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NEWS & OPINION FROM SISTERS, OREGON

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Ray April ties off a banner wishing good luck to Sisters Olympian Chris Klug.

School computer lab restored and improved

By Jim Cornelius

Two months ago, a water pipe in the Sisters Elementary School heating system broke. Water and oily steam poured into the computer lab, destroying all the equipment, the carpet and the fixtures.

This week, a completely refurbished "cybersite" will reopen — and it is better now than ever.

After an insurance reimbursement of approximately \$91,000, the lab was refitted with Dell computers with Pentium 4 processors.

The hardware is better than the machines that volunteers worked hard to secure for the original lab.

"They're a huge improvement," said technology contractor DeAnn Pilch, who has assisted in setting up the lab.

Of course, everyone involved in the reconstruction of the lab acknowledges that it was the "tons of volunteers" and "mega hours" put into the original lab that laid the foundation for the new, improved version.

One of the biggest improvements is that all the machines run Windows XP software. Having all identical computers and software makes teaching much easier.

"It's very difficult to teach a class where students don't have consistent access to the same thing," Pilch said.

The lab has 30 computers. According to Todd Pilch, district technology specialist, the lab is almost always full, with some 300 students a day participating in classes or working on projects.

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Locals support Sisters Olympian

By Jim Cornelius

Some local folks will be watching the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City with special intensity this week as their friend Chris Klug hits the slopes in the snowboarding Parallel Giant Slalom.

Klug, who lives in Sisters during the summer, earned the signal honor of helping to carry a flag from the rubble of the World Trade Center in opening ceremonies.

His girlfriend Missy April will be on hand to watch Klug vie for a medal against the best competition in the world. So will her parents, Ray and Pat April of Sisters.

Klug is considered the best U.S. hope for a snowboarding medal and the April family is excited to see him compete.

They also recognize that just getting to Salt Lake City is a great accomplishment for the snowboarding athlete, who faced a grim health crisis after the 1998 Nagano

Olympics.

The 2002 Olympics is the pinnacle of a comeback for Klug from a liver transplant that saved him from a potentially fatal degenerative disease.

Klug was diagnosed at age 20 with primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC). The disease, which blocks the bile ducts, led to the death of football great Walter Payton. After monitoring the progression of

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Fire department launches inspections

By Jim Cornelius

The Sisters fire department is having trouble keeping up with fire inspections as Sisters grows. So the department has launched a new self-inspection program that will allow some businesses to check their own fire safety.

"We only have so many people and we're getting behind on inspections and reports," said firefighter David Wheeler, who handles

inspections for the department. "We just can't get to every business in town."

The self-inspection program will only apply to retailers and other businesses that have very simple requirements. Wheeler will still inspect commercial buildings, industrial sites, gas stations and lumber and hardware stores.

Local businesses will be

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Snowfall bodes well for water year

By Jim Cornelius

Water users are cautiously optimistic that substantial snowfalls of this winter will turn around drought conditions that parched the region last year.

Deschutes County Water Master Kyle Gorman likes what he sees, but he's not quite ready to call the storms a drought-buster.

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John Patrick Kalista survived. His driving privileges will not.

Man walks away from Sisters wreck

By Jim Cornelius

A Redmond man survived a wreck that, to all appearances, could have cost him his life on Friday, February 8.

According to sheriff's office reports, John Patrick Kalista, 25, of Redmond, was traveling westbound on Highway 126 shortly after 11 p.m.

when he lost control of his mother-in-law's 1987 Ford Taurus, ran off the road and went head-on into a tree.

Deputies investigating the accident reported that the vehicle was airborne for some 20 feet before it hit the tree, leaving an impact scar well up

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