

Crowd packs Divide Camp dinner

By Steve Tool
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Multitudes of Wallowa County supporters of Veterans attended the Divide Camp Wild Game and Salmon Banquet at Cloverleaf Hall on April 25. Divide Camp is a non-profit program for treatment of both physically and/or psychologically wounded Veterans, focusing mainly on post-9-11 Vets. It is located in the Wallowa Mountains between Joseph and Imnaha.

So many people attended the banquet that volunteers ended up having to get more tables and chairs for the overflow crowd. Both elk stew and salmon were served as the main courses as well as potatoes, salad, and various deserts. The event also featured speeches, music by "Last Call" as well as a live and a silent auction.

Veterans Shawn Phillips and James Nash gave detailed talks regarding their service in the Middle East as well as the positive experience that Divide Camp brings to Veterans.

Julie Wheeler, Divide Camp executive director, and several volunteers spoke of their commitment to Divide Camp and about how working with Veterans and the camp changed their lives.

In an interview, Wheeler expressed amazement that their first event went so well. "I didn't really expect that much support for a first event," she said.

Wheeler said that the event raised over \$13,000 for the camp and left everyone impressed with the community support.

The money raised will help pay for the camp's summer activities, including a Grande Ronde fishing trip, along with hikes and horse packing trips into the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

"It'll be a busy year. We didn't have funding for these trips, and this banquet is making a huge difference, and that's exciting." Wheeler said.

Not everything is coming up roses, however. Wheeler said Divide Camp is still looking for a headquarters with office space, sleeping quarters and storage. "I believe it's out there. We just haven't connected yet," Wheeler said.