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IVCRT wins 10-year Caves concession contract

A long-term "shot in the arm" in the form of a 10-year contract to manage the concession at Oregon Caves National Monument has been awarded to Illinois Valley Community Response Team (IVCRT).

The long-awaited decision for Oregon Caves Outfitters under IVCRT was revealed on Monday, Oct. 6.

The announcement was made by Craig Ackerman, superintendent of the monument, operated by the National Park Service (NPS); and Jon Jarvis,

NPS Pacific West regional director.

"I guess we can finally exhale," said George Fence, IVCRT chairman. "We have sought this moment for two years, and now the real fun begins."

"I must say that I am so proud of the skills, leadership and just plain hard work demonstrated by so many in helping us win this bid," Fence said. "A 10-year contract will help pave the way for genuine economic and quality-of-life revitalization for our area."

After two successful seasons managing temporary contracts, IVCRT, which is a 501c3 nonprofit organization "engaged in the social and economic development of rural Josephine County," will maintain its management role of the concession through 2013.

IVCRT is one of the few nonprofit national park concessionaires in the country, said Executive Director Ron Phillips. "Otherwise," he said, "it's a field dominated by a few large corporations. This

contract represents a special, mutually beneficial partnership between a local community and NPS."

The concession is comprised of food, lodging and gift sales.

Jarvis said that a panel of concession professionals analyzed proposals on specific objectives and recommended selection of IVCRT.

"We concur with the team's high standards of supporting the park and its desire to encourage sustainable tourism, as well as its community develop-

ment spirit as a nonprofit organization," said Ackerman. "IVCRT has done a good job during the past two years under especially difficult and uncertain circumstances."

He specifically noted last year's 500,000-acre Biscuit Fire that threatened evacuation of all 15,000 I.V. residents. The fire caused a 25 to 50 percent reduction, said Ackerman, in visitation during last summer and fall.

Despite that, he said, the Outfitters "not only recovered from that set-

back, but increased occupancy in the Chateau (built in 1934) by 80 percent from last year."

With 41 valley residents on staff, IVCRT has focused on employing I.V. community members. It also has integrated local arts and crafts, and other products representing the uniqueness of Southwestern Oregon into the gift shop and food service operations; an approach strongly supported by NPS.

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CJ studio shows off textile arts

By BRITT FAIRCHILD
Staff Writer

At the Singing Loom Studio opening during September's Second Friday Art Walk, Cave Junction artist Libby Goines noticed that some of her visitors looked puzzled, as though they didn't quite know what to make of the place.

She even spotted a woman picking through one of her work baskets, looking for an item to buy.

For Goines, their behavior reinforced her reasons for wanting to open the studio in the first place.

"(People) can see what a working artist's studio looks like," she said of Singing Loom, something currently lacking in town.

Located above Blue Moon Books & Coffee in Downtown CJ, Singing Loom Studio offers the community a chance to explore and learn such textile arts as weaving, spinning, beadwork, sewing, knitting and embroidery, and others.

Known already in the valley for her musical talents, Goines also offers singing, guitar and piano lessons.

Joining Goines in the studio next door is CJ artist Deborah Dawson, who offers private and group painting instruction and other art-related activities. The women are calling their developing art collective, "A Creative Space."

"It took an Aquarian named Libby Goines to light a fire under me," Dawson said, noting she used the last of her savings to open the studio and had been planning to open one for about a year.

It's a risk, she admitted, but at least she's doing something she loves.

An artisan group, funded by a grant through I.V. Community Response Team, also is looking into using the third studio in the upstairs building. The other studio is vacant.

The time is right, Goines said, for introducing such a concept like A Creative Space to the area.

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SHOOTING -- American Medical Response (AMR) and Illinois Valley Fire District medics tended to two gunshot victims at the AMR facility behind Cave Junction City Hall on Sunday, Oct. 5 following an incident in O'Brien. Josephine County Sheriff's Office deputies and other lawmen in the area are looking for the suspect in the shootings.

Consultants will help find fire chief

By BRITT FAIRCHILD
Staff Writer

Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) board decided during a special meeting on Friday evening, Oct. 3 in the district's main fire station to use BOLA Consultants in Jacksonville to advertise for a new fire chief.

Board members will meet with Lou Gugliotta from BOLA during another special meeting on

Wednesday, Oct. 8 at 6 p.m. at the main station, 681 Caves Hwy., to discuss criteria for the position.

IVFD Board President Joel Downing said Monday, Oct. 6 that a job description developed in 1999 and reworked in 2000 will be used in the advertising process.

"It's still valid to this

day," Downing said of the description, noting the requirements for the job include management and firefighting experience.

The board noted a college degree is also preferred, but not required.

BOLA's services will include providing a background check, printing and mailing expenses and other advertising-related costs.

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LATE NIGHT FIRE -- Illinois Valley Fire District and Oregon Dept. of Forestry responded on Sunday, Oct. 5 to an 8:06 p.m. alarm for a wildfire with two structures moderately threatened, said I.V. Division Chief Joe Feldhaus. The fire of undetermined origin burned a half-acre of grass and brush, and some \$2,000 worth of redwood planking at 1111 Lone Mountain Road. No injuries were reported, and firefighters rapidly extinguished the blaze. I.V. sent four engines, two tenders and three brush rigs; ODF sent four engines, because of the potential for a much-larger fire.

Suspect in O'Brien incident on the run

An "armed and dangerous" suspect in the shooting of two O'Brien residents apparently was chased by a deputy some 17 hours after the incident, but the driver escaped into a wooded area after his pickup truck hit a tree.

Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) deputies and lawmen in surrounding areas including Northern California are seeking Wilfred C. Coddington, 47, of 475 O'Brien Road, where the shootings occurred.

He is wanted in connection with single gunshot wounds to the abdomens of Jesse J. Ballenger-Windle, 26, of 9407 Takilma Road; and Jeremy L. Jorgensen, 18, of 475 O'Brien Road.

The victims were taken to Three Rivers Community Hospital in Grants Pass by American Medical Response following the incident reported at 11:29 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 5.

They were in stable condition, said JCSO.

Following the call for help on Sunday, emergency personnel could not locate the two victims, as they had been taken by

private vehicle, driven by an unidentified woman, toward Cave Junction. It appears that they first were taken to Siskiyou Community Medical Center. Finding no one there, they were then driven to the AMR quarters, where medics from AMR and Illinois Valley Fire District responded.

At the AMR site, the two were given first aid and basically stabilized before being taken to Grants Pass. Two ambulances were used.

Meanwhile on Sunday, deputies sought information from the two, and others went to the shooting location. Officers surrounded a residence and shed, and a canine deputy was called in. Neighbors were alerted.

However, the suspect was not found. But a deputy at 3:51 a.m. on Monday tried to stop a pickup truck he believed was driven by Coddington.

JCSO said that the vehicle failed to yield to emergency lights on Naue Way near its intersection with Lone Mountain Road.

After the vehicle

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Disabled I.V. woman to walk for three days to raise cancer awareness

By BRITT FAIRCHILD
Staff Writer

If no one will walk with JoAnne Forbing, then JoAnne Forbing will walk alone.

She's determined to cross the finish line at this year's Avon Breast Cancer 3-Day walk in San Francisco on Nov. 7-9 -- even if no one from Illinois Valley is there to cross it with her.

"I'm a very stubborn, strong-willed person," said Forbing, a modest and gentle but resilient disabled woman who uses crutches which she calls her second pair of "legs" to help her walk.

Forbing participated in the 60-mile Avon walk in

Seattle last year, but stopped after 44.6 miles because of dehydration and the blisters on her hands from her crutches.

After traveling so many miles the hilly terrain also became difficult.

Despite stopping early, Forbing however recalls the event with a sense of awe.

"It's an experience you don't even know how to describe. The unity is something that is totally indescribable," she said, noting some 3,000 men and women took part in the Seattle walk.

"It kind of dumbfounded me," she said.

The 51-year-old

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