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Ray Egan brings Oregon Trail pioneers back to life at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.

Baker City, Oregon - - - Two historic men of the Oregon Trail will reappear on the stage of the Leo Adler Theater at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center – brought back to life by the creative efforts of Ray Egan in his living history presentations. “Ezra Meeker” and “Willis Boatman” will re-tell their adventures in performances August 1,2,3,and 4 at 11:00 am and 2:00 pm daily.

Ezra Meeker was a young pioneer who crossed the continent in 1852 with his wife and settled in the Puget Sound area. He became a prosperous hop farmer supplying the growing brewery business in early day Oregon Country, but lost his fortune during a hop aphid epidemic in 1891. In his senior years, he turned his efforts to preservation of the Oregon Trail and the story of the great migration. In several cross country wagon trips, he stirred public interest in preserving the historic trail, placed markers, and is today acknowledged as one of the most successful preservationists of American history. The story of how he saved this piece of history has become western lore.

Willis Boatman crossed the Trail in 1852 as a young man with his wife Mary Ann in a wagon party that was plagued by disease and death. His grim experience highlights the incredible courage found by some of the pioneers to endure and adapt over the course of their journeys. The Boatmans faced further challenging years among the first settlers in the Puget Sound area of Washington Territory. Willis Boatman lived to the age of 99.

Ray Egan tells their stories in their own voices, using original quotes from diaries, meticulously recreated costumes and makeup to bring these pioneers back to life to share their experiences. Egan has been researching frontier history for many years, presenting living history programs on pioneers, and assisting with restoration of Fort Steilecoom Park and the Ezra Meeker Historic Mansion in Puyallup. He has returned to the Interpretive Center several times in response to audience requests for these inspiring programs.

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, operated by the Bureau of Land Management, is located 5 miles east of Baker City, Oregon on Highway 86. Take Exit 302 from I-84. The Center is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Admission for adults is \$5. Seniors are \$3.50. Children 15 and under are free. Federal passes are accepted. Visit www.blm.gov/or/oregontrail/ for more information about the Center, or call 541-523-1843 for updates on programs and events.

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