

SPONSORED COFFEE CHATS WITH KIKI



Photo Credit: Spencer Cordovano

\$10 BILLION AND DISINTEGRATED ROADS

Everyone agrees that Highway 75 in Blaine County is currently terrible. Various decisions over time have led up to the extreme disrepair today, but now we can clearly see that something on a big scale must be done very soon. Patching some potholes here and there is not going to be enough of a fix. It is going to be inconvenient and expensive, and we might have to pay for it ourselves directly rather than waiting for the Idaho Transportation Department’s schedule.

Similarly to our road situation, Blaine County has made many other decisions over time that are going to catch up with us in a big way unless we change our direction. Many of us moved here for the skiing. I know I did, right out of college, as it was the best damned ski mountain in North America. This was a seasonal ski town with no summer business. Businesses made all their profits for the year over the two weeks at Christmas and one week over Presidents’ Day spring break. Some people still believe that skiing tourism will continue to drive our economy. Well, there are two data points we cannot ignore; one, we won’t be able to count on winters in the future, and two, there is \$10 billion

worth of real estate owned in this county.

\$10 billion worth of real estate owned tells us that many people here are not making their living in the ski industry, but in the selling of, building on, investing in, and maintaining that real estate, and that many people live here for reasons other than skiing: it’s a safe place to raise a family; people want an early active, retirement in healthy air; the deserts are too hot in the summer for all the retired boomers who have moved there. But if the new climate abnormal makes it not so attractive to live here, with smoky summers and evacuations, folks will move to somewhere else.

Through taxes, we as a community underwrite marketing of ourselves as a ski destination and subsidize air travel here. Great snow year we had this last winter, but within eight to 10 years we probably will not be able to ski to the bottom of the mountain as snow levels rise to higher elevations with the changing new abnormal. Can’t make snow if it is too warm. If there is no snow and there are smoke-filled Augusts and constant fire evacuations, I don’t care if the airfare is free, and the magazine ads are glossy, people won’t want to be here.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Another Injury Crash On I-84

On July 10, 2019, at 9:21 p.m., Idaho State Police investigated an injury crash on eastbound Interstate 84 at milepost 147, west of Gooding.

Ronnie Wood, 39, of Nampa, was driving eastbound on Interstate 84 in a 2012 Ford F-150 pickup truck. Wood fell asleep and struck the rear of a 1998 Dodge pickup pulling a U-Haul trailer, driven by Kay Unger, 56, of Florence, Ore. The U-haul trailer became separated from the Dodge pickup. The Dodge pickup came to rest in the median and the U-haul and Ford pickup came to rest on the right shoulder.

Unger and her passenger, Logan Unger, 29, of Florence, were transported by ground ambulance to North Canyon Medical Center in Gooding. Kay Unger was wearing a seatbelt and Logan Unger was not wearing a seatbelt.

Idaho State Police was assisted by Gooding County Emergency Medical Services, Gooding County Sheriff’s Office, and Wendell Fire Department Station 92.

THE WEEKLY

SUN

CALENDAR

EVENT FEATURE

JAMGRASS BANDS HEAD TO STANLEY

Sawtooth Valley Gathering hits its fifth year

BY DANA DUGAN

Music festivals are summer’s greatest inventions. This year marks the fifth time the Sawtooth Valley Gathering will be held in Stanley, 60 miles north of Ketchum, Thursday, July 25, through Sunday, July 28.

The event is produced annually by James Fowler’s Nothing But Love organization. Fowler, who went to high school in the Wood River Valley, is now a Boise resident. He has long been a live-music enthusiast, traveling to festivals around the world. Fowler knows what he likes: contemporary bluegrass, wicked guitar action, dance jams and a field full of friends enjoying themselves.

As in the past, the festival will feature two full days of live music, camping, craft vendors and food trucks at the event. There are two stages at the venue, the Sawtooth Stage and the newly renamed (for this year) Sawtooth Brewery Nothing But Love Stage.

There are some new additions, too. For instance, there will be a pre-party at the Sawtooth Brewery in Hailey on Thursday, July 25, with Pixie and the Partygrass Boys.

“It’s the ‘Scenic Road To The Sawtooth Valley Gathering Traveling Concert Series,’” said Fowler, laughing. “We had one in Boise at Funky Taco two weeks ago, too.”

On Thursday, July 25, there will be a street party in Stanley to kick things off. The box office will open at 5 p.m. at Mountain Village Resort and camping will be available at the Mountain Village off-site camping area.

“Without Mountain Village, straight up, we couldn’t operate,” Fowler said. “They’re great to us. We’re feeling really good about it.”

Presented by the Kasino Club and Papa Brunee’s Pizza, the street party will be held on Ace of Diamonds Street from 6 to 10 p.m. with the Stanley Street Band and the band Idaho Vacations. At 10 p.m., Andrew Sheppard, back in town from his new home in Nashville, will play at Mountain Village Resort’s Velvet Falls Dance Hall from 10 to 11:15 p.m. Jupiter Holiday will take the stage from 11:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.

“Jupiter Holiday are my Boise jam-band heroes,” Fowler said. “They’re one of my favorite bands in Idaho. And the Velvet Falls space feels great.”

On Friday, the box office will open at 10 a.m. Up at Stanley Park, the unique festival site with its backdrop of the rugged Sawtooth Mountains, the action will start gently with yoga from 10 to 11 a.m. Friday (and again on Saturday). Earth Beverages will serve kombucha samples, and Mountain Village Resort will open a Bloody Mary bar at the same time.

Music will begin at 11 a.m. and run to midnight each day. Among the highlights—and there are many—will be ALO from Southern California; Yak Attack, Gene Evaro Jr., Brad Parsons, Pixie and the Partygrass Boys, the Quick and Easy Boys from Portland, and many others.

One thing this festival is known for is musicians sitting in with each other over the course of the two days.

Parsons is “one of our heroes,” Fowler said. “It’s his fourth show. He’s the hardest worker out there. He does a lot of sit-ins but he doesn’t leave it up to chance. The artist-at-large squad is solid this year.”

Saturday will see another lineup of regional musicians, including Cassandra Lewis, who plays a “must-see set,” Fowler said.

Lewis has played Treefort Music Fest, and Ranch Fest, and is “super-weird in the best way possible, with a voice as big as the Sawtooths,” Fowler said.

Portland-based Cascade Crescendo will also take the main stage on Saturday.

“They’re the next big bluegrass band,” Fowler said. “John Craigie from Portland is blowing up,



A festival circuit favorite, Railroad Earth will headline the Sawtooth Valley Gathering on Saturday, July 27, in Stanley. Photo credit: Railroad Earth



Bands will play on two different stages at the Sawtooth Valley Gathering, both with incredible back-grounds of the Sawtooth Mountain Range. Photo credit: Dana DuGan

and he’ll be followed by Colorado singer-songwriter Daniel Rodriguez, who was with Elephant’s Revival. Dead Winter Carpenters will be back, too.”

The list of artists is deep and impressive. Free Peoples will return, and Andrew Sheppard will play sets both Thursday at Velvet Falls and Friday at the festival site.

The headliner this year, Railroad Earth, will play two sets Saturday night. Hailing from New Jersey, the name comes from a Jack Kerouac poem titled “October in the Railroad Earth.” They are one of those big, hyper-talented bands that blow audiences away with their inventive rhythms. Essentially, they play amplified rock ‘n’ roll on acoustic instruments better than anyone else.

“I’m excited to have them,” Fowler said. “They’re playing two sets to fill in for Jeff Austin, who was booked, but who recently died.”

Fowler enthuses plenty about the music but he’s equally ready to share the glory and the hard work.

“We’re still a volunteer-based event,” he said. “The crew, which is as big as ever, is run by Courtney Sibbett. She works festivals all over the West Coast. Of course, there’s Luke Henry, and we fully support his Summer’s End project. I’m excited to see a bunch of our friends play in Hailey in August.”

More than 15 craft vendors and several food vendors will be on hand, including KB’s, Lime in a Coconut, Wood River Sustainability Center, and Sawtooth Brewery.

Other sponsors include Tito’s Vodka, Sawtooth Adventure Co., Clear Creek Disposal, Sushi on Second, Wood River Roofing, Pioneer Cabin Co., and others. Moss Garden Center will supply floral arrangements.

On Sunday, Velvet Falls will be cranking, with live acts all day from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m., open to all pass holders.

“On Monday, we pick up the cigarettes,” Fowler said. “American Spirit is donating ashtrays so we can keep people from dropping their butts all over the park.”

For tickets, information and to reserve campsites, visit sawtoothvalleygathering.com.