



# The Nugget

News and Opinion from Sisters, Oregon

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## Milli Fire burns near Sisters

By Jim Cornelius  
News Editor

What started as a small lightning-sparked fire on Black Crater in the Three Sisters Wilderness west of Sisters blew up into a raging wildfire that has burned over 10,000 acres and has displaced hundreds of Sisters-area residents.

The Milli Fire was 20 percent contained as of Monday afternoon. Containment is considered as having strong control lines that are well mopped up, where there is a high degree of confidence that the fire won't escape those lines.

A perfect storm of lightning activity, hot, dry windy conditions and competing fire priorities played into the growth of the blaze. Sisters Ranger District Assistant Fire Management Officer Jinny Reed recounted the early development of the fire for *The Nugget*.

The fire was detected on the morning of Saturday, August 12, after lightning storms had rolled through Sisters Country the night



PHOTO BY GARY MILLER

The Milli Fire burned with high intensity in tough terrain. The fire was over 10,000 acres at press time.

before. The fire was three to four acres in size when detected.

"Around 10:45 a.m. a full suppression strategy was approved and established upon detection by the Deschutes National Forest," Reed reported. "(The) duty officer was granted full

authority to utilize all suppression tools, i.e. aerial retardant, chain saws, pumps inside wilderness as necessary to suppress the fire and keep it small."

Keeping it small was not in the cards.

Reed drove out to Forest Road 1018 to get a better

look at the fire and saw that it had increased in size to more than 20 acres

"From my vantage point I saw that the fire had started near the 2006 Black Crater Fire, full of standing snags," Reed said.

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## Be alert to health effects of wildfire smoke

By Sue Stafford  
Correspondent

When the Milli Fire, located southwest of Sisters, flared up last Wednesday, growing from 260 acres to 3,500, smoke from the fire became a concern for residents in the area surrounding the fire.

For some, smoke causes minor eye and nose irritation, some develop headaches. But, for those with underlying health issues, smoke is much more than an inconvenience – it can be life-threatening and, at the very least, an irritant causing serious medical concerns.

According to Dr. Rod Elliott-Mullens,

See SMOKE on page 16

## Work continues on school bond projects

By Jim Cornelius  
News Editor

Teachers are back in their classrooms, and soon students will be, too. At Sisters High School and Sisters Elementary School, they'll be walking into revamped facilities, thanks to several bond-financed projects. And some projects will still be underway.

The projects were funded by a voter-approved \$10.7 million bond, augmented by a \$4 million state grant. A bond oversight committee, led by recently elected school board

member Jay Wilkins, is tracking the projects.

"It's just so critical to do what we said we were going to do," Wilkins said.

He noted that the district has been able to take on some additional work thanks to cost savings on materials and labor.

"We've been able to make the dollars go a little farther in some cases," Wilkins said.

For example, the district was able to expand the planned painting of some rooms in Sisters Elementary

See SCHOOLS on page 14

## Sisters was quiet for eclipse

By Cody Rheault  
Correspondent

As local residents of Sisters awoke to smoke-filled skies, many out-of-town visitors prepared for the coming full solar eclipse.

In the yard of their rented home off South Pine Street, a small group of nine friends set up a homemade projection screen to view the eclipse. They came from Palo Alto, California, Longview, Washington, and Portland and Bend, Oregon to join their friends in experiencing Sisters and the eclipse.

Jeff Myers, a scientist with NASA who works at the Ames Research Center in



PHOTO BY CODY RHEAULT

A visiting eclipse gazer was well prepared for the brief event. Sisters was quiet, with handfuls of people watching as the sun darkened.

Mountain View, California, and one of the guests developed a homemade projection system to view the sun.

Utilizing a technique learned from an amateur astronomer,

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