When it's 90 degrees...

PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Kids cool off in the Fir Street splash park.

ECLIPSE: Traffic is expected to be very heavy

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a longer exposure to events, but spreading out arrivals may lower the intensity of the event.

Sisters' alternate route will be in action throughout the period leading up to and immediately after the eclipse, with extra personnel out to manage traffic impacts — to the degree that that is possible.

Sgt. Nathan Garibay, of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, who serves as the county's emergency services manager, says that there will be at least a couple hundred thousand more people in the county than usual during the run-up to the eclipse, to a total of about 412,000 people. That's a minimum.

"We're really confident that this is our bottom number," he said. "We're building contingencies on a much higher number."

Weather could affect the number of people in the area. If there is predicted cloud cover on the coast and in the Valley, there will likely be an influx of day-trippers chasing the opportunity to view the eclipse.

The influx at the height of fire season has officials concerned.

"It's just going to increase our opportunity for starts," said Garibay.

Another concern is that traffic will be so heavy that it will be difficult to respond to accidents and breakdowns on the roads.

Sisters Deputy Fire Chief Tim Craig said that the district will staff up for the days leading up to the event so that all the ambulances in the district are fully staffed. But traffic may impede their ability to respond, especially on the Santiam Pass.

"One of our big concerns is being able to get ambulances up there," he said.

However, since the largest volume of calls is in the immediate Sisters area, the district is not planning at this time to stage an ambulance up Highway 20 to the west.

"We're going to keep our ambulances mobile," Craig said.

Sisters Fire Chief Roger Johnson recommended that tow trucks be staged along the highway to make it faster and easier to clear a wreck or a breakdown.

Black Butte Ranch will also have two ambulances on duty. The Ranch itself — which will have 6,000 people aboard that weekend — will be closed to the general

See **ECLIPSE** *on page 23*

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