

Applegater

Photo by Liz Butler

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Voters to decide fate of Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center

BY JACK DUGGAN

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners signed an order on January 29, 2014, to put before the voters a measure to form a service district to support the Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center (SOREC), commonly known as "Extension."

Extension has been delivering scientific-based research and information to Jackson County residents for 100 years. In the early 1900s Extension helped local residents grow crops to improve the agricultural economy of southern Oregon, to improve methods of food preservation and storage, to combat

pests and disease, to test new crops and to maintain the rural character of Jackson County. Those programs continue today, along with 4-H projects in civics and leadership, science, technology, animal husbandry, natural science, horticulture, marketing and expressive arts. Our local Extension hosts the largest Master Gardener program in Oregon, providing assistance to urban and rural residents in raising healthy gardens for food, aesthetics and the environment. Programs for small farms, livestock production, small woodlands, land stewards, food preservation, wellness and healthy living, continuing assistance to

orchardists and the growing wine industry, and partnerships with local organizations such as ACCESS are all a part of what Extension contributes to Jackson County's quality of life. Professors with expertise in entomology, viticulture, crops, irrigation, pasture management and more bring university-level agricultural education to the local landscape.

Extension services are provided by the land grant colleges in each state, established by the federal government and requiring each local community to provide basic support. That support, which is about ten percent of SOREC's budget, has come from the Jackson County general fund. Declining timber revenues and increased demands on the general fund, however, require a new source of dedicated funds if Extension is to survive in Jackson County. For each local dollar invested Jackson County receives \$8.48 in direct dollars from state and federal sources as well as grants, fees and contracts. Indirect

economic impact comes from Extension program participants who invest in tools, supplies and workers to improve and maintain their properties, plus thousands of volunteer hours.

The service district measure asks voters to approve a maximum tax rate of five cents per thousand dollars of assessed value. If the maximum rate were assessed, the owner of a \$160,000 property would pay \$6 per year to support Extension's programs and bring additional economic activity to Jackson County. The actual assessed rate, however is currently estimated at close to three cents per thousand. Actual assessment won't be determined until after the election and will be decided by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners, who will be the governing board of the new district.

More important, though, than the facts and numbers, particularly to a vibrant community like the Applegate, is the See SOREC, page 6

Notes from a Rogue entomologist

Invasion of the stink bug: News from the home front

BY RICHARD J. HILTON

This is the second and last installment about the dreaded stink bug.

Now that a large breeding population of brown marmorated stink bugs (BMSB) has been found in downtown Ashland and some individual stink bugs have been found in most every town in Jackson County, where do we go from here?

The first thing is to be able to identify this exotic and invasive insect pest. While it is fairly large and distinctive, there are a few look-alikes that can cause confusion. We have two native stink bugs, one of which is a predatory species, and some other larger bugs that have been mistaken for BMSB.

One common insect that has caused a lot of confusion is the squash bug. If you grow squash or live near a pumpkin patch,

you may well be familiar with this species. It is about as long as BMSB, a little over a half inch, but not nearly as wide. It is a specialist, living on squash and pumpkin plants. The squash bug has become more numerous in the last few years and will even crawl into your house in the fall like BMSB. However, BMSB is a generalist and can be found on a wide array of plants and crops, from tree fruits to tomatoes.

If you find an insect that you suspect might be BMSB, please check the bmsb.hort.oregonstate.edu website for information, or contact the local Extension office on Hanley Road. Our volunteers at the plant clinic are trained in identifying BMSB and love having the opportunity to put their skills to the test. We would like

to know if you have spotted BMSB in order to determine the current local distribution of this pest. Firsthand reports are our best resource.

Besides relying on the eyes of the public, we are working on devising a better BMSB trap as a monitoring tool and possibly an aid in control. Stink bug traps currently sold in garden supply stores are not very good. The primary method we use for monitoring BMSB is a beating tray, where we beat on foliage and catch what falls out on a cloth sheet. While it is not high-tech, it does work, especially if you know where to look. BMSB's favorite hosts in urban settings have been the invasive and misnamed tree-of-heaven, English holly, catalpa and maples, especially bigleaf maple, where the stink bugs get into the seed clusters. In fact, for any of the



Brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) aggregation in Sacramento in 2013.

myriad host plants for BMSB, we always concentrate our search on plants with the highest seed or fruit load, as that is where bugs prefer to feed.

A good trap would make things easier. Researchers have isolated pheromones to attract BMSB but it has been difficult to find the right mix. Stink bugs are interested in sex early in the summer, but at the end of the season they are looking for places to aggregate and are attracted to different compounds

See STINK BUG, page 11

CONGRATULATIONS to our local wineries



who won medals at the
2014 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition,
widely acclaimed as the largest competition of American wines in the world.
See list of winners on page 17.

The Gater turns 20!

Celebrate the *Applegater's* 20th year (can you believe it?) at a celebrity-filled (okay, maybe only one or two) special event at Red Lily Vineyards in June.
Entertainment • Gourmet Dinner
Red Lily Fine Wine • Blind Auction
and more!
Look for announcements on our Facebook page and Jo's List.

INSIDE THE GATER

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