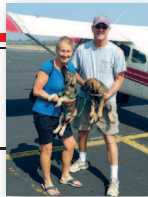


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Pop-up concerts soothed impact
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The Nugget

News and Opinion
from Sisters, Oregon

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Sisters, OR
Permit No. 15

Vol. XL No. 37

www.NuggetNews.com

Wednesday, September 13, 2017

Milli Fire begins to wind down in Sisters

The crisis that began in Sisters on August 12 when the Milli Fire began has abated. Evacuation orders have been lifted, smoke is clearing and some areas of the forest closed due to the fire are again accessible.

But the fire has left its mark. At 24,025 acres with 60 percent containment, the fire continues to burn on the southwestern edge of the fire perimeter as it moves slowly south in the Pole Creek burn and west into rock. The fire intermittently puts up columns of smoke as it moves into interior pockets of unburned fuel.

It has cost \$15 million to suppress so far, and the economic costs due to loss of business and event cancellations is still being calculated.

Resources on scene include 59 personnel from the Forest Service, the BLM, the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Firefighters have been



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

For the first time in weeks, folks in Sisters can clearly see the mountain skyline as smoke from Oregon's multitude of fires — including the 24,079-acre Milli Fire — abates.

patrolling, mopping up and repairing containment lines. Crews also continue monitoring the perimeter as it pushes into the lava flows along Highway 242, ensuring that all hot spots are monitored until cold.

The area closure in place for the Milli Fire has been reduced. While the western, southern and eastern boundaries of the closure remain

the same, the northern border has decreased to open access around Black Butte Ranch and Cold Springs Campground.

Acreage on this fire will likely grow moderately this week, fire officials report. The west side of the fire continues to burn down-slope with occasional torching in pockets of timber in the Three Sisters Wilderness

and will continue to extinguish naturally when it runs out of fuel in the lava fields. Fire will also continue a slow move to the southwest in the Pole Creek burn area where overhead hazards remain a concern for firefighter safety. When necessary, firefighters will utilize indirect fire-fighting tactics like helicopter bucket drops to cool hot spots.

Sisters Folk Festival looks to future after cancellation

As a pall of dense smoke settled across Sisters on Wednesday, September 6, an emergency meeting of the executive committee of the Sisters Folk Festival's board of directors convened to make a decision each of those involved described as painful and gut-wrenching: For the first time in the two-decade history of the event, they were forced to cancel.

The cancellation was a blow to artists, music-loving patrons and the businesses in Sisters that host venues and cater to the festivalgoers.

Board chairman Kerry Bott told *The Nugget* that the

See **CANCELLATION** on page 30

Highway 242 to remain closed due to fire

The McKenzie Highway is a scenic byway and a favorite ride for bicyclists and motorcycle riders from across the region. This summer, it's also served as an anchor point for containment lines around the northern and western edges of the 24,079-acre Milli Fire.

The encroachment of fire has left burned snags along the roadway on Highway 242, and tree branches and other debris are scattered along the route. According to Oregon Department of Transportation spokesmen, the route will remain closed until damage and hazards are assessed and whatever action required is taken.

Snags in particular pose

a hazard both to work crews and the traveling public, and they will have to be removed. Burned trees can fall across the roadway, sometimes long after fire has moved through. Wind and the weight of snow or shifting soils due to rain can bring them down. ODOT will work with the Forest Service to identify hazard trees, and crews will cut them down.

How long the closure will be in place and whether the road will be reopened at all before the snow flies remains to be seen.

"We anticipate that it will be closed for a while yet," said ODOT public affairs official Tom Strandberg. "Safety is our primary concern."

Sisters graduate is 'best warrior'

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Sgt. Dane Moorehead, 2008 graduate of Sisters High School, was named the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year in the 2017 Oregon Best Warrior Competition held August 24-26, at Camp Rilea near Warrenton, Oregon.

Moorehead was one of 15 Oregon National Guard soldiers who competed for the elite titles of Soldier and NCO of the Year in a grueling competition that tested their mental and physical resolve.

Moorehead has been with B Troop, 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment, 82nd Brigade Troop Command, since June 2010. In 2014-15, he was deployed and served

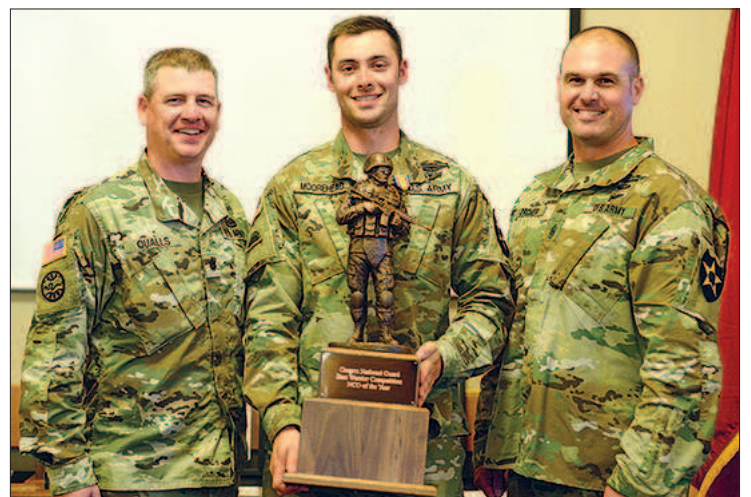


PHOTO PROVIDED

Sgt. Dane Moorehead (center), 2008 Sisters graduate, is the 2017 Oregon National Guard Best Warrior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year.

11 months in Afghanistan in Operation Enduring Freedom. He earned several medals during that deployment, including the Army Commendation Medal with

Valor for his actions while his unit was under enemy fire.

Competition included the Omaha Beach event,

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