



Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

Braden Roseborough gives one last look at the plane he's just leapt out of above Ritzville on Sunday afternoon.

Wingsuiters take to the skies over Ritzville

By CASEY MCCARTHY
 Staff Writer

RITZVILLE — As the aircraft approached 18,000 feet on Sunday afternoon, the door opened and poured in a cold air, much different from the warm temperatures the passengers had left behind. One by one, with screams of excitement lost in the gush of air, seven people leapt out of a perfectly good airplane.

This was just one of numerous trips into the sky as wingsuiters and skydivers took advantage of the sunny weather last weekend, falling through the Central Washington sky back down toward a small airstrip off Interstate 90 in Ritzville.

Skydive West Plains hosted their first annual West Plains Wingsuit Weekend from July 17-19. Wingsuit skydivers getting started were invited to come out for coaching, lessons and safety tips.

Nikko Mamallo was one of the seven who jumped out of the plane on Sunday afternoon, far from his first jump of the weekend. Mamallo has more than 2000 career skydives, and teaches first-flight wingsuit courses as well as advanced wingsuit skills.

Mamallo, who came out and helped coach for the event, said he, wingsuit coach Braden Roseborough and Skydive West Plains team member Kara Kruse had been discussing a wingsuit event at the Ritzville drop zone for a while now.

"We've been talking about it

for a while, getting more people excited about wingsuiting," Mamallo said.

For the first time ever at Skydive West Plains, Mamallo said they had full planes consisting of only wingsuiters. While they didn't have any first time wingsuit jumps, he said the weekend really allowed for a spot for people just getting started to work on some more intermediate skills.

The event was a great chance for wingsuiters to build some confidence and excitement, Mamallo said.

"When you go to some of the larger drop zones, it's a lot easier to get lost in the mix of everything," Mamallo said. "There's so many people there, and it's not just us in the sky."

For last weekend, Mamallo said it worked out great because all of the wingsuiters could learn, and jump, in the same groups.

Kara Kruse said they were able to really start hosting jumps, and events, again in July due to COVID-19 restrictions. While she said she knows skydivers have been itching for an opportunity to jump, she said they've tried to take things slowly.

"We've been taking it easy because we had such a long layoff that we wanted to make sure we're doing everything safely and within the COVID guidelines," Kruse said. "But we're staying busy and having fun."

See SKIES, B3



Photos by Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

ABOVE: Wingsuiters practice formations on the ground before ascending for their jump on Sunday afternoon at Skydive West Plains in Ritzville.
 BELOW: The last wingsuiter left in the plane lowers his head as he leaps out behind his six fellow skydivers on Sunday afternoon over Ritzville.



608 N MAGNOLIA ST | 3 BEDS | 2 BATHS | 1,990 SQ. FT. | \$390,000



Norman Hanley
 509-771-0215

Windermere
 REAL ESTATE

WINDERMERE/K-2 REALTY LLC

102 W 3rd Ave | Moses Lake
 509-765-3337 | windermere Moses Lake .com