

Teaching the Next Generation of Bull Riders

World champion bull rider Shane Proctor shares rodeo lesson with Nespelem youth

By Vic Bobb

The early-April morning is chilly. More than a dozen boys are out in the rain-pocked dust of the south end of the arena taking turns on drop barrels, talking among themselves about the bull-riding techniques they learned the day before.

Asked why he's out in the uncomfortable breeze a full half an hour before today's lessons begin, 10-year-old Philip says, "We can't wait to start. Shane is awesome."

Phillip is talking about Shane Proctor, the 2011 world champion bull rider, who was at the Jackson Sundown rodeo grounds in Nespelem sharing his rough-stock expertise and his philosophy through the eighth annual Shane Proctor Bullriding School.

Shane grew up in the area and graduated from Lake Roosevelt High School. He has made his home in North Carolina for a decade, but has never forgotten his roots here.

"This is the first arena I ever rode in," Shane says.

That first ride as a 5-year-old in the Nespelem Junior Rodeo's Mutton Bustin' event was the beginning of a rodeo career that

includes not just a Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association world championship eight years ago, but qualifying for five National Finals Rodeos, finishing third in the world standings three years ago, winning a Colorado ranch by triumphing in television's Toughest Cowboy competition, qualifying nine times for the Professional Bull Riders World Finals and taking home more individual rodeo prizes than he can count.

Shane works hard to get his students to understand the interconnectedness of their life choices, values and decisions.

"It's all about setting goals and achieving them," he tells the 30-odd boys, girls and young men gathered to hear him talk from the steps of the cookshack on the clinic's second day. "Every day is a test. It doesn't matter what you did yesterday. You could have been world champion yesterday, but today is a new test."

Fundamental to Shane's understanding of success is his deep conviction that what is critical to an individual's success is not the techniques of body placement atop a ton of spinning and bucking bull, but character, values, self-discipline, integrity, honor and respect.



Shane, left, and his team of cowboys, bottom left, critique every ride and offer advice throughout the rodeo clinic.



“We are in training for the road of life,” Shane says. “Rodeo’s a tough sport. There’s a lot that can go wrong—and not just in rodeo.”

Although not everyone in the group is going to become a member of the PRCA, he emphasizes that the most important skills and qualities they are learning are characteristics that translate into strength and success in whatever realm of life a young person might find himself or herself.

“You take what you learn here and you apply it to whatever you’re committed to,” Shane says. “You want it, you work for it.”

He says there will be failures along the way. Ever modest and self-deprecating, Shane offers plenty of examples of the rough patches along his own road.

He acknowledges there are bulls he has never managed to stick, and offers anecdotes about some of the less glamorous moments of being on the road chasing gold buckles.

Sometimes the lesson is inspirational. Just before Shane rode to a legendary 93.5-point triumph aboard Pearl Harbor—a bull who was 15-0 against the foremost riders in the world before he found Shane on his back—Shane had been bucked off by a much lower-ranked and less challenging bull.

“You have half an hour to be mad,” he says. “Then it’s time to move on to the next challenge.”

In Shane’s professional life, the next challenge is one he has set for himself. After a dozen years competing in PBR events—and also riding in PRCA events during most of those years—Shane announced last year he was leaving the PBR circuit to pursue the PRCA all-around cowboy title.

If Shane achieves this goal, rising to the top of the rodeo heap with income that includes \$3,000 in winnings in two events, he will be the first rough-stock cowboy to take the all-around crown since late in the 20th century. ■



Zack and Ashley Radmer and hunting safety instructor Drew Munson review the hunting safety information available on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife website before heading outside for hands-on activities.

The Next Generation of Hunters

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife program teaches hunting safety to children

By Craig Reed

Ashley and Zack Radmer have trailed along with their father on numerous big game and bird hunts in recent years. The siblings have helped their father, Scott, pack big game meat and birds to their outdoors camp on several occasions.

Back home east of Sutherlin, the family has enjoyed many meals featuring elk, pheasant and venison.

Now, Ashley, 15, and Zack, 12, are preparing to step up alongside their dad or even take the lead on hunts this fall. They will have hunting licenses and

tags of their own, allowing them to carry their own rifle in pursuit of deer, elk, pheasant and grouse.

In addition to the earlier trips with their parents, Scott and Jenny, the family's next generation of hunters is taking the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Hunter Education Course. In Oregon, the course is required for all new hunters age 17 and younger unless they're hunting on land owned by a parent or legal guardian, or unless participating in the Mentored Youth Hunter Program. However, the course is available to those who are older and who want to learn about hunting or who want to be refreshed on the different aspects of hunting.



The course provides students with an introduction to hunting skills, firearm safety, hunter ethics, wildlife identification and hunt preparation.

"I thought it was really interesting," says Ashley who just completed her freshman year at Sutherlin High School. "It was a good opportunity for me to learn more about hunting. We learned safety aspects, how to use a gun properly. It helped me better understand what my father has been teaching me."

Zack, who just completed sixth grade at West Intermediate School in Sutherlin, says it was important to learn about gun safety and wildlife identification to prevent accidents.

"You must always keep the muzzle in a safe direction," he says.

Ashley and Zack took the classroom portion of the test online. That involved studying 10 chapters and passing a test after each one. They then participated in a field day in late March at the Roseburg Rod & Gun Club under the guidance of instructors Drew Munson and Hedge Jarvis.

The students watched a hunting safety video before doing a walk-about that focused on safe gun handling when getting in and out of vehicles and when crossing fences, shooting a shotgun at the trap range, shooting a .22, identifying the target and checking the line of fire on either side of the target, and the advantages of wearing hunter orange versus camouflage.

Scott, who has been a hunter for the past 27 years, says it is important that his children get as much hunting education as possible before venturing out with their own rifle or shotgun.

"It's important to educate kids and then if they choose to hunt, that's their choice, and if they choose not to, that's OK, too," he says. "It's important that they learn to be safe in the woods, and to learn about nature and wildlife and conservation. They were willing to take the course."



Ashley describes the online course and the field day as "worthwhile."

"I think everyone should take the opportunity to go through this program before going out hunting," she says.

The Roseburg Rod & Gun Club has averaged about 130 kids going through the hunter education course in each of the last several years. The club will offer the course in June, July, August and twice in September this year. Courses are also being offered in the Myrtle Creek, Riddle, Winston and Camas Valley areas. To see when courses are scheduled and to register, go to www.myodfw.com and click on Workshops & Events.

"We try to give the kids the basics on responsibility, ethics and gun handling, so they can carry on with their parents or hunting partners in a safe manner," says Drew, a 15-year hunter education instructor. "You try to drill safety into their heads, pointing the muzzle in a safe direction all the time, keeping the finger off the trigger until it's time to shoot, making sure of the target and what is in front and behind it. That way, if you follow those simple rules, nobody gets hurt or injured."

With the hunter education course behind them, Ashley and Zack are now anxiously awaiting the fall hunting seasons and venturing out with Scott. Zack says he doesn't think shooting at an animal will bother him "because I like the meat."

The two young hunters are good examples of the slogan that tops the ODFW's Hunter Education website page: "Learning to hunt is an adventure that can last a lifetime, and ODFW Hunter Education is a great way to start." ■

Above, Drew works with Ashley on the shooting range on shotgun technique.

Above left, orange guns on the range reinforce the safety message that hunters should wear orange while in the woods.

Happy Birthday, WOEC!

Co-op celebrates 75 years of service, part 3: WOEC in a modern world

By Scott Laird

2019 marks the 75th anniversary of West Oregon Electric Cooperative.

Born out of need to provide electricity to a rural corner of Oregon, WOEC continues to provide a vital resource to an area that is difficult to serve.

The 1990s were a turbulent time for the electric industry and particularly WOEC. Decades of declining salmon runs became a hot topic in the Pacific Northwest as regional electric utilities struggled with how to address the issue.

During the 1980s, about \$1 billion was spent on salmon recovery efforts, often funded by customers of government-generated power, with few gains to show.

While hydroelectric dams were seen as a major cause of the problem, regional utilities looked at other causes and suggested fishing harvest practices and management strategies be changed. They also suggested changes to hatchery practices, introducing water conservation efforts and developing habitat restoration projects as possible solutions.

Fish mitigation and its associated costs—especially for regional electricity customers—continue to be controversial.

While large natural disasters were not a new thing in the Northwest, the 1990s and 2000s featured a series of storms that proved particularly disastrous for WOEC, creating havoc and repeatedly causing millions of dollars of damage

The Inaugural Day Storm of 1993 featured high winds that knocked out the entire WOEC system, leaving some customers without power for five days.

On February 8, 1996, following a large and damaging windstorm the prior December, heavy rains and warm temperatures on top of a deep snowpack



A lineman clears debris from a power line following the Inaugural Day Storm of 1993.

Photos courtesy of West Oregon Electric Cooperative

led to severe flooding in the Vernonia community.

WOEC's headquarters building on Adams Avenue was inundated with more than 3 feet of water, and important files and equipment were damaged. Staff spent months working in cramped quarters trying to salvage documents while contractors repaired the building.

The 1990s and 2000s were also a turbulent time for WOEC's finances. In

June 1991, residents in the Chapman area signed a petition to leave WOEC and receive service from Columbia River PUD. Residents were told by the board that unless CRPUD offered to buy the entire system, the board wasn't interested in selling a portion of the co-op.

In September 1991, talks of a merger with Tillamook People's Utility District were discontinued after an agreement could not be reached.

In mid-1991, officials from the Rural Electrification Administration conducted an audit and field inspection of WOEC that looked at management and financial practices and operations. Following the audit, a 26-page management assistance plan was produced.

General Manager David Seuss wrote a series of articles in *Ruralite* titled “State of the Co-op,” in which he detailed improvements management was making based on the plan. Those changes included a brush control program, installing sound management policies and financial practices, addressing deferred maintenance and safety code violations, and finding ways to fund improvements.

Deregulation of the electric power industry by the federal government in the mid-1990s allowed utilities to begin buying power on the open market and increased competition.

In April 1995, WOEC signed what was considered a groundbreaking new “surplus firm” contract with the Bonneville Power Administration that guaranteed fixed rates for five years and created an immediate reduction in wholesale power costs of 11%.

In May 1996, Seuss retired. Office manager Russell Green replaced him in October. Seuss left the co-op in better shape than he found it, recommitting the co-op to system maintenance and navigating a rocky time of financial instability by establishing new accounting practices.

Even with the series of changes and improvements, in July 1996 a group of co-op members demanded the WOEC board declare bankruptcy or resign. A Rural Utilities Service representative told the members that filing bankruptcy would only increase costs through legal expenses and government oversight, and government intervention would likely lead to higher rates to ensure all loans were paid.

This demand by members was the start of several years of conflict between members and WOEC management and the board of directors.



There was more than 3 feet of water in WOEC headquarters following the 2007 flood. Above, WOEC employees clean up water-damaged office file cabinets.

A major topic across the energy industry during the 1980s and 1990s was alternative energy options. In the late 1990s, WOEC joined 11 other co-ops as owners of the Coffin Butte project, which generates electricity from landfill gases.

1999 was a busy year for WOEC. The board approved the retiring of capital credits and sent checks totaling \$109,000 to members who had been part of the co-op from 1950 to 1966. As the year ended, WOEC announced it was prepared for the Y2K bug after participating in an exercise with other Northwest utilities.

The other big news in 1999 was the potential purchase by WOEC of Portland General Electric’s Columbia County electrical distribution system. The deal would have required WOEC to pay \$7.9 million to add 7,200 customers in Scappoose, St. Helens, Columbia City and Rainier, tripling the co-op membership and potentially reducing rates by 10%.

Both Columbia River PUD and Clatskanie PUD objected to the deal. A settlement was reached in January 2000,

with those two utilities bumping WOEC out of the deal and buying the territories from PGE. As part of the negotiations, WOEC received a \$2 million settlement from PGE. That money was placed into a trust.

In 2001, WOEC members approved a change in the bylaws that govern the co-op, paving the way for WOEC to become a member, along with 15 other utility and municipal districts, in the NoaNet project—a fiber optic network to provide rural telecommunications services. WOEC invested some of the funds from the PGE settlement to help build the infrastructure for the project and formed Columbia Broadband—a subsidiary company to provide service based out of Hillsboro.

A slumping economy and slashed prices in the broadband market produced slower-than-expected growth for the company. In 2005 NoaNet reorganized as Lightspeed Network. Columbia Broadband began selling WildBlue,

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providing high-speed internet access to its customers in 2005. Columbia Broadband remains a shareholder in LSN.

In 2000, WOEC joined the Pacific Northwest Generating Cooperative, allowing the co-op to partner with 15 other regional co-ops to manage power purchases on the deregulated open market. At the same time, WOEC signed a 10-year contract with BPA to buy power.

Rapid growth in the region and a lack of new power generating facilities led to power shortages and rapid price increases in the early 2000s. After speculating that a 250% increase might be needed, in October 2001 BPA announced a 46% rate increase to its wholesale power costs, leading to a 13.5% increase in retail rates for WOEC members.

Other issues led to increased instability in energy wholesale costs in the Pacific Northwest, including BPA's settlement of a long-running lawsuit, regional water shortages due to declining winter rainfall and snowpacks, and the Enron scandal that led to the sale of PGE.

In 2003, longtime board member Sam Hearing retired due to health reasons after serving 35 years as a director. The board created a scholarship fund in his honor, recognizing high school seniors in the WOEC service area.

During the 2000s, WOEC undertook several large maintenance projects, including replacing failing underground lines; replacing overhead lines especially susceptible to storm damage with underground lines; replacing overhead line and poles; upgrading substations; and regularly trimming trees.

At the end of 2004, Green left WOEC and became CEO of Ruralite Services. During his almost decade of service, Green regularly used Ruralite magazine to communicate the business of the co-op to the members and helped navigate WOEC through some challenging times, including the instability at BPA.



WOEC's current headquarters were built on higher ground in 2011 to avoid future damage from floods.

Photo by Brenden Delzer

Marc Farmer was announced as the new general manager in March 2005.

Severe winter weather again punished WOEC members. Three separate snowstorms between December 28, 2003, and January 6, 2004, left tens of thousands of members without power for several days at a time.

On December 14, 2006, the region was hit with one of the worst windstorms on record, knocking down trees and power lines and halting service to 100% of WOEC members for three days. It took several more days for power to be restored to all consumers.

One year later, on December 3, 2007, heavy rains caused flooding in Vernonia, knocking out power to customers and causing extensive damage to the WOEC headquarters after 3 feet of water flooded the offices and warehouse. Cleanup and repairs at the office took several months.

One year later, in December 2008, several large storms dumped 2 feet of snow on much of the WOEC territory, leaving 80% of members without power through the holiday season. Many customers were without power for several weeks. These storms created a major impact on WOEC's finances.

Following the 2007 flood, WOEC's management and board, after surveying members, decided to relocate the co-op's headquarters to higher ground to avoid future flood damage. The building was completed in 2011 at a cost of \$3 million.

At the same time, WOEC built a substation out of the flood plain in Vernonia.

At the end of 2013, General Manager Marc Farmer left WOEC. The board hired Bob Perry.

WOEC continues to face the same challenges it has always faced during its first 75 years. The co-op's service area covers a sprawling geographic region, filled with trees, rivers and hills. With only one urban area—Vernonia—in the service district, many miles of vulnerable line and poles are needed to reach all members. Wholesale rates are often subject to decisions handed down from BPA. Without a major industrial customer, WOEC must count on residential and small commercial members to cover operational costs.

Even with these difficulties, WOEC management, staff and the board of directors find a way to keep the lights on, just as they have for the past 75 years. ■

Fighting for Local Health Care

Community pulls together to ensure continued access to medical services

What does it take to keep an old town alive?

People. And people need infrastructure. They need power to run the infrastructure. They need communications—phone and Internet. They need businesses to supply them with food and materials. They need homes, places to gather and worship, public works systems and policing. They need schools.

And, if the town and environs are 45 minutes away from the nearest medical facilities, they need local health care.

But what happens when devastation strikes a town twice? Who are the heroes crazy enough to think it's up to them to build and save a health center—not once, but twice?

In 1996, the Vernonia Health Center—the only health care facility serving the Upper Nehalem Valley, with a population of about 5,000—was flooded, along with businesses, schools, West Oregon Electric Cooperative's headquarters and several substations.

The clinic was rebuilt through the work of the Vernonia Health Center board in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the medical provider at that time.

Surely the clinic would be good for another 100 years. Or so everyone thought—until 2007, when it happened again. This time, 4 feet of mud and water mandated a FEMA buyout.

Rural health care in Vernonia thrives today thanks to the diligent efforts of the Vernonia Health Center Board of Directors, which is an all-volunteer organization.

“But it wasn't always this way,” says Board Secretary Wendy Sears. “For decades, multiple health organizations



The Vernonia Health Center's reception area is bright and welcoming.

came and went. Some moved on because it wasn't financially viable. Others were driven out by the floods.”

Following the 2007 flood, FEMA condemned many parts of Vernonia, denying owners—including Vernonia Health Center—the chance to rebuild in the same location. Schools had to move to higher ground. WOEC's headquarters had to be rebuilt at a higher elevation, as did the health center.

A huge learning curveball was thrown to the health center's board members, who had to secure funding, find a building site and figure out how to continue providing health care in Vernonia.

Through collaboration with state Sen. Betsy Johnson, then-County Commissioner Tony Hyde and the city of Vernonia, land on higher ground was procured on the corner of Rose Avenue and Cougar Street, across the street from WOEC headquarters.

This was just the beginning of many sleepless nights, years of work and an intense learning process for health center board members.

The Start of Health Care in Vernonia

Recognizing the difficulty of keeping health care in the area, in 1976 a group united with the goal of stopping the

revolving door of medical providers in Vernonia and maintaining quality medical care for the region—not just for themselves, but for future generations.

In 1978, the Vernonia Health Center Board was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Its mission was to facilitate activities designed to promote, encourage and sustain the health and well-being of the community and its members.

The health center's primary draw for clientele is Vernonia and the surrounding area. The reach goes west to Elsie, south to Buxton and Banks, and north toward the outskirts of Scappoose and Rainier, encompassing the Mist/Birkenfeld area.

Since 1978, the Vernonia Health Center Board of Directors has owned and maintained a clinic facility in Vernonia using various providers.

A member of the board since 1991, Wendy remembers the sleepless nights following the second flood in 2007. The board questioned where to find a project manager, how to organize funding and put it out for bid, and how to coordinate with the city. How could they keep the clinic viable?

In 2013, Brett Costley and Erika Paleck joined the board—Erika as chairwoman, and Brett as liaison with other community groups. Brett's experience as a city councilor and board of education member, and Erika's experience with other volunteer organizations, helped push the project forward.

With the addition of Scott/Edwards Architecture to create plans and act as project manager, things began to roll. In 2014, Daniel Huggett—now WOEC's CFO—came on board, first supporting and then replacing Robert Wagner as treasurer.

New work began as Erika, Brett, Wendy and Dan began to work with grant providers, construction companies and local authorities to secure the new location and design a building within budget—all without interrupting what medical service there still was.



The health center stands on higher ground to avoid another flood-related disaster.

In 2014, the new Vernonia Health Center building was dedicated in honor of one of the original heroes: Carolyn Keasey, a driving force in keeping health care alive in Vernonia. She was a beloved member of the community and volunteer for many nonprofits. She joined the VHC Board in 1991 and served as president for 15 years.

“Until her death in 2013, Carolyn worked tirelessly for health care in the community,” Wendy says.

The building is debt-free and ready to serve, thanks to primary funding from local donations, grants from the Ford Family Foundation, Fred Meyer Memorial Fund and the Providence Community Giving Campaign, several smaller bequests and FEMA—as well as help from the construction company 5 Star Builders and Scott/Edwards Architecture.

Because rural health care in America isn't a great moneymaker, the second—and possibly even more difficult—part of the equation for a health center is finding the qualified, dedicated providers.

To fulfill the board's mission and moral obligation to provide a medical home for residents of Vernonia and the Upper Nehalem Valley, the board knew it had to be a hands-on, proactive partner.

“That meant the perfect practitioner

organization's values had to be in harmony with the board's mission, and their services had to meet the essential health care needs of the community,” Wendy says.

The Present State of Health Care

The health center is anchored by Adventist Health of the Tillamook Regional Medical Group, which has brought X-ray technology to the clinic—a first since 1996—as well as expanded lab facilities, urgent care and Sunday hours.

The Vernonia Health Center is designed to accommodate multiple practices under one roof. Other building tenants are Whole Body Health Physical Therapy and SAFE of Columbia County.

Through its board, the center also recruits qualified health care professionals and supports them in establishing practices that are sustainable and meet the needs of the community as it evolves.

“The clinic serves not only to deliver modern health care in a clean, safe modern environment, but as a symbol of permanence to a community dependent on medical continuity and care,” Erika says.

Ambulance access and backup generator systems are the next two improvements in the works.

In addition to Brett, Dan, Wendy and Erika, health center board members are Olin Younger, Erin Gehrke-Swepston, Diane Coughlin and Diana Peach.

“The Vernonia Health Center board is committed to collaborating with its partners in educating the community and cultivating a model of patient-centered practice,” Erika says. “The board also understands the need for innovative thinking to ensure continued access to medical services for the community in order to honor their commitment to their neighbors' well-being. These are local heroes, helping to bring to life the next generation of community heroes.” ■



Sky Wilson and her parents bought Ya-Hoo Corrals in Valley County. Sky says she doesn't know if life can get any better than owning a business she loves.

Lifetime of Riding Leads to Business Ownership

Sky Wilson channels her love of horses and Idaho wilderness into teaching horsemanship

By David Rauzi

Sky Wilson wants to take you for a ride. “I just love being able to share my passion for horses with so many different types of people,” she says.

Sky has been riding horses her entire life, and that interest—as well as her enjoyment of outdoor Idaho—has turned into a dream job for this 2014 Prairie High School graduate.

In March, Sky and her parents, Justin and Michelle Wilson of Grangeville, bought Ya-Hoo Corrals, just north of McCall on Warren Wagon Road in Valley County.

“We do guided horseback trail riding, pretty much offering a variety of day

trips from an hour to four hours,” she says.

Ya-Hoo Corrals also caters to private and group rides for clients as young as 6, and for riders from novice to experienced. Riders are evaluated for their abilities, and rides are then tailored to their needs. Ya-Hoo also offers rides for senior citizens and people with disabilities.

Among the scenic vistas around McCall through which Ya-Hoo guides its guests is the glacial-created Payette Lake, views across the Donnelly Valley and surrounded by snowpacked mountains most of the year.

You always get the opportunity to see deer, elk, moose, bear, coyotes, all right there,” Sky says. “It’s a very outdoorsy

feel for being so close to a populated area. That’s not something you can get just anywhere.”

Sky says she was basically born on a horse.

“My mom shot a moose when she was pregnant with me while on horseback,” she says.

From early childhood, Sky rode with her parents in the backcountry, did trail rides, went on hunting excursions with her dad, and participated in O-Mok-See and high school rodeo.

She first became involved with Ya-Hoo Corrals following graduation. A friend who worked there suggested she apply for a job. Sky interviewed with owner Cheryl Bransford, went on a ride



When she and her parents bought Ya-hoo Corrals, Sky became the proud co-owner of 15 horses.

that day and was hired. Since then, she has worked there every summer. The past four years she was head guide.

“That first year I was in training, figuring out the groove of things,” Sky says. “Not everyone goes about doing the same thing. I came in thinking I knew quite a bit, but I realized there was still a ton more information I could acquire. Cheryl was more than willing to always share information with me and assist me.”

Part of this was in the essentials, such as saddling and controlling horses and in-house veterinary care. It also included aspects of the business, specifically customers.

Sky says she didn't expect to work with so many people who did not understand horses.

“You try to break it down so everyone can understand, and it is difficult because everyone has preconceived ideas about how to do it,” she says.

Sky says there are some common novice misconceptions, such as “saying ‘giddy up,’ and slapping the reins on the horse's neck for go or that they know voice commands,” she says. “And also,

that they won't hurt the animal. When you pull back on the reins or you kick them, you're not being mean to them. It's a misconception you're going to hurt the horse. These horses kick each other a lot harder than we could.”

Dealing with those who have riding experience is also a challenge, Sky says. Like herself, they need to be taught what to do, but for different reasons than a novice.

“To keep the horses and ourselves safe, they need to follow the guidelines we have,” Sky says. “Though they may know what they're doing, there are certain standards they need to follow for everyone's protection.”

Sharing her passion for horses is just one part of Sky's motivation.

“I want to give them lifelong memories they can create with their family and friends,” she says.

One ride that sticks out was during Sky's first summer with Ya-Hoo with a little girl from California who was terrified from the start. Sky spent the ride distracting her, including singing some Disney tunes.

“By the end of the ride, she was the happiest little girl, wanted to learn more about horses and do more riding,” Sky says.

That girl recently returned with her parents “because of the impression I made on her.”

“This is what I enjoy—allowing people to create those good memories and have a good time in a new area with something they may not normally get a chance to do,” Sky says.

Cheryl operated Ya-Hoo for nearly 30 years. Along with the clientele list, Sky and her parents acquired the facilities, vehicles, utility trailers and 15 horses.

“It's my baby, my focus,” Sky says. “It was always my dad's dream to own an outfitting business, so they were more than happy to help me out with my dream as well as his.”

It's an exciting dream fulfilled for Sky, but not a year-round occupation. Ya-Hoo's operational season is mid-May through September/October. Sky keeps busy pursuing a business degree through Lewis-Clark State College, working as a ranch hand for Flying B Ranch in Kamiah and working horses at Scotlyn Ranch outside Grangeville.

“And when I'm not crazily busy, bartending at Forester's in McCall,” she says.

Through it all, Sky has continued to learn. She says she enjoys meeting new people and sharing great moments with them that develop into lasting friendships.

“There are so many opportunities that working with horses has given me,” Sky says. “I don't know if it can get any better than owning this business. The fact I get to continue to play with horses all the time and meet people and share that love with horses, wildlife and the outdoors—I don't think an Idahoan can wish for anything better than that.” ■

For information, go online at Ya-hoocorrals.com, call 208-634-3360, email yahoocorralsmc-call@gmail.com or find them on Facebook and Instagram.

Dining Cowboy Style

Cowboy Dinner Tree provides visitors an old Western experience

By Craig Reed

Imagine sitting on a hard leather saddle for days, riding through the timber and over the mountains while rounding up scattered cattle.

Finally pushing the livestock down the last forested hill toward the valley's sagebrush floor, in the distance a juniper tree marks the location of a line shack.

After days of eating off a campfire and sleeping on the ground with a saddle for a pillow, some comforts of home are within sight.

That line shack offers a home-cooked meal of a big beef steak, beans, potato, rolls and hot coffee.

That scenario took place year after year for cowboys who rode the range in the forested high desert of Central Oregon.

One hundred years later, that Western dining opportunity still exists at the line shack that has become the Cowboy Dinner Tree Restaurant on East Bay Road, 4.5 miles south of Silver Lake.

"The kitchen here is over 100 years old," says Angel Roscoe, who owns the restaurant with her husband, Jamie. "It was built when all the ranches in the area were being established. This was a catch-all line shack where cowboys could gather to eat while moving cattle from the forest to the desert. It was a happy meeting place—a joyful place."

Angel and Jamie, like the previous owners, have kept the structure rustic and the menu simple. A 26- to 30-ounce top sirloin steak, beans, potato and rolls are the main staples. Visitors may choose a whole roasted chicken rather than beef. Both are cooked over a wood fire. Although not traditional, a green salad and a dessert are also served.



Angel Roscoe, co-owner of Cowboy Dinner Tree, stirs a pot of beans in preparation for dinner.

"We're replicating how it used to be," Angel says. "It's a little gem. I believe in the simplicity of the place. That's the way it was, and we'll stay with what works."

The outside of the line shack—which has been expanded twice and added an enclosed porch—has a rustic wood look. Inside, diners are taken back to the Old West. Branding irons, ropes, boots, horseshoes, spurs, chaps and numerous other items from days gone by hang from the walls and ceiling.

"We want to keep its history," Jamie says.

Jeff Tant of Newberg has been taking family and friends to the Cowboy Dinner Tree the past 20 years.

"It's the quintessential Oregon experience," he says. "There is history and heritage there. The whole journey—the whole trip, the whole meal—it's not just a trip to eat, but a journey to a dining experience, to history, to an atmosphere that makes you feel like you're having an authentic experience."

Lane Thomas of Spring River also has been a regular visitor to the restaurant for the past 20 years. He says the quality of the food and the atmosphere bring him back.



Left, featuring a kitchen that is more than 100 years old, Cowboy Dinner Tree provides a rustic, delicious experience.

Below, Jamie Roscoe roasts a chicken.

The line shack was turned into a restaurant in 1992 by Al and Marcie Prom. Marcie had been in the restaurant business in Lakeview. Al was a cowboy and horse farrier. The couple expanded the structure and got the word out that an authentic Western atmosphere was being offered. They started serving the big steaks and whole chickens.

Connie Ramage managed the restaurant for the Proms. Connie's daughter, Angel, worked there as a teenager. Connie and her husband, Don, bought the Cowboy Dinner Tree in 2008. In 2013, Angel and Jamie bought the business.

Jamie and Angel met at the restaurant 12 years ago when she was waitressing and he was there celebrating his 28th birthday. They married eight months later and now work together at the restaurant along with their three children: Dani, Jack and Wade.

Angel works out front and is the "face of the Dinner Tree," according to Jamie. He stays in the back, cooking the steaks and chicken.

Jamie is a U.S. Army veteran and has been a member of the Oregon Army National Guard since 2003.

"I think the neatest thing about having the restaurant is all the types of people we meet," he says. "There's a diverse number of people that come here to have a great time, whether they're from a Lamborghini club or driving a Pinto. You get to share with them and hear their stories."

Angel says the key to the success of many businesses—location, location, location—doesn't seem to apply to the Cowboy Dinner Tree.

"We are definitely an interesting business, a successful business despite being in the middle of nowhere," she says.



"I think people enjoy coming out here and having an adventure."

Reservations are a must. The restaurant's days of operation change with the seasons, ranging from Saturdays only in December and January to Thursday through Sunday from June 1 to October 31.

In keeping it simple, the restaurant doesn't accept plastic cards for payment, only cash.

"We want everybody to have a good experience here with some of the same traditions the cowboys of the past had," Angel says. ■

To make reservations, call 541-576-2426.



Kim Palmer, left, and Rena Wahl visit with area residents outside of the Days for Girls storefront in Rotian, Kenya, while on a humanitarian trip to promote female health. Photos courtesy of Rena Wahl

Women's Health a Priority for Locals

Humanitarian work takes local resident to Kenya for Days for Girls program

By Katelin Davidson

In January Rena Wahl took off from a farm in dryland Eastern Washington on the trip of a lifetime to the remote African bush in Kenya to help those less fortunate.

Rena's philanthropic spirit was encouraged by her sister, Kim Palmer, who made a humanitarian trip to Kenya more than three years ago.

Kim's volunteering focused on working with the Days for Girls program and midwives out in the bush.

"She came back in love

with Kenya," Rena says. "I knew someday I would go and witness her work there."

Rena embarked on the two-week journey with her sister, brother-in-law and mother. But their work started months before boarding their flights to Africa.

Kim is a midwife in Rathdrum, Idaho. Rena supported her work in Africa through monetary donations during her initial trip. Most of the funds, donated to the Days for Girls program, provided necessary and reusable hygiene products for girls.

"Before the trip, we were raising money for the Days for Girls program," Rena says. "The program is about giving reusable menstrual kits to keep girls in school. In the rural area where girls have to walk to school, once they start menstruating they often don't go to school for the week and eventually stop going to school."

Because many girls do not have money to buy supplies, Rena says they turn to men for help. This puts them in a vulnerable position and at an increased risk of genital

mutilation. Even though the practice is illegal in Kenya, it is still prominent throughout the country.

Funds donated by friends and family prior to the trip primarily went to the purchase of flannel, which is highly used in the packs provided to girls because it is absorbent and can be washed and reused. Rena bought 300 yards of flannel fabric to take to Kenya.

Money was also sent to the Days of Girls storefront in Rotian, Kenya, which allowed them to make 300 kits for



Above, students at Naisoya Primary School are given female anatomy presentations. Right, Naisoya Primary School female students received Days for Girls kits.

girls. Each kit costs around \$10 and lasts three to four years. It includes underwear and liners.

The first year Kim traveled to Kenya, she helped two women start a business to make the kits for the Days for Girls program. The following year, they moved into a store. This year, Rena and her sister helped finish the kits and install snaps on the bags.

Since toilets in Kenya are pit latrines, there is not an option for girls to dispose of waste, which is why reusable kits are important and practical for use in remote areas.

“When we mobilize girls and women, their communities and our world grow stronger,” the Days for Girls website states. “We are changing the status quo through quality menstrual care solutions, health education and income-generation opportunities.”

Rena and Kim traveled to a school with representatives from the Days for Girls

program to help distribute 170 kits to girls who attended the school. Along with the kits, there was a presentation for the girls on male and female anatomy, menstruation information and instruction on how to use items in the kit.

Rena credits a progressive male headmaster for allowing the program, education and distribution to occur at the school. While the girls may have giggled during the presentation and when looking through the kits, they were respectful, engaged and asked good questions, Rena says, noting they understood the importance of the kits and can now educate female family members.

The secondary purpose of the trip was for Kim to continue outreach to midwives in remote areas of the region.

With many friendships established from Kim’s previous trips, Rena and her family traveled to villages to visit with midwives and witness the bond between these



women and Kim.

“It was my opportunity to honor her work and take pictures for her and show what she means to these women,” Rena says.

On previous trips, Kim has worked with midwives to provide professional training. These trainings are commonly hosted in public areas so the general public can understand midwifery is a professional career. Now the focus is to provide basic necessities such as gloves and stethoscopes to midwives in the region.

Rena says they were invited to visit with a midwife who delivered a baby the night before. They met in a hut with other women where they shared tea and met the mother and baby.

Rena and her family also traveled to a primary school where her mother, Kay Richardson, distributed dolls she made for the children. The students also received pencils and toy cars from the

group. Rena says they appreciated the gifts.

During the trip, Rena and her family immersed themselves in the culture of the region. They attended church, participated in a naming ceremony and met tribal warriors. The trip concluded with a safari.

“The humanitarian piece is why I went, and the safari at the end was the icing on the cake,” Rena says.

Rena says witnessing the strength of the family unit and the health and happiness they share helps put things in perspective to have a more appreciative and authentic attitude in daily life. After the trip, Rena’s passion for supporting humanitarian efforts such as the Days for Girls program has been ignited.

“Days for Girls is really remarkable and a really great program,” Rena says. “I will continue to send money with my sister for future trips. I’m happy to spend time to make a difference.” ■

Local Farm-Fresh Foods for All

Food Roots helps put healthy options on dinner plates and invests in area farmers, businesses

By Joanna Stelzig

Food is fuel for the body, mind and soul. It helps us grow, be productive, and come together as a family and even a community.

Food is a focal point for Food Roots. Started in 1999 by the late Shelly Bowe as a garden project at the local CARE Inc., it became its own 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2006. Through funding from other sources, Food Roots has evolved into an independent nonprofit organization.

Not just any type of food will do. Food Roots advocates local farm-fresh food.

The mission of Food Roots is to grow and maintain a robust food system on the north Oregon coast through community engagement, education, food producer support and improved access to locally grown food. Food Roots accomplishes this through myriad outreach programs—from educational courses and access options to incentive buying programs.

“Food Roots engages roughly 250 volunteers in their programs each year, ranging from farm to school activities, adult gardening classes, group community gardening events and through special event activities like Pie Nights,” says Executive Director Lauren Sorg. “Food Roots employs six year-round staff members and one annual Food Corps service member who is based at Nehalem and Nestucca Valley Elementary schools four days a week.”

A Call to Action

For more information on the many projects and programs offered through Food Roots and how you can become involved, visit www.foodrootsnw.org.



Double Your SNAP Dollars
At Tillamook County Farmers Markets & FarmTable

HOW IT WORKS:

- GO** Go to your farmers market information tent
- SWIPE** Swipe your EBT card for tokens to buy SNAP eligible foods
- MATCH** We match up to \$10 a day with Double Up Food Bucks for fruits and vegetables
Neskowin & Tillamook Markets match all SNAP eligible foods
- SHOP** Shop at the Farmers Market or FarmTable!

Manzanita Farmers Market	Tillamook Farmers Market	Pacific City Farmers Market	Neskowin Farmers Market
5th Str. & Laneda Ave Fridays, 5pm-8pm June 7 - Sept. 13	2nd Str. & Laurel Str. Saturdays, 9am-2pm June 15 - Sept. 28	Camp Str. & Brooten Rd Sundays, 10am-2pm	Neskowin Beach Wayside Saturdays, 9am-1pm May 18 - Sept. 28

New Location! Food Roots' FarmTable Storefront - 113 Main Ave. Tillamook
Monday - Friday 9am-5pm, Saturdays 10am-2pm, May - November
FarmTable match limited to twice weekly and subject to change

Thank you to our fabulous funders and community partners:
The Stimson-Miller Foundation • Adventist Health
The Herbert A. Templeton Foundation • Barbara Emily Knudson Foundation
Oregon Food Bank - Tillamook County Services • Tillamook County Churches

www.foodrootsnw.org

Staff and volunteers work tirelessly to promote the cultivation of farm-fresh healthy food, and to create opportunities for people to buy and consume wholesome local food. Lauren says they work hard to support area farmers and food entrepreneurs, since access to local food requires investing in local farmers to grow strong businesses.

Programs include:

- Farm to School.** Direct classroom-based garden curriculum is provided to more than 1,000 students in three Tillamook County school districts, in addition to farm field trips, classroom farmer visits, local-produce tasting tables and family engagement events. Schoolchildren learn the importance of healthy



foods, a balanced diet and how to grow their own food.

- **FarmTable Storefront.** Through a local storefront, small-scale farmers, ranchers, fishermen and other agricultural producers and their products reach consumers. FarmTable is open year-round, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Food Roots' 113 Main Ave. location. Saturday hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. June through October.

- **Seed to Supper.** The free six-week adult novice gardening course is offered in partnership with Tillamook County Master Gardeners, Nehalem Bay Garden Club and the Tillamook County Library system, among others.

- **Individual Development Accounts.** Business startup funding is provided with a 3:1

matched savings program that includes business plan development and financial readiness training for farm and food businesses.

- **Double-Up Food Bucks.** The SNAP matching program offered at local farmers markets and at the FarmTable storefront provides an extra \$10 to food-insecure families, incentivizing them to use their federal benefit dollars at local markets on fresh fruits and vegetables. That supports children and families with increased nutritious food at the table and supports small family farms with increased sales.

- **Beginning Farmer Incubator.** Two 30-foot-by-72-foot tunnel greenhouses at the Port of Tillamook Bay provide access to growing

spaces for beginning farmers who seek to increase vegetable production. Patrick and Courtney Mortensen of Circe's Garden grow salad mix and a variety of vegetables for Food Roots' FarmTable storefront. Several local restaurants, including The Schooner in Netarts, also use the facility. In 2019, Tillamook PUD awarded \$5,000 in Community Support Grant funds to improve electrical requirements for the structures.

Food Roots operates on a tight budget, with funding through private and state grants, sponsorships and community support. The organization hosts three Pie Nights fundraisers in different parts of the county each year. People come together, enjoy

Students from Nehalem Elementary School explore Nehalem River Ranch on a Food Roots' farm field trip.

homemade pies and help raise funds for programs that affect the community.

Food Roots has many aspirations for the organization and community: building more connections between producers and buyers, building infrastructure and creating a more localized place to gain access to food. Staff is looking at methods to help schools obtain access to local food for their cafeterias, bringing together local farmers, school district administrators, teachers and cafeteria staff.

Through the efforts of many, Food Roots adds to its plate, growing strong programs that help the community thrive. ■

Museum Preserves White Pine History

By Christina Sawyer

Visiting your local museum, you'd expect to make amazing discoveries. But imagine how the volunteers at the White Pine Public Museum felt when they discovered a treasure hiding right under their noses.

"Every day at the museum, there is something new to see" says Janet VanCamp, chairwoman for the White Pine Public Museum board. "But our most recent discovery is

really something special."

While cleaning out a museum storage area earlier this year, volunteers uncovered a horse-drawn hearse. In the 17th century, the term hearse referred to the horse-drawn carriages that carried caskets to the place of burial during a funeral procession.

Volunteers have unofficially dated their discovery to 1850. Their research also provided information linking the acquisition to a trade with a local man for an ore car in 1989. Desperately needing repairs, the treasure was tucked away in storage where it lay for the past 30 years. Museum volunteer Mary Thomas says the estimated cost of repairing the hearse is about \$10,000.

Many items donated to the museum need repair, and while the White Pine County Tourism & Recreation Board provides some support to the museum, volunteers rely on grants, memberships, admission fees and donations to bring the diverse stories and history of the community back to life.

The museum was spearheaded by the Ely Business and Professional Women's Club in August 1959. More than 100 citizens joined together to develop a collection, and the museum was incorporated as the White Pine Public Museum in June 1960, opening with exhibits loaned and donated by citizens of White Pine County.

Museum Manager Julie



The White Pine Public Museum in Ely opened in 1960.

Wallace and her assistant, Joy Ragali, comprise the museum's small staff. They host several educational tours and provide a personal touch to anyone's museum experience.

Recently, a group of third graders from Las Vegas participated in an impromptu scavenger hunt, allowing for an interactive experience with the exhibits.

Mary says the staff and volunteers strive to accommodate all visitors. They are working to translate the

self-guided tour pamphlet into Spanish, for example.

"There is always something new, even though it's old," Janet jokes. "Imagine what these dolls have seen," she adds, referring to a collection of antique dolls volunteers recently worked on.

Visitors find riches like a player piano from 1860—paper roll still intact. According to museum records, the piano was brought over the Plains by the Hayes family.



On the museum's eastern facade, a mural of the short-faced cave bear gives viewers an idea of how tall 'Lilly' would have stood on her hind legs. Muralist John Steinauer painted it in May 2015 in cooperation with Boy Scout Troop 289.



Mt. Wheeler Power lineman and local artist Jason McNutt painted the above mural in the museum's Natural History and Mining Room. It provides the backdrop for the 12,000-year-old short-faced cave bear fossil known locally as 'Lilly.' She was found in White Pine County in 1992 by local cavers.

Photos courtesy of White Pine Public Museum

The museum's collection of antique instruments and music players is extensive. It includes a Victrola—an early type of record player that was patented in 1906—and original band instruments from the White Pine High School music department, including a sousaphone used in the marching band, a saxophone from 1914 and a Rosewood marimba.

Visitors can also sit down at a 1921 Concord piano that was originally brought out from Chicago and used in the Masonic Hall for Ely Lodge No. 29.

The museum's medical room features a cabinet that still holds a variety of equipment, instruments and medicine bottles once used by Dr.

Noah Smirnoff and Dr. J.K. Jones, who practiced medicine in the county for many years.

There's also a wooden cauterizing machine used for tonsillectomies at Steptoe Hospital, a wooden wheelchair with a caned back and a dental chair from the clinic in McGill, Nevada.

Outdoor displays include the Gilbert Cabin, which was built in the 1880s and is one of the earliest cabins in Ely. Those intrigued by ghost stories can visit and inquire about which Gilbert family member is thought to haunt the cabin.

Visitors can pack a picnic lunch and have a rest on the west lawn while checking out the old jail cell, where they can take in details of the

Fourth of July Celebration Mural on the west outdoor wall.

The first mural commissioned by Renaissance Society muralist Colin Williams tells the story of the significance of the Fourth of July for White Pine County as a holiday for all ethnic groups celebrated together.

While there are hundreds of amazing discoveries at the museum, there are countless donated items patiently

waiting restoration. So while a visit to the museum will uncover the rich history of this community, it will also help support the museum. ■

The White Pine Public Museum is not-for-profit and relies on fundraising, donations, admission fees and memberships, which allow staff to renew and preserve important pieces of the community's rich history. Staff are always looking for volunteers to help bring displays to life and provide every visitor an inspiring experience. To make a donation or volunteer with the museum, call 775-289-4710.

Museum Fundraiser

There will be a 1920's-themed beer and bacon tasting June 22, 4 to 7 p.m. at the White Pine Public Museum: 2000 Great Basin Blvd. Costumes are encouraged. The fundraiser will feature locally brewed beers and a silent art auction. Tickets are \$25 if purchased in advance, or \$30 at the door.

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

WREC grant recipient earns internship with Utah congressman's office

By Dianna Troyer

When Colton Smith attended West Wendover High School, he set a goal of one day working in a political office in Washington, D.C. This summer, Colton will take a big step toward achieving that dream when he heads to the nation's capital for a prestigious internship.

From May to August, Colton will work for Chris Stewart, a Republican representing Utah's 2nd Congressional District in the state's western and southern regions.

A freshman at Southern Utah University in Cedar City, Colton applied for the internship after learning about it at the Leavitt Center of Politics and Public Service on campus.

"To me, Washington, D.C., is a global



Colton Smith with Utah Sen. Mitt Romney.

Photo courtesy of Colton Smith

symbol of freedom for the world," he says. "The number of historical sites in the area fascinates me."

One of Colton's responsibilities will be taking constituents from Utah's 2nd District on tours of the Capitol.

"It's definitely my favorite place in Washington, D.C., because it's the center of American democracy, and the Statue of Freedom stands over it," he says.

The 19-foot, 6-inch bronze statue crowns the Capitol's distinctive dome. Wearing a robe secured with a brooch inscribed "U.S.," the classical female figure wears a helmet with eagle feathers.

The rotunda, often referred to as the symbolic and physical heart of the Capitol, is 96 feet in diameter and 180 feet tall. Thousands of visitors stroll around it daily, looking at large paintings of significant historical events and statues of former presidents.

"My favorite painting there is the surrender of Lord Cornwallis because that moment symbolizes the beginning of American freedom," Colton says of the 12-by-18-foot oil painting. In 1781 at Yorktown, Virginia, the British Army surrendered, ending the last major campaign of the Revolutionary War.

"The marble statue of Abraham Lincoln is my favorite statue in the rotunda," Colton says of the contemplative life-sized depiction of the president holding the Emancipation Proclamation in his right hand. "I admire him as a president because without him the nation we know today would not be here."

In 1866, Congress commissioned the Lincoln statue to 18-year-old Lavinia Ellen "Vinnie" Ream. She was the youngest artist and first woman to receive a commission from the government for a statue. She completed it in five years.

Colton says he hopes to learn more this summer about public land management, which is a policy issue Congressman Stewart is focused on.

"He advocated for the protection of public land when he introduced



As a Congressional intern, Colton will spend a lot of time in the Capitol Rotunda as he leads Capitol tours for constituents from Utah's 2nd District.

Photo by Architect of the Capitol



The Capitol building, left, is one of Colton's favorite places in Washington. His favorite statue in the rotunda is this marble likeness of Abraham Lincoln.

Photos by Architect of the Capitol

legislation to create a sixth national park in Utah," Colton says. "Yet he also advocates for states' rights on public land, allowing for more local control over usage, such as grazing and other business interests."

Last summer while touring Washington, D.C., Colton says he often thought of his favorite president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

"He inspires me because he accomplished so much during his political career," Colton says. "He led us through the worst economic disaster in our nation's history and one of the worst armed conflicts. All the while, he battled

infantile paralysis."

Among Roosevelt's countless accomplishments was establishing the Rural Electrification Administration by executive order in 1936. An REA loan in 1959 enabled Wells Rural Electric Co., a non-profit cooperative, to provide electricity to its member-owners.

WREC has helped Colton achieve his goals.

"I'm grateful to have received a grant from WREC's Next Dollar Foundation to help pay for college and to have participated in the Utah Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Michael F. Peterson Youth Leadership Challenge,"

Colton says. "Student leadership in high school led me toward public service."

During high school, Colton served as student body president and joined Future Business Leaders of America. He now serves as the chief of staff in student government at SUU.

After his unforgettable summer, Colton will return to college next fall. He is majoring in economics and minoring in legal studies and criminal justice.

"One day I hope to be involved in politics," he says, "but first I have aspirations of studying law. I can't wait to see what unfolds this summer." ■

Right-of-Way Maintenance Increases Safety, Reduces Outages

By WREC Staff

As part of Wells Rural Electric Co.'s mission to improve the quality of life in the communities we belong to, one of our top priorities is providing members with safe, reliable electricity.

While WREC's line crews are always ready to respond to outages at a moment's notice to restore power as quickly and as safely as possible, fulfilling our obligation to reliability is about far more than being prepared when the power goes out.

While outages are inevitable, WREC operations personnel are dedicated to executing a detailed preventive

maintenance program that ensures your lights stay on as much as possible by avoiding outages before they happen.

WREC employees look at system data to identify potential problem areas and projects to strengthen our distribution system. Two of our biggest duties every spring and summer are trimming trees and making sure right-of-ways are cleared around power poles, lines and other equipment.

Right-of-way maintenance and tree trimming are essential, time-consuming jobs that take many forms. In some areas, the priority is clearing brush and other foliage around poles to provide

protection in case of wildfire. In 2018, the Echo Fire in southern Clover Valley burnt through WREC's lines and, thanks to right-of-way maintenance, didn't burn down any poles.

In other areas, as shown in these photos, it's important to clear trees that could damage equipment and cause outages or make accessing problem areas difficult, potentially lengthening the duration of outages.

These projects are an essential, ongoing part of reliability. The goal is simple: making sure you have access to the electricity that powers your lives and our communities whenever it's needed. ■



Many WREC poles and power lines—such as the one pictured above—run through areas with heavy brush and thick trees.

Photos by Ryan Brodsho



While maintenance projects can be time-consuming and require heavy equipment, clearing brush from around poles is a vital part of protecting equipment from wildfires.



A recent right-of-way clearance project in Ruby Valley carved a safe path for WREC lines and equipment.



OTEC crews, along with numerous partners, staged a car-versus-pole accident for a virtual reality safety video, which will be used for training and education.

Photos by Nini Valerio

OTEC Joins Forces to Film Safety Video

Video shows dangers of electricity and how to save someone injured in a car-versus-pole accident

By Lisa Jacoby

The car is crushed against the power pole, the front end wrinkled like an accordion. A power line lies nearby, possibly alive with electricity. A disoriented woman sits in the driver's seat.

Emergency personnel arrive, along with a crew from Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative.

Although the scenario is a real one that OTEC crews encounter at least once a month, this particular scene is staged for a virtual reality safety video that shows the dangers of electricity and how to save a person injured in a car-versus-pole accident.

OTEC worked with the Baker City Fire Department, Baker County Sheriff's Office

and Life Flight Network to produce the video. It will be used to train emergency personnel and educate the public.

"This is a more immersive way to portray that safety message," says Lea Gettle, OTEC's manager of administration and strategic services.

Lea spearheaded the effort, which relied on participation from local emergency agencies. Other key participants were OTEC's national insurance partners and safety professionals from Federated Rural Electric Insurance. B&K Recycling donated the car used in the mock accident. The driver and bystanders were volunteers.

"It was really amazing," Lea says of the cooperative effort.

OTEC linemen created the scene by building a

deenergized line. They buried a pole that had been damaged in a wreck much like the scenario portrayed in the video. The crew designed and constructed the lines in a way that, to most bystanders, appeared normal and energized.

"It looked pretty real," says Tony Hellbusch, an OTEC foreman who built the scene with OTEC Journeyman Lineman Casey Mitchell.

Footage was filmed in early March on South Bridge Street in Baker City.

Firefighters and EMTs were on scene all day, as were officers from the Baker County Sheriff's Office. Life Flight landed twice.

When a power line falls on a car, the vehicle can become energized, which

means an electrical current is pulsing through the tires to the ground. If the person inside steps out while touching the car, the electricity runs through them to reach ground.

If a rescuer touches the car without realizing it is energized, he or she could be seriously burned or electrocuted.

The safety video shows an incorrect rescue as well as the correct steps to save someone in this situation.

If a power pole is involved, OTEC is called to respond and deenergize the wires. Staying put until a lineman secures the area is normally the best option.

If forced to escape due to fire or some other pending danger, the person inside the car needs to leap as far away



The all-day exercise provided a chance for additional training for emergency agencies. The scenario included Life Flight, which can respond directly to a scene and land on a highway, county road or in a field.

as possible with both feet together, then hop or shuffle to a safe distance.

“The intent of the video is to demonstrate that unless those steps are taken, they could easily die,” says Mike Mitchell, an OTEC general foreman.

The all-day exercise provided a chance for additional training for the emergency agencies. Michael Weimer, regional director for Life Flight Network, says the helicopter crews train several times a year with the Baker City Fire Department and staff at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City.

The scenario for the safety video, which had Life Flight landing on a road, is realistic. In addition to hospital transports, Life Flight can respond directly to a scene and land on a highway, county road or in a field.

Two Baker County Sheriff’s Office deputies were on the

simulation.

“Their role was to block traffic,” Sheriff Travis Ash says.

In the case of an emergency such as this one, deputies handle the investigation but also control traffic and civilians to ensure the safety of the other responders. In their regular line of work, they work together on real emergencies often.

“The freeway gives us lots of practice in the winter,” Travis says. “We know our roles.”

Fire Chief John Clark sees the advantage of virtual-reality over traditional online classes.

“Training online becomes mundane,” he says. “It’s typically a lecture.”

Plus, those are filmed from one perspective.

“You depend on what the cameraman thinks is important,” John says.

In contrast, virtual-reality immerses a viewer into all aspects of the scene.

“With virtual reality, there’s interaction,” John says. “It makes it more realistic—it really puts you in the place of a hands-on witness.”

A film crew from Place VR shot the safety video footage. The mock accident began with a 911 call and rolled through the entire rescue and power restoration processes.

The camera has a lens on the front and back. In post-filming production, the two images are stitched together to create a 360-degree view when watched with a VR headset.

For instance, at one point the viewer is sitting inside the Life Flight helicopter with the pilot in front and the flight crew behind.

“You can’t escape the message because you’re in it,” Lea says. “That makes it so memorable.”

The video will be posted on the OTEC website and available to download. Although it isn’t virtual reality when viewed on a computer screen, the 360-degree video can be moved with a mouse or arrow keys to see around the scene.

OTEC is the first member-owned utility in the nation to use virtual reality to make a safety video.

OTEC—and the linemen who work with electricity every day—hope this video will save lives.

“It’s invisible,” OTEC journeyman lineman Chris Peppers says about electricity. “You can’t see it, you can’t hear it, but it’s there.”

OTEC is planning another video to discuss agriculture and the danger of power lines when working with farm

equipment and sprinkler pipes.

Other Uses of VR

OTEC is working on a larger project to use more virtual reality technology to promote economic development and tourism across Baker, Union, Grant and Harney counties.

OTEC received a grant from Travel Oregon, which will be used to film agritourism destinations in each county and buy VR headsets for visitors centers. In Baker County, for instance, a visitor interested in Anthony Lakes could slip on a headset and experience the snowy slopes.

“There are so many applications,” Lea says.

In addition to the safety video, the film crew captured footage that will be used for recruiting by the Baker City Fire Department. The video will include information about life inside the fire station, as well as fire suppression techniques filmed during a training fire. With virtual reality, the viewer is able to take in the whole flame-engulfed scene.

“You can look ahead and behind you, and see the rest of the crew,” John says.

John plans to roll out the recruitment video through social media. He hopes to reach more people interested in a part-time position.

“Recruiting for part time is really tough,” he says.

OTEC is working with Golden Shovel Agency, an economic development marketing agency from Minnesota, to produce and distribute the videos. ■

Program is Definitely ‘For the Birds’

OTEC takes action to keep birds safe while keeping the power on

By Susan Parrish and Andrew Cutler

Every year, there are dozens of animal-related power outages at Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative. Every year, birds die in these mishaps.

OTEC has minimized bird-related outages and bird mortality by taking preventative steps such as introducing nesting platforms in raptor-nesting locations.

From their home in Elgin, OTEC members Bud and Jane Scoubes can watch osprey fishing in the Grande Ronde River.

“The problem was that osprey had been building nests in the transformers,” Bud says.

About five years ago, Bud drove by the old train depot a few blocks from his home and noticed a power pole on the ground. He saw a solution in that old pole.

“I thought, ‘If OTEC will work with me on this, I can build a platform and keep the osprey out of the power lines,’” he says.

He called OTEC, and a crew moved the pole to the Scoubes property. Bud attached an old shipping pallet to the top of the pole to serve as a platform.

The OTEC crew returned and set the pole in the ground at the edge of Bud’s property near the river, away from the power lines. A pair of ospreys nested on the platform in spring 2018.

“We named them Jack and Diane, after the John Mellencamp song,” Bud says. “They raised three young ones. We watched the adults teach their offspring how to fish and how to fly. When they were about two-thirds grown, one of the chicks disappeared, so two were left. We named the youngsters Pine and Aspen.”



By building nesting platforms away from power lines, OTEC has helped reduce the number of bird-related power outages.

Photos by Andrew Cutler

Bud and Jane enjoyed watching the osprey family throughout the summer. Last fall, the osprey family migrated south, but a pair of ospreys—possibly Jack and Diane—returned to the platform this spring. The Scoubes are hopeful they again will have a front-row seat to the ospreys’ daily life.

Preventing Outages, Protecting Birds

When OTEC instituted its avian program in 2010, the purpose was to protect migratory birds while reducing outages in the service territory.

Nine years later, the program is making headway.

“As our program continued to evolve, we found more opportunities to protect birds from getting entangled with our power lines,” says Charlie Tracy, director of engineering. “It takes a while to put a good reporting system in place. There certainly was a learning curve for identifying and then documenting each bird-related incident on our system. However, as our knowledge and training improved, it was eventually reflected in our reports.”

The successful program can be directly tied to the cooperative’s work making power poles safer for birds, and its efforts building perches, nests and poles for avian protection.

“Once we know of locations that have a high potential for bird-related problems, we get to work right away to redesign and rebuild structures with avian protection in mind,” Charlie says.

Some of the projects include cutting jumper wires—energized lines—and installing protective barriers to help eliminate the chances of birds being electrocuted.

The cooperative has also reframed some of its power poles—lowering the cross arm on a pole about 60 inches and installing fiberglass cross arms, rather than the traditional wood, while increasing the width of the cross arm from 8 feet to 10 feet to give more room for birds with large wing spans—and installing plastic caps on the transformers and silicone hose on lines. New transformers are outfitted with these safety coverings.

Charlie is sure the effort is paying off.

“As we have identified the problem areas and addressed them, our efforts are being rewarded,” he says. “This will continue to be an ongoing program which requires dedicated resources. Unfortunately, once a nest is moved and avian protection is installed along with other measures to deter them, the birds don’t just go away. They immediately start looking for another location.”

Even though OTEC’s avian reporting



program is not perfected, the cooperative remains proactive and committed to preventing avian injuries and fatalities.

Utilities that do not protect wildlife can face stiff fines. In 2009, PacifiCorp pleaded guilty in federal court to violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 related to the deaths of 232 eagles in two years on its electric infrastructure in Wyoming. Fish and Wildlife Services said these deaths could have been prevented with readily available measures.

The utility was ordered to pay \$1.41 million in fines and restitution and to spend \$9.1 million over a five-year period to make its system safer for birds.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects a long list of migratory birds, as well as their nests and eggs. The treaty protects every species of bird in the United States except for the common pigeon, sparrow, starling, Eurasian Dove and game birds. Birds such as ravens, magpies and others are fully protected.

Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, OTEC must report all known bird mortalities to the FWS. Dead eagles cannot be touched—USFS or the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is contacted. The bird is frozen

Minimizing Interaction Between Birds and Lines

OTEC has minimized bird mortality and bird-related outages by:

- ▶ Increasing spacing between energized components on power structures.
- ▶ Increasing insulated materials while building power structures.
- ▶ Introducing nesting platforms and bird guard devices in critical raptor nesting locations, often by coordinating with landowners and installing nesting platforms separate from power structures.
- ▶ Installing bird guard devices.

and transported to Colorado Springs, Colorado, where the feathers are harvested and sent to Native American tribes across the country.

All the work OTEC puts into these projects not only helps protect the local bird population, but also helps reduce power outages and making the system safer. Being a good steward and protecting our environment and natural resources is one of OTEC’s priorities. ■

Strengthening Family Ties

Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative helps fathers build life skills and reconnect with their children in Marlboro and Dillon counties

By Robin Howard

One out of every four children in the U.S. has an absent father. It's a situation so prevalent that if fatherlessness were a disease, it would be an epidemic. As resilient as kids can be, new research shows that not having a dad in their lives is disastrous.

"It is our distinct pleasure and privilege to aid in the cause of strengthening fragile families by addressing father absences as a root cause of poverty," says Derrick Dease, executive director of the Man 2 Man Father Initiative. "We believe that by helping to build families, we strengthen the community. The community strengthens the city, the city affects the state, and the state affects the nations. The result is that we help change the world."

Teens with absent fathers have significantly higher odds of doing jail time. Half of incarcerated women grew up without a father. Children with absent fathers are more likely to smoke, drink, use drugs, have affective disorders, require emergency room visits, be obese, drop out of school, have poor grades and get pregnant as teens.

As of the last census, about 8% of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to more than 38% of children in households headed by females.

Research also shows children who grow up with an absent father suffer psychological damage that can affect their entire lives.

As a culture, the father is blamed for his absence. However, not all absentee dads are absent by choice. Once a man is divorced or separated from his children's mother, he is usually relegated to the sidelines by law and society. His sole responsibility is to be a financial provider with little or no thought given to the importance of his role as a caregiver to his children.

This creates a no-win situation for low-income fathers who

struggle to make even a basic living wage. For most, failure to keep up with child support payments means jail time. Jail time means unemployment—and a criminal record—thus compounding the stigma and making the man even less employable.

While this is a story about hard truths, it isn't a story about despair. It is a story of hope.

Meet Jerry. A few years ago, Jerry had no relationship with his children or their mothers. He did not have a job, diploma, car, support system or path to being the father he wanted to be.

Meet Henry. Henry was unemployed, separated from his five children and unable to pay child support. He was especially discouraged because his daughter is severely disabled and wasn't getting the emotional or physical care she needs.

Jerry and Henry were brave enough to share their stories as representatives of the thousands of fathers entangled in the same cycles of poverty, isolation and despair.

Like Henry and Jerry, many fathers who don't see their kids or can't keep up with child support aren't deadbeats. They want to be providers and good dads. Through the messiness of breakups, separation or divorce, they can get disconnected from their kids, and there are plenty of legal barriers that keep them from getting reconnected.

Regardless of circumstances, when a father loses contact with his children, they are instantly derailed. The damage fatherless children suffer, and the resulting social ills affect all of us.

This was the issue on the table in 1999 when a group of concerned citizens in Marlboro County got together to address the growing numbers of absent fathers. The group began by assessing the complex challenges low-income dads face, including unemployment, poor communication with the mothers, lack of consistent access to their children, inability to pay basic living expenses and child support, inability to navigate the legal system, lack of

education, obstacles caused by prior convictions and temptations of earning a living in an underground economy.

To help fathers reconnect with their children, Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative was born under the umbrella of the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. They set

"When a father is involved and present in a child's life ... the child is better equipped to deal with life's challenges."

—Gailon Wisdom, Man 2 Man Outreach Coordinator



Above and right, parents actively involved with the Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative receive peer and specialist support, group counseling, job training and parenting skills.

Photos courtesy of Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative

a mission of engaging fathers in the positive support of their children and enhancing community support for fatherhood throughout the Pee Dee region.

“When a father is involved and present in a child’s life, there is a greater chance of stability, and the child is better equipped to deal with life’s challenges,” says Gailon Wisdom, outreach coordinator for Man 2 Man.

“Statistics show that father-absent homes produce 71% of all high school dropouts, 90% of all homeless or runaway children, and 63% of all youth suicides,” Gailon says. “We also know that 71% of teens with absent fathers experience early parenthood or teen pregnancy. When the father is present, the child is 60% less likely to be expelled from school, two times more likely to go to college, 75% less likely to experience teen pregnancy and 80% less likely to spend time in jail.”

In other words, the stakes are incredibly high.

Today, Man 2 Man is a stand-alone nonprofit and part of a network of fatherhood programs in South Carolina. The organization serves fathers from Marlboro and surrounding counties,



including Chesterfield, Darlington, Florence, Dillon and Marion.

Most fathers in the Man 2 Man program are in their late 20s to early 30s, and one-third don't have a GED or diploma. In fact, 93% of fathers are unemployed when they enter the Man 2 Man program. For these men, education can be the key to unlocking an entirely different future for themselves and their children.

It was for Jerry, who could see no path to being an involved father when he entered the program. He had long wanted to earn his GED, and with help from Man 2 Man, he did it and is now taking college courses. Man 2 Man also helped him find a job. With a job, Jerry was able to buy a car. Now he picks up his children on weekends and can buy them what they need. He has a good relationship with both his kids' mothers and has become a mentor for other fathers in his situation.

Jerry is one success story among many who enter the Man 2 Man program. In 2018, Man 2 Man served 424 fathers who had 921 children among them. Two hundred of the participants found employment, 41% were able to pay their child support and 23% said they had an improved relationship with their children. Since 2002, Man 2 Man has helped 2,322 fathers improve



Chesterfield County Sheriff's Deputy George Johnson is a Man 2 Man participant. He says the program taught him to be patient in any situation.

life for themselves and their families.

One of the keys to the program's success is a holistic approach that includes peer support meetings. In these meetings, fathers find a community that understands their situations. There is respect without judgment—just knowing someone understands what they're going through is a massive relief. For many, it's the first time they've ever had a support network in their lives.

"What I enjoy about Man 2 Man is the friendship and non-judgmental support and assistance reaching goals," Roderick Ridges says. "They also help me to stay focused on the important things in life and to always believe in myself."

Today, Roderick works for the city of Bennettsville and is better able to take care of his family.

When Henry came to Man 2 Man, he was ready to give up. Through peer support sessions he learned how to get a job and keep it, how to be a better parent, how to deal with anger and how to be financially responsible. He learned how to navigate the legal system and gained joint custody of his children. When the mother of his disabled daughter was found neglectful, Henry was granted full custody and is now her caretaker.

These aren't overnight transformations, however. The Fatherhood Curriculum is comprehensive, and it's hard work. The program focuses on four main components for fathers: parenting, healthy relationships, economic stability and men's health. The program also facilitates an Employability Job Boot Camp—an intensive five days of on-the-job training—that preparing fathers for the working world to be better employees.

Fathers also get help navigating the child support system, mediation with the child's mother, gaining access to healthcare, getting criminal records expunged, transportation, employment and housing. Man 2 Man plans regular parent/child activities so dads and their kids can spend time together having fun and making positive memories.

Thanks to support from the local community, the program is free. Most learn about Man 2 Man by word of mouth, referrals from community partners and from the group's Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative SC Facebook page, which gives viewers a look at what the program is like.

"Attending the group sessions has helped me learn to have patience with the situation I'm in," says George Johnson, a program attendee who was recently sworn in as a deputy sheriff with the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Department. "I'm learning it's not about me or my child's mother. It's about our child."

Some fathers are court-ordered to participate as an alternative to jail time for non-payment of child support. The Jobs Not Jail Alternative to Incarceration gives family court judges the option of sending a father through the six-month program instead of sending him to jail, while others may be required to participate through a parenting treatment plan arranged by the Department of Social Services.

"When I got locked up, I realized I needed the support



Man 2 Man encourages and helps fathers be more involved with their children and helps them develop the skills necessary to care for them.

from Man 2 Man to help me become a better man, son, father, brother and friend,” Tyreek Blair says. “I’m proud of the changes I’ve made in my life to become a better father. I stopped getting angry and learned how to just walk away.”

Tyreek earned his commercial driver’s license and is in a better position to take care of those close to him.

“I’ve learned the most important thing to do is spend quality time with family,” he says.

Johnathan Gooding was referred through the parenting treatment plan program to give him the opportunity to regain custody of his young daughter. He says losing custody of his daughter negatively affected the relationship with his family and marriage. He suffered from depression and weight loss throughout the ordeal.

Johnathan’s commitment to the program helped him receive emotional support and new ideas to improve his parental skills and relationship with his wife and family. Johnathan regained custody of his daughter and spends more time bonding with his family.

It costs about \$2,000 to support a father through the six-month program, and the organization depends on financial and in-kind donations to operate. Besides financial support, its wish list includes supplies, clothing, cars in working condition, computers, cellphones, educational toys, children’s books and furniture.

Those wishing to help can also provide a job for a father in their program, sponsor a father through the program or donate gift cards that can be used as incentives for accomplishments. Financial contributions can be made at www.scfathersandfamilies.com or by mailing a check to Man 2 Man, 110 South Parsonage St, Bennettsville, SC 29512 or Man 2 Man, 1321 West Evans St., Florence, SC 29501. ■

Finding Help for Fathers in Need

Most fathers want to be involved in their children’s lives. Man 2 Man gives them a respectful place to work out challenges and build life skills to help men be the fathers they want to be, and the fathers their children need.

Fathers can get assistance at the following peer sessions.

- Mondays at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the Man 2 Man Florence office at 1321 West Evans St.
- Tuesdays at Dillon County Library at 2 p.m. and Harbor Freight Distribution Center at 4:30 p.m.
- Wednesdays at 2 p.m. at Northeastern Technical College in Cheraw and 4 p.m. at Florence-Darlington Technical College.
- Thursdays at Man 2 Man’s Bennettsville office at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

One-Tank Trips

Take a fun road trip from Marlboro and Dillon counties

Whether it's a special occasion or just the end of a long week, sometimes you need to get out of town. Marlboro and Dillon counties are within easy driving distance of some of the best vacation destinations in the country. These one-tank trips are just far enough that you feel like you're away, but not so far that you'll need a vacation after your vacation.

Emerald Isle, North Carolina

Emerald Isle is a barrier island on the southern Outer Banks. This beach community is so laid back that its official tagline is, "Nice Matters."

For a real treat, check into The Islander beachfront hotel. With an ocean-view pool and cabana, and crisp nautical themed rooms, you may want to extend your vacation. Emerald Isle also has scenic campgrounds where you can pitch your tent or park your rig.

Spend your mornings at the beach watching the dolphins play in the crystal clear water. Anglers can spend the day at Bogue Inlet Pier, a hotspot for catching trout, black drum and albacore.

Be sure to take a break for chicken and waffles at famous The Trading Post restaurant, then wander the quaint downtown shops with ice cream from the Sweet Spot.

Asheville, North Carolina

Leave home after breakfast, and you'll be in historic Asheville, North Carolina, by lunch. Located in the stunning Blue Ridge Mountains, Asheville has something for everyone.

Check in to the historical Black Walnut B&B, or any one of the area's other friendly lodgings, and set out for a walk around town. Asheville has more breweries per capita than any other city in the U.S., and dozens of art and local craft galleries. Save the next day for exploring the iconic Biltmore mansion,

estate, dairy, gardens and winery.

Back in town, Asheville has no shortage of entertainment. Ride the hop-on-hop-off trolley, listen to live music at The Orange Peel or take a Haunted Asheville tour.

Nature lovers will enjoy driving or biking Blue Ridge Parkway, hiking in the Pisgah, Nantahala or Cherokee National Forests. Kids and adults love zip lining in the mountains, as well as paddle boarding or tubing down the French Broad River.

Foodies will be in heaven on the city's food tour that allows visitors to sample several restaurants in just a few hours. Be sure to hit the WNC Cheese Trail and nibble your way through town.

Charleston

Since Charleston is less than three hours from Bennettsville, you may think you've been there and done it. This time, vacation like a local with off-the-beaten-path stops and activities. Book a hotel downtown for the ultimate immersive experience. Locals take their staycations at the Wentworth Mansion with its uber-romantic bar and restaurant in a former stable. If you want to save some cash, sleep just over the bridge in Mount Pleasant or rent a beach house on Isle of Palms.

Wherever you land, you can take the city's free DASH trolley around town. Bring your bike—or rent one downtown—and hit the beaches via Charleston's Battery2Beach route that connects Folly Beach, Isle of Palms and Sullivan's Island beaches with the peninsula.

Be sure to sign up for an easy kayak tour down Shem Creek to watch the dolphins and pelicans play, then head to lunch or dinner at the Wreck of Richard and Charlene—a secret restaurant nearby with no signs or advertising (look for the red buoy).



After a satisfying Lowcountry lunch, walk on the mighty Ravenell Bridge for a breathtaking birds-eye view of the city. Time it just right and you'll be so close to cargo ships passing under the bridge that you can wave at the captains.

For dinner, head for a local favorite such as Leon's Oyster Shop, Little Jack's Tavern or The Obstinate Daughter.

Save a day to take the Coastal Expeditions ferry to uninhabited Bull Island. Keep an eye out for resident critters such as alligators, bobcats and wild pigs. Bring a bag for collecting shells because this island has some of the best shelling on the coast.

Savannah, Georgia

Known in the South as Charleston's weirder sister, Savannah is an experience unlike any other. Just three hours away, Savannah is an easy drive and has affordable lodging within walking distance of the best the city has to offer.

Orient yourself on the hop-on-hop-off trolley, tour the famous Mercer-Williams House, then have lunch or dinner at the historical Six Pence Pub.

Strolling the Bonaventure cemetery or



Above, nearby Charleston offers many off-the-beaten-path stops and activities. Right, Bogue Inlet Pier in Emerald Isle, North Carolina is a popular scenic fishing spot.

taking an evening ghost tour is a must in America's most haunted city. For your evening meal, it's a hard choice between The Olde Pink House on Abercorn Street and Vic's on the River on East Bay.

If you need a break from Savannah's friendly ghosts, Tybee Island is only a 30-minute drive from downtown. This lovely little island has a well-appointed pier and beach where you can spend the day.

Myrtle Beach

Two hours from home is the most happening vacation resort on the East Coast. Myrtle Beach's Grand Strand is a 60-mile stretch of golden sand that includes a boardwalk with arcades, shops, restaurants and a family-friendly amusement park. If you like active vacations, Myrtle Beach is for you. From watersports to fishing, golf, shopping and rainy day entertainment for kids, there's no shortage of fun to be had.

Been before and looking for a unique



experience? Sign up for a relaxing Island Picnic Cruise to Winya Bay. Collect shells while watching for strand-feeding dolphins, birds and alligators. While you're playing, your boat crew will be busy setting up a shady picnic lunch.

Marlboro and Dillion counties are great places to call home. Lucky for us, when we're ready for a change of scenery, one tank will take us to some of the most scenic and relaxing places in the country. ■



Above, Myrtle Beach's Grand Strand is a 60-mile stretch of fun for the entire family. Below, the Biltmore Gardens in Asheville, North Carolina, are part of the iconic Biltmore mansion.

Above photo courtesy of South Carolina Dept. of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, below photo courtesy of ExploreAsheville.com

