Hospital expands rehab center

By MATT FURBER

In a joint venture, St. Luke’s Wood River Medical Center and the Idaho Elks Rehabilitation Hospital in Boise have put together a new outpatient therapy center in St. Luke’s Physician Office Annex adjacent to the hospital. The first patients were seen Monday, Aug. 4.

Akin to a weight room in an athletic club, the facility expands the hospital’s outpatient rehabilitation services, which include a variety of therapeutic machines, three treatment rooms and an aquatic therapy pool.

“We see a lot of work related hand injuries,” said Mary Kay Foley, site manager and physical therapist. “We will work closely with patients so they can resume their daily lives as quickly and as safely as possible. We will also offer a variety of wellness programs to improve the quality of life, fitness, and sports performance.

The pool is also a great addition to our service. “It looks like a little submarine,” said one visitor. The Swim EX pool produces current for resistance training. “It’s like a cross four wave,” said one of the installers. “You could tie a rope to the wall and surf it.”

Physical therapists can watch patients through the four windows in the pool or get in the water to work with them, said Foley.

There is also a 10-piece Nautilus clinic for strength and conditioning, treadmills, elliptical treadmills, stationary bikes, a Pilates reformer machine for core strengthening, and an upper-extremity ergometer for rehabilitation of things like shoulder injuries.

Although worker’s compensation cases may be a large part of the business at the center, many visitors are likely to be sports injury patients.

Dr. Charlotte and Herbert Alexander moved their orthopedic services into the annex in November 2002. Their office is next door to the center.

The only other physician with offices in the annex is gynecologist Dr. Ross Donald, with the Women’s Medical Group. Nurse practitioner Carol Wade, who has an office in Hailey shares the space. The entire second floor of the annex is yet empty.

The rehab center is planning to offer corporate wellness programs and see a growing potential for seasonal patients, Foley said. “People come to the mountains for recuperation.”

See REHAB on page B12

REDEFINING WILDERNESS

DOES WILDERNESS DRAW BUSINESS TO TOWNS?

Second in a series of three

By GREGORY FOLEY

Central Idaho, including the region that encompasses the vast Boulder and White Cloud mountains, is a land of contrasts. Flat pastures dotted with sagebrush give way to towering peaks. During the abbreviated summers, a dry heat parches the landscape, before succumbing to an extreme cold that asserts its grip each winter.

But for many central Idahoans, the most noticeable disparity in the region is between the economies of the two counties that comprise the heart of the state’s mountainous middle.

Blaine County is an established bastion of wilderness designations inherently carry economic impacts, with arguments being made for and against protected lands based on financial considerations.

Many conservatives claim that wilderness areas give back to rural populations less than they take, creating only a limited demand for basic services at the expense of traditional enterprises, cultures, and recreational activities.

At the same time, some economists and environmentalists have said that designating a large portion of the Boulder-White Clouds as protected wilderness could in itself provide substantial economic benefits to the economies of both Blaine and Custer Counties.

“I think wilderness designation would be good for the identity of the area, and the economy of the area,” said Rick John-son, executive director of the Idaho Conservation League, which has strongly lobbied Simpson to advance the wilderness legislation.

Simpson’s economic plan

In an attempt to diversify the belea-

Recent designations provide models for BWC negotiations

By GREG STAHL

Wilderness designations in the 21st century are taking on a new guise that appears to be an attempt at tempering pro-
gerative idealism with conser-

One recent model included congressional wilderness design-

Slater said. “Packers, guides, ranchers, sportsmen... We need to work to ensure that they are as well off or better off than they are today. Everybody needs to win in this process.”

Opposing views

Wilderness designations inherently carry economic impacts, with arguments being made for and against protected lands based on financial considerations.

Legislation being drafted by Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, to designate 250,000 acres of wilderness in the Boulder-White Clouds and concurrently boost the Custer County economy with a unique econom-

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Wilderness designations inherently carry economic impacts, with arguments being made for and against protected lands based on financial considerations.
Mining built and shaped region’s early days

By GREG STAHL
Express Staff Writer

Like many of Idaho’s mountainous regions, Boulder-White Cloud country was settled largely because of mining activities around the turn of the 19th century.

With only a handful of exceptions, however, large-scale mining has become a part of the region’s history. But Custer County has ridden the surging waves associated with the boom-and-bust nature of the industry through to present day.

Minerals were first discovered in Custer County in 1873, with the discovery of gold, and a three-decade mining boom ensued. Mining and cattle ranching activity in the area soon warranted a supply base, and in 1876, Alvah F. Challis laid out the city of Challis as a supply depot.

In more recent terms, for most of the 1980s and 1990s, the Thompson Creek Mining Co. near Clayton was Custer County’s largest employer, but because of a recent decline in the market prices of molybdenum, the mine’s workforce was scaled back from 400 at its peak to 20 in 2001. With a slight increase in market prices of molybdenum, the mine said it now employs approximately 150 and continues as Custer County’s largest private employer.

Mineral claims at Thompson Creek were staked in 1967, and commercial production began in 1983. During peak operations, the mine’s annual production of 15 million pounds represented 8 percent of the world molybdenum supply.

In 1997, the short-lived Grouse Creek gold mine near Stanley was closed by its parent firm, Hecla Mining Co., after 3.5 years of operations. The 187-person workforce was scaled back to a skeleton crew of as many as 20 that continues to work on mine-site reclamation.

In 1901, Mackay was abuzz with expansion plans from the White Knob Mining Co.’s copper mine.

During the Great Depression, metals prices dropped dramatically and the local impact forced a near shutdown of mining activity during most of the 1930s. The war years, however, were prosperous ones for Mackay, as war dictated increases in demand for copper.

The late-1940s marked the end of significant mining in Mackay, but limited activity continued until about 1975.

The towns of Ketchum, Hailey and Bellevue in the Wood River Valley of Blaine County were also mining centers before sheep ranching and, later, tourism took over as the primary economic engines. In 1936, Sun Valley resort opened its doors and the seeds for present-day tourism were sown.

The Wood River Mines were rich in lead and silver, and between 1980 and 1985, $12 million worth of the minerals were extracted from mines in the area.

The communities commemorate this heritage annual with Ketchum’s Wagon Days celebration held each Labor Day weekend.

In between the modern-day communities that surround the Boulder and White Cloud Mountains, abandoned mines and ghost towns abound.

Custer and Bonanza are restored ghost towns and popular tourist destinations in Custer County. The ghost towns of Galena, Bullion City, Boulder City and Broadford lay dormant in the Wood River Valley. Vienna, Sawtooth City and Gladiateur are some of the Sawtooth Valley’s mining relics.
**MODEL**

Continued from page B1

“We’re looking at what happened in Nevada last year, the Clark County bill. They gave a fair amount of land to the state to sell,” Slater said.

The Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002, which designated small wilderness areas in the Mojave Desert around Las Vegas, also freed up federal land for private development and a new airport 30 miles south of the city.

Wilderness advocates had originally asked for 4.1 million acres, but pared down their request by 10 times to make it more palatable for wilderness opponents.

As a concession to the hunting community, the bill also included a condition allowing the Nevada Division of Wildlife to use trucks and helicopters in the wilderness to survey and capture wildlife and maintain artificial watering holes.

The Steens Mountain Wilderness was a different animal entirely, but might be applicable to the Boulder and White Cloud discussions.

The Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000, in addition to designating 170,000 acres of wilderness, authorized $5 million to purchase ranch in-holdings, as well as the trade of 104,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management property for the displaced ranchers.

The Nature Conservancy-Idaho is working with Simpson’s office to potentially move existing livestock operations near the White Cloud Mountains “to a more secure base,” said Geoff Pampush, TNC-Idaho director.

“In particular, we’re in conversations with landowners in the East Fork, but it’s actually much broader than that,” Pampush said. “What we’re looking to do is potentially identify new operations for some of the existing ranchers in the upper Salmon basin. In order to make that work, we may have to buy the ranches of the impacted ranchers and then identify a ranch for them to acquire and help them acquire it.”

The motivation for designation of a Steens Mountain Wilderness was different from current efforts in the Boulder and White Cloud Mountains, Slater said. Efforts there stemmed from a defensive posture assumed when former President Bill Clinton’s interior secretary announced plans to designate the area as a 3 million-acre national monument.

“We decided there could be a better alternative,” Slater said.

In return for supporting wilderness protection, ranchers were also permitted to graze cattle in parts of the wilderness, and they are allowed to drive into the area to check fences and stock tanks.

Of his experience with the Steens Mountain bill, Slater said he learned, above all else, to be meticulous.

“One of the best things I learned is that we have to button down every issue,” he said. “We have to cross every t and dot every i, and make sure we leave very little ambiguity for others to interpret, either in lawsuits or by agency officials.”

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**HORSE PACK AND HUNTING OUTFITTERS**

are taking a potential wilderness designation in the Boulder and White Cloud mountains with a grain of salt.

“When I take someone out on a trail ride, there’s an expectation that there will be nobody else on that trail,” said Jim Super, of Super Outfitters of Sun Valley. “If you have too much use, you lose that look and feel.”

Mike Scott and Louise Stark have led horse pack and hunting trips in Idaho’s White Cloud Mountains for 17 years. As owners of Challis-based White Cloud Outfitters, they said they see potential designation of a wilderness area in the White Cloud and Boulder ranges from multiple perspectives.

“It will bring more people. I think that’s kind of a given,” said Stark. “But then I have to look at the type of experience (we) offer right now, and our clients don’t want to see people when they’re up there.”

Lois Selver said wilderness designation would probably be accompanied by increased scrutiny from public lands managers, “possibly to the extreme.”

“Really, we don’t have any problems with the way things are right now,” she said. “The language in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area laws is pretty restrictive. It’s worked, to a great deal, to this point in time. If we just enforced what’s already on the books, we’d be close to being there.”

Sawtooth Valley-based outfitter Tom Proctor owns Pioneer Mountain Outfitters.

Proctor agreed that a wilderness designation would probably attract more visitors to the region. However, he still views wilderness in the area as a mixed blessing.

“On one hand, when they set this up in ’72, they established the wilderness in the Sawtooths, and the White Clouds were left for multiple use. You have to understand that I don’t like mountain bikes and motorcycles, but they have to have a place to go.”

“If you go wilderness, you’re looking at eliminating a lot of those uses, and it probably would be better for me.”

Unlike his Custer County counterparts, Blaine County outfitter Jim Super said wilderness designation in the Boulder-White Clouds is “long overdue.”

But Super, who owns Super Outfitter Adventures of Sun Valley and offers day-use hunting trips in the Boulder Mountains, also said more people would trigger a balancing act between the benefits of increased business and his clients’ expectations.

“When I take someone out on a trail ride, there’s an expectation that there will be nobody else on that trail,” he said. “If you have too much use, you lose that look and feel.”

Louise Stark, of White Cloud Outfitters, said wilderness designation in the area as a mixed blessing.

“I can not tell you if it would enhance our experience or not,” she said. “I kind of wunder.”

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**Some outfitters view wilderness as a mixed blessing**

By GREG STAHL

Express Staff Writer

Mike Scott and Louise Stark have led horse pack and hunting trips in Idaho’s White Cloud Mountains for 17 years. As owners of Challis-based White Cloud Outfitters, they said they see potential designation of a wilderness area in the White Cloud and Boulder ranges from multiple perspectives.

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Louise Stark

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Louise Stark

White Cloud Outfitters

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**Support for Wilderness designation in Idaho**

A 2002 Poll by Davis, Hibbitts & McCrane asked Idahoans about the issue of wilderness designation. When asked a conceptual question about designating federal land as wilderness in Idaho in general respondents were fairly evenly split. When asked about a specific 500,000 acre wilderness in the Boulder-White Cloud Mountains those in favor outnumbered those opposed by about 2-to-1.
noting that the plan is “in no way” intended to be “an economic bailout for Custer County.”

**Does Custer need help?**

Many groups with an interest in Simpson’s proposed legislation agree that Custer County needs economic stimulation, although some environmental organizations outright oppose the concept of selling public land to fund new programs. “We believe direct appropriations are a far more effective way to achieve economic enhancement goals,” Johnson and ICL directors said in a July 22 letter to Simpson.

Indeed, Custer County in recent years has been in the midst of an economic depression. Unemployment in the county hovered just under 8 percent in 2001. Idaho Department of Commerce statistics indicate that average yearly earnings per job in 2000 were $24,287, compared to a statewide average of $28,103. In addition, an estimated 38 percent of the county’s income is derived from non-labor sources, such as stock dividends, interest payments and retirement payments.

“Custer County is in such dire straits,” said Paul May, owner of the May Family Ranch reunion center and bed-and-breakfast inn, near Clayton. “We’ve lost the superintendent of schools, the principal of the high school, and the principal of the grade school. People are just moving out.”

In fact, the population of Challis from 1990 to 2002 declined sharply during the same period, from 4,333 to 4,292. The city of Mackay, on the southeast side of the proposed wilderness, also decreased in population from 1990 to 2002.

**Boom-and-bust industry**

Custer County’s population peaked in the 1980s at approximately 5,500, during the boom years of the mining industry, which reached a countywide high in 1984 with approximately 400 employees. By 2000, a mere 206 county residents were employed in the mining industry.

See B-WC on page B8
MOLLY KEENAN is attending UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND with the assistance of a scholarship given by the Ketchum/Sun Valley Rotary Club.

Proceeds from the 2002 Great Wagon Days DUCK RACE we’re used to fund Molly’s Scholarship as well as 9 other deserving local high school grads.

The Duck Race Helps Rotary Help Our Local Community!

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The Race is August 31! 208-720-8618 for info.

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B-WC

Continued from page B7

Sharon May, co-owner of the May Family Ranch, said she is concerned about the continued loss of jobs in longtime staple industries that use public lands. “It sounds wonderful to set wilderness aside, if you can control it,” she said. “Logging has been stopped. Mines are being closed. The cattle are being driven out. Ranchers’ incomes have really dropped.”

However, one body of evidence suggests that economies across the rural West are being forced to diversify to pull out of the historical boom-and-bust cycles of extractive industries.

In a widely publicized report issued in April, the Sonoran Institute, a nonprofit organization with offices in Arizona, Montana and Canada, provides data that suggest rural economies that have diversified and have provided certain public amenities, such as Blaine County’s, tend to be most successful.

Ben Alexander, associate director of socio-economics for the Sonoran Institute and co-author of the report, called “Working Around the White Clouds,” said he believes the economic incentives in Simpson’s plan could make a difference in Custer County. “What I think Mike Simpson is trying to do is on track,” he said.

In the 52-page report, Alexander states that the demographic and economic conditions in the rural West are changing rapidly, requiring communities to focus more on services and so-called “knowledge-based” industries to stay competitive. “At the very least, citizens need to realize that competing as a low-cost producer of food, fiber and minerals is no longer a competitive advantage,” the report states. “The game has changed and the communities of central Idaho must adapt to these changes in order to succeed economically.”

The report notes that “decades of heavy dependence on mining have left (Custer County) impoverished.” The good news, it says, is that the region is well positioned to establish itself as a retirement and tourism destination: “Before, the concept was jobs first, then migration,” Alexander said. “Now, people decide where they want to live. The whole economic paradigm has shifted to migration first, then jobs.”

Keys to economic success

Specific community offerings, such as an educated workforce, locally based education facilities, a regional airport, high-speed Internet access and public lands in protected status, can all play a role in attracting new residents and businesses, Alexander said.

Blaine County—with approximately 20,000 residents in 2001 posted average earnings per job of $30,709, well above the state average. Part of the equation, Alexander said, is the social, cultural and environmental amenities the county offers, which attract residents, tourists and retirees.

But, with more than 94 percent of the land in Custer County controlled by federal and state agencies, some of its residents claim that less, not more, government control is needed to boost the economy.

State Rep. Lesnore Barrett, R-Challis, said that calling Simpson’s draft legislation an economic incentive bill does not automatically make it such. “I can call myself Elizabeth Taylor, but that’s not going to make me beautiful,” she said. “We’re losing our resource industries because of environmental regulation.”

Barrett said she believes one of Custer County’s primary economic shortfalls is insufficient federal “Payments in Lieu of Taxes” subsidies—funds provided to counties with untaxable federal lands in their boundaries. Allocations are based on each county’s population, amount of federal land in its borders and payments for uses of the land. For the fiscal year 2003, Custer County is slated to receive $381,000 in PILT funds, compared to $861,000 for Blaine County.

Benefits of wilderness

Countering claims that federal

BRUCE WEBER, a Bellevue resident and 15-year employee of Backwoods Mountain Sports, in Ketchum, assists Wood River Valley resident Dave Spaulding in selecting a new backpack for an upcoming expedition. Weber supports designating the Boulder and White Cloud mountains as federal wilderness. “There are not that many places left in this country with those kinds of resources and that scenery,” he said.

“The economic health of Blaine County depends on wilderness and roadless areas that provide for high-quality recreation opportunities.”

SARAH MICHAEL Blaine County commissioner

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Blaine County Planning and Zoning Commission will conduct a public hearing and consideration of an ordinance of Blaine County, Idaho, amending Blaine County Code Title 9, Zoning Regulations, Chapter 5, Productive Agricultural District (A-20), Section 5, Conditional Uses, by adding Large Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation; providing a severability clause; and providing an effective date.

The public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, August 14, 2003 at 6:30 p.m. in the old County Courthouse, 206 1st Ave., Hailey. All interested persons are invited and urged to attend. Written input may be submitted to the Planning Office, 206 1st Avenue South, Suite 310, Hailey, ID 83333, or FAX 788-5576, or e-mail to bergin@co.blaine.id.us and will be made part of the public record.
Alexander said a wilderness designation for the Boulder-White Clouds would make central Idaho a more easily recognized destination and enhance the opportunities for regional communities to promote and develop their economic base with nonconsumptive uses of the land—such as outdoor recreation.

Tourism is often the first step in an economic transition," he said."People come to a place first as tourists, and then may relocate their family or business."

Stanley, considered the gateway to the Sawtooth Wilderness and immediately west of the White Clouds, has reaped the benefits of a boom in the nation’s $18 billion per year human-powered outdoor-recreation industry. The largest employer in the city, the Stenhammer Corp., operates a variety of tourism-related businesses.

Numerous studies also have indicated that the draw of protected lands and recreation has provided a significant economic boost to economies nationwide. A study released in May by the Outdoor Industry Foundation’s Business for Wilderness program found that counties that contain the country’s largest national parks experienced income growth twice the national average.

A 2001 study by Oregon-based economic consultants Dean Runyon Associates—composed for the Sun Valley-Ketchum Chamber and Visitors Bureau—states that tourist spending in 2000 in Blaine County sustained 5,980 jobs and provided $120 million in income.

Health Insurance

Kent Pressman of Ketchum has been waging his own war on weeds in his Warm Springs neighborhood. Thanks Kent, we need all the help we can get!!

Weed Warriors of the Week

Create your own "Weed Free" zone, call Blaine County Weed Control at 720-8774

Sponsored by: Blaine County Cooperative Weed Management Area and the Bureau of Land Management
On Monday, August 11, 2003, at 5:30 p.m., in City Hall the Ketchum Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing upon the application of THUNDERSPRING III, LLC for a Planned Unit Development—Conditional Use Permit to construct thirty-two (32) townhouse units on approximately 1.92 acres located at Tax Lot 7509 (1908 Warm Springs Road) in the Limited Residential (LR) Zone.

All interested persons may appear and shall be given an opportunity to comment on the matter stated above.