

Body located in wilderness possibly man long missing

Unidentified human remains found at the western edge of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness could be those of a hiker caught by the massive Biscuit Fire, it is indicated by Josephine County Sheriff's Office.

The sheriff's office was notified on Saturday, Nov. 2 that hikers had found human remains. It was revealed on Monday, Nov. 4 that the remains were taken to an autopsy facility after detectives Jerry Rylander and Jim Mason went to the site via helicopter.

The location of the remains "is about two or three air miles from where Michael Woods was last seen on or about July 8, when he left on an extended hiking trip. The location is generally consistent with the intended hiking route of Woods."

It is not known, said the sheriff's office, if the person perished in the Biscuit Fire or by some other means. Some animal depredation had occurred.

Other information will be released after an autopsy and further checking, said the sheriff's office.

Assistance with power bills likely

The Josephine County Community Action Agency has started the 2002 Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) to help low-income seniors and people receiving disability income with their heating bills.

LIEAP is a federally funded program to assist Josephine County residents to pay for heating their homes during winter months.

All other low-income Josephine County residents will be able to phone as of Monday, Nov. 4 to schedule an appointment. There are income guidelines: To be eligible, the income for a family of four cannot exceed 60 percent of the median (Oregon state-wide average) of \$2,915.75 per month.

This program is not meant to be the sole source of payment for heating bills. People who are anticipating receiving LIEAP help should talk to their fuel providers and make payment arrangements while waiting to receive LIEAP.

People may phone (541) 474-5445 for more information, or to schedule an appointment.



FALL RECYCLE ROUND-UP - Illinois Valley Community Response Team and Southern Oregon Sanitation, with many community volunteers, conducted a Fall Recycle Round-Up (Can Slam) on Saturday, Oct. 26 at the I.V. Visitor Center. Some 8,820 pounds of recyclable items were deposited; filling two 30-yard dumpsters and half filling a third. (Photo by Sam Newton)

Jobless rate declines to 6.8%

The Beaver State's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined to 6.8 percent in September from 7.0 percent in August, said Oregon Employment Dept. (OED).

September marked the first time in a year that Oregon's rate has been below 7.0 percent. The last time the state's rate was below 7.0 percent was in September 2001 when the rate was 6.9 percent, said OED.

Oregon's unemployment rate has been on a downward trend throughout the year after peaking at 8.1 percent in January and February. The decline in the September rate was similar to the drop in the U.S. rate, which ticked down from 5.7 percent in August to 5.6 in September, reported OED.

In September 113,026 Oregonians were unemployed, and 1.7 million were employed. This was the lowest number of unemployed since July 2001, when 112,289 were unemployed.

Besides data covering Oregon's civilian labor force, OED also released data from the business survey. This survey indicates that seasonally adjusted total non-farm payroll employment was flat in September.

Looking at the longer-term view, this measure of employment essentially has been flat for the past five months, with a gain of only 400 jobs during that time.

"Oregon has had essentially the same employment level for the past five months, but at least the unemployment rate has moved very slightly

downward," said state employment economist Art Ayre. "Still, I don't see convincing evidence that the recession has ended and that we're in a period of recovery."

In September, the start of the school year meant increases in employment following summer break. Private education posted a gain of 5,200 jobs and is now close to its year-ago level of 22,200 jobs. Similarly, local government education added 12,500 jobs as employment rose to near its peak autumn level. Despite the job gains in local government education, employment there is 1,300 jobs below its September '01 level.

Lumber and wood products had been one of the few manufacturing sectors posting over-the-year job gains until September. Now the industry employs 46,800, which is identical to its level in September '01. Electronic equipment manufacturing has suffered through a retrenchment of employment.

Employment reached a high of more than 42,000 jobs in early '01. Starting in June last year, employment started to drop until reaching a level close to 38,000, where it has remained since February of this year. In September, 37,400 were employed in the industry.

On the non-durable goods side of manufacturing, food and kindred products posted a gain of 200 jobs in September to finish the summer processing season. This industry employed 27,700 in September, about the same level as in September 2001 when employment was 27,400.

Employment in food processing can be volatile in the summer months, depending on weather patterns and consequently the timing of harvest for various agricultural products, said OED.

In September, many other industries performed in line with seasonal expectations for the month. Construction dropped by 300 jobs; wholesale dropped by 400 jobs; transportation and public utilities added 700 jobs; and services grew by 4,600 jobs. All these changes were close to the typical trends for the time of year, OED noted.

Within services, two industries stand out for persistent growth. Health services, at 118,200 jobs (+900 jobs), posted a strong monthly gain. This industry has averaged a gain of nearly 400 jobs per month more than the past year, OED said.

Social services added 1,400 jobs in September and has grown by an average of 150 jobs per month in the past year, said OED.

Rice honored posthumously

Josephine County Marine Patrol Deputy Tom Rice has been honored posthumously by the Oregon State Marine Board for his efforts in training fellow marine officers and for outstanding service as a marine deputy.

Rice died in the line of duty on May 23, when a helicopter in which he was a passenger hit a wire and crashed into the Rogue River near Grants Pass. The pilot, a civilian, also died during the mission to find a missing woman.

The "2002 Dave Hill Instructors Award" was given Rice posthumously for demonstrating strong ability and tireless dedication to training fellow marine patrol officers and new recruits. Rice also

was honored with the "Award of Merit for Outstanding Service." The awards were accepted by Rice's wife and daughter, who attended the awards ceremony in Hood River last month.

"These awards are a fitting tribute to this very capable and highly respected marine officer," said Pat Rowland, law enforcement coordinator for the marine board. "His contribution to his fellow officers, the marine board, his community, and to boating law enforcement and safety will be sorely missed."

The Dave Hill award is named in honor of a former Yamhill County marine deputy and longtime U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteer.

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