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# Illinois Valley News

Wednesday, October 16, 2002 Three Sections, 28 Pages, Volume 65 No. 30 Cave Junction, Oregon 97523

Single Copy 50-cents



## Takilma fire debris cost up to \$85k

Josephine County will pay up to \$85,000 in clean-up and other costs for property at 7902 Takilma Road.

During its weekly business meeting Wednesday morning, Oct. 9 in Grants Pass, the commissioners ratified Resolution 2002-97 in the matter of granting an exemption to competitive bidding requirements for the work at the Takilma property.

The resolution, as well as a contract with Western States Environmental Inc., was approved and signed during an Oct. 3 workshop.

The asbestos and arsenic found on the property has already been removed. The metal found on the property is currently being removed.

A Western States representative said it is working with Illinois Valley Rural Fire Protection District to burn the lumber and wood waste also on the property.

In addition, 3,000 tires were found at the site, which also need to be removed. Commissioner Jim Brock said the situation is an example of "all taxpayers paying for one."

The property had been used by Richard Busk, and the county had foreclosed on it.

A major fire erupted on the site on June 30. Some 65 firefighters from eight agencies responded to the general alarm.

--Britt Fairchild

## Fire directors handle range of matters

Directors and staff outnumber the audience 7-1 during a meeting of the Illinois Valley Fire District board in Cave Junction City Hall on Thursday evening, Oct. 10.

And a fairly routine agenda resulted in the entire meeting lasting only some 40 minutes. Among items during the session, the board:

-Approved a financial report showing expenditures of \$50,521 during September.

-Was told by Chief Kyle Kirchner about a number of areas to be addressed in connection with a Special Districts evaluation that could reduce fire insurance costs.

-Learned from Kirchner that the fire district is recognized in essence as a role model for its cooperative work with other agencies during the Biscuit Fire, and that district personnel have been asked to help provide a workshop.

-Set the next board meeting for Nov. 14.



**ART EVENTS --** Various visual, epicurean, performing and literary attractions were part of the Second Friday Art Walk in Downtown Cave Junction on Oct. 11. A 'Silent Witness' display, depicting women who've died due to domestic violence was at Cabin Chemistry; Bebe's ART for everyone showed many masks; Jamie Sowell made her own at Child's Play; and Rebecca Pearson wore her hat of horns at Bebe's.

## Hoopa fire field trip scheduled

A second field trip to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) site abutting private property at the southern end of Rockydale Road will be held on Thursday, Oct. 24.

The field trip, sponsored by the Forestry Action Committee (FAC), will begin at 10 a.m. from the lower compound of the forest service site in Cave Junction. The actual tour at the site is set for 10:30.

FAC received funding from the National Network of

Forest Practitioners to conduct several workshops in Illinois Valley on the "Hoopa Way of Fire." The Grants Pass Resource area of BLM agreed to work with FAC to select a BLM site in the valley where a merger of BLM, community and Hoopa approaches to the use of fire can be investigated.

Field trip participants should wear sturdy shoes, and bring water, a snack and lunch. For more information phone 592-4098.

## Selmac improvements pending

By BRITT FAIRCHILD

Various projects are in the works to help improve Josephine County's Lake Selmac Park, with a major portion of rent money from the U.S. Forest Service footing the bill.

During a Thursday night Oct. 10 meeting in the Selma Community Center, county park Director Bruce Bartow collected what he called a "shopping list" of ideas from area residents on how they want to see extra funds spent.

Suggestions ran the gamut from constructing a new play-

ground, adding a Frisbee golf course, to removing silt from the lake.

"It's your park. It's your money," Bartow told the nearly 30 participants.

During the height of this summer's Biscuit Fire, USFS used the park as a base camp for some 6,000 to 10,000 firefighters and support personnel helping contain the blaze. As a result, there was some damage to the site, primarily in the grassy, blacktop and curb areas, Bartow said.

The forest service agreed

to pay rehabilitation costs -- in addition to the little more than \$100,000 it paid in rent -- but a final amount hasn't yet been negotiated, he said.

With minimal improvements made during the years at Lake Selmac, Bartow said that part of the \$100,000 would go toward sewer and road repairs, among other infrastructure renovations.

"All of the money (could) go into roads, but that is no fun," Bartow told the group.

He estimated that \$50,000

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## City woodsman, spare that tree

By BRITT FAIRCHILD

Plant new trees, but keep the old.

That was the resounding cry from a small handful of Illinois Valley residents during the Cave Junction City Council meeting on Monday night, Oct. 14 in city hall.

As part of its downtown revitalization project -- which is still in the planning stages, although the environmental and first-draw requirements are complete -- the council has discussed removing some of the city's Liquid Amber trees and replacing them with different, and younger, ones.

Several of the trees in question are diseased.

Removing such trees, said Jim Lombardo, of O'Brien, is OK, but fill in the gaps with the same kinds that have been growing in the city for 25 or 26 years.

"(By using the same trees) you get class," he said.

Other trees have caused potential dangers because their roots have grown outward, causing portions of concrete sidewalks to buckle and become uneven.

Utility Supervisor Gary Biggs addressed the issue during the council's Sept. 23 meeting. At that time, he also provided the council information on various replacement trees, benches, trash receptacles, and changes in street lighting for the project.

But even more thought should be given to the tree

decision, Kerby resident Dorothy Wiltfong told the council.

Reading from a letter she wrote to the council, Wiltfong, president of I.V. Garden Club, stressed the beauty and benefit of the trees, not just for those living in the valley, but also for tourists visiting the area.

"When I first heard of the removal of trees I was horrified," she said. "Redwood Hwy. was recently designated a Scenic Highway. How scenic will our part of the highway be without the welcome sight of green, shade producing trees in the summer, or the glorious pyramids of color we experience from these more than 20-year-old trees in the autumn."

She also stressed that the trees listed as potential replacements are high maintenance, and insect and disease prone, and would not make good city trees.

"I'm not thrilled with the idea of taking all the trees out either," said Mayor Ed Faircloth, as he and the other councilors acknowledged the public outcry such an action would evoke.

The council discussed other tree concerns, including irrigation, the use of tree grates, and the possibility of removing, or grounding down a crowning root and how that would affect the tree.

One thing councilors agreed upon -- the likelihood and need for, whether the old

trees stayed or new ones were planted, enlarged openings around the trees themselves.

"They don't have enough room (to grow)," Faircloth said.

To encourage the roots to grow down instead of outward, Biggs suggested angling irrigation pipes.

A decision regarding the tree issue notwithstanding, Faircloth asked Biggs to research how much area would be needed around trees, the angles for irrigation, and to identify diseased trees.

The council also decided to order 10 trash receptacles with two different interchangeable types of lids (one to use in summer and one in winter), and 10 coordinating benches and planters.

Complimenting their willingness to offer ideas along with their opinions, Councilor Dan Fiske said that he appreciated the input from the tree supporters on possible solutions and that they weren't just "throwing insults."

In other business, the council voted against a request from Josephine County Commissioner Frank Iverson to give an informational presentation to the council on the Josephine County Wellness Resource Center, Ballot Measure 17.91.

Councilors agreed they didn't see the need for the presentation since they will vote on the measure as citizens and not as a city.



**O'BRIEN STREET FIRE --** Illinois Valley Fire District and Oregon Dept. of Forestry firefighters responded on Tuesday, Oct. 15 to an afternoon at 106 O'Brien St. Favorable winds and quick response enabled firefighters to keep the blaze away from structures. The fire burned primarily brush and some trees, as well as debris. Cause of the fire is under investigation, but could have been dumped ashes, said I.V. Fire District. No injuries were reported.

