

# Applegater

Photo by Barbara Holiday

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## Growing grains on small farms

BY SHELLEY ELKOVICH

Amber waves of grain are rippling across a handful of small farms in Southern Oregon in what could be a resurgence in regional production. Last January, a group of bakers, brewers, chefs, millers and farmers met at OSU Extension in Central Point to collaborate on ways to meet consumer demand for locally-produced grain products.

Eighty years ago, 41 varieties of wheat were grown on a million acres in Oregon. Small farms grew wheat. Today, there is much less wheat, and what is grown is mostly produced on the large commodity scale, such as the bigger farms in the Klamath basin. Wheat is still Oregon's fifth largest commodity crop, but 85% of it is exported, mostly to Pacific Rim countries.

Since Southwestern Oregon no longer produces much locally consumed grain, almost a generation of knowledge and infrastructure has been lost. Most farms in the region are small holdings, and part of looking toward a future that includes grain in the local economy involves looking back at cultivation methods of the past, when equipment and practices were scaled for smaller farms. In order to teach producers about grains, Small Farms staff Maud Powell and Shelley Elkovich planned a series of seven classes entitled, "Growing Grains on a Small Farm." The series, funded by a USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant, covers all aspects of grain production throughout the growing season. Each class

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Firefighters gain control of a house fire near Williams in 2008.

## Fire Chief to you: We're at a critical point

BY SANDY SHAFFER

Have you ever called 9-1-1? No? Lucky you! Because, whether it's a personal injury, kitchen fire, heart attack, automobile accident, baby coming prematurely or a lightning strike out here in rural Oregon, calling 9-1-1 is how we get the quickest emergency help. You might be surprised at who shows up to respond to your emergency situation and, where they respond from.

Our Applegate Valley Rural Fire District (AVFD) covers most residents on the Jackson County side of our Applegate watershed and a bit of the Josephine County side, almost to Murphy. Located in Ruch, District Headquarters (or HQ) is where

the staff and shift supervisors respond from (all paid employees); a team is on call 24-7. However, like most rural fire districts, the majority of our District's firefighters are volunteers. So many times your firefighter or EMT (emergency medical technician) will be a neighbor, friend or co-worker. The District has seven different fire stations spread across the 181 square miles of their jurisdiction (including HQ), and volunteer firefighters are vital in responding to calls from each one of these stations. For most alarms the District sends a response from the HQ station and one or more outlying

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## Waldorf School forming in Williams Area

BY SHAUNA KENEALEY

On a brisk fall morning, children rush into school enthusiastic to begin the day. At the door the teacher is there to welcome the children with a handshake and a smile. The smell of baking bread drifts from the Kindergarten as parents greet each other in the hall. This is the typical morning scene at a Waldorf-methods school.

Waldorf education is the fastest growing independent educational movement in the world, with over a thousand schools worldwide and an increasing number of charter schools in the United States. Right here in the Applegate Valley, community members, parents and educators are working to develop a Waldorf-methods public charter school in the Three Rivers School District and plan to open the Woodland Charter School in September of 2011.

What is Waldorf? Waldorf education is grounded in a deep understanding of child development and works to recognize and value each child as an individual with unique talents and needs. Social and emotional intelligence are developed along with a growing cognitive ability to best prepare them for the challenges and opportunities of life. Traditional academics are infused with artistic and practical

activities. Foreign language, handwork, gardening, cooking, woodworking, music, games, and movement enrich the academic main lessons.

The environment of a Waldorf-methods school is filled with elements that are both functional and beautiful, found in nature and created by human craftsmanship. Healthy senses are stimulated

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