

Peace Pole Installed at Wallowa County Courthouse

ENTERPRISE, Oregon – Peace is one of Rotary International’s nine causes – up there with ending polio, providing clean water, and supporting education. To bring light to this cause and attention to local peace efforts, the Wallowa County Rotary Club installed a peace pole on the courthouse lawn in the summer of 2022.

A Peace Pole is an internationally-recognized symbol – each one bearing the message “May Peace Prevail on Earth,” in different languages on each of its four or six sides. According to the [website](#), there are an estimated 250,000 Peace Poles in the world.

But Wallowa County Rotary didn’t want just any old peace pole, easily and inexpensively ordered online, rather the club wanted a signature Wallowa County peace pole handcrafted by local woodworker Steve Arment carved out of cedar.

Swinehart said, “We wanted a peace pole that was more impressive than a lot of the standard pre-printed ones and since this is a county of artists, we asked Steve Arment to come up with a design, and the pole is the result.”

After Arment carved the different languages into the peace pole and adorned the top with a bald eagle, it was taken to Ron Polk’s house to be coated with teak oil. Swinehart said Enterprise Electric donated the use of one of its cranes, and Rotarian Tom Gleasman and helpers set it on a base the county erected for it on the corner of the courthouse lawn.

Swinehart said the County also had all of the landscaping and paver work done at the pole location. Funds were secured through grants received from Rotary District 5100 and the Wallowa County Cultural Trust, with the balance coming from local Rotarians.

“The Rotary was very interested in erecting a pole here and actually has funding to do a second similar one elsewhere,” Swinehart said.

The languages were chosen primarily to represent cultures that have historical roots in Wallowa County, including Nez Perce, Swinehart said.

“We added the line at the bottom ‘From Where the Sun Now Stands’ to honor Chief Joseph’s speech when he ceased fighting at Bear’s Paw – it is not normally on a peace pole,” Swinehart said.

A bronze plaque will be placed on the pole in the future that will include the message, “A Peace Pole is an Internationally recognized symbol of the hopes and dreams of the entire human family, standing vigil in silent prayer for Peace on Earth.”

Rotarian Judy Allen said The Rotary Peace Pole is the culmination of a short but colorful history of peace activities that followed the work of another group, the Wallowa County Peace and Justice Committee, founded by Brian Concannon.

Allen said since 2010 she has worked with a group of Rotarians interested in peace that helped organize events for the International Day of Peace held globally on September 21; sponsored children's international dancing; hosted talks by Dr. Steve Rubin on Doctors Without Borders and professional conflict resolution experts on their work in Africa; and held an annual potluck with activities around conflict resolution.

In 2019, Allen said, the group formed a Rotary Peacebuilder Club and began work to nominate Seth Kinzie for a Rotary Peace Fellow award.

Allen said, "Seth was awarded this distinction among 1,600 applicants in the United States in 2020 and began his fellowship in fall 2021."

Kinzie's peace fellowship took him to Uganda, Swinehart said.

"Seth came home for the peace pole dedication ceremony and filmed the event. It was a big deal," Swinehart said.