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I.V. pupils climatized by project

By SHANE WELSH
Staff Writer

The wind of change is in the air, and Illinois Valley kids are measuring it.

For several years, Lorna Byrne Middle and Illinois Valley High Schools have been using high-tech weather equipment, connected to a WeatherNet website, to track and measure weather-related events.

The systems were originally set up for professional technical programs in area high schools, and eventually were worked into agricultural programs.

The entire project is managed by Southern Oregon Education Service District (ESD), which provides services to school districts that they can't provide for themselves.

Normally, the weather systems cost approximately \$1,000, but Rainwise, the company which develops these systems, gives schools a 33 percent discount.

The weather meter is solar powered and transmits 300 feet via radio signal. An antenna broadcasts the information wirelessly to classrooms that have a receiver connected to a computer that students use.

The meter gathers rainfall information, temperature, barometric pressure, humidity, wind speed and wind direction and then calculates dew point and wind chill factor.

Information that can't be found in textbooks can be collected by students in real-time. Not only can students gather live weather data from around Illinois Valley, but they can collect and compare data from other counties in Southwestern Oregon.

The data is shown as a continuous readout for 24 hours. Dave Heider of Northern Oregon designed a program called Weather View that students use to access the information. A computer image is updated every five to 15 minutes that students can use in their reports.

Illinois Valley High School teacher Jim Heern uses the system in his classroom to track weather to assist with agricultural projects.

"We look at the weather to predict what is going to happen in the greenhouse," said Heern. "We can look at the weather for the next five days, and if it is going to freeze, we can tell which plants we can put outside, or if we will need more fuel to heat the greenhouse."

"We also use it for a lot of data. We can look at what the weather was like last year to see frost dates

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HOMICIDE SCENES - In the aftermath of a homicide in Cave Junction, friends of the victim (top) gathered in Jubilee Park for a memorial service; some residents (right) demonstrated their concerns and sympathy at the county building; and investigators combed the crime scene (bottom right). The victim, Christina 'Lily' Martin, is shown below. It was the second homicide in Illinois Valley in two months and the fourth in Josephine County since September. A rumor early this week that two suspects were arrested is untrue, said Josephine County Sheriff's Office.



(Photo by Michelle Binker)



(Photo by Michelle Binker)



'TREE-MENDOUS' EFFORT - Illinois Valley's Forestry Action Committee sponsored the annual Volunteer Planting Day on Saturday, Feb. 28. Nine teams planted hundreds of seedlings at riparian and special-interest areas. (More photos on page 10)



Murder suspect sought Woman's body found at track on Old Stage

Josephine County sheriff's detectives continue to investigate the bludgeoning murder of a diminutive, young woman whose body was found near the athletic field at Lorna Byrne Middle School on Thursday morning, Feb. 26.

According to Detective Jim Mason, two young men discovered the body of the one-armed victim. She was described as a transient who frequented Cave Junction's shelters for the homeless or others without permanent homes.

Her body was found near the track-and-field shed above the main campus. The two young men who found her were not LBMS students as some thought initially. They reported the find to the sheriff's office around 11 a.m.

Deputies located the body of a white woman, identified as Christina M. Martin, 23. Immediate indicators from the scene suggested the woman was the victim of a homicide.

Martin is described as 4-11, weighing approximately 100 pounds.

Deputies went door-to-door in the vicinity of LBMS on Old Stage Road with Martin's Washington state driver's license after the discovery, hoping to uncover information.

An autopsy has revealed that Martin sustained blunt force trauma to the head, said the sheriff's office.

According to a report issued by the sheriff's office, investigators have learned that Martin was last seen in the downtown area of Cave Junction the night before her murder.

Martin, who sometimes used the name "Lily," had only a left arm as a result of a birth defect. She was last seen wearing blue jeans and a light-colored jacket.

On Saturday afternoon, Feb. 28, a large group of street people and others who were acquainted with the dead woman held a memorial service in Jubilee Park, not far from the site where her body was found.

She was described as "a kind, gentle person." Her friends gathered in a circle around a heart-shaped flower arrangement, and many recalled their associations. She had not been in CJ long.

Detectives continue to work the case and are asking anyone with information about the case to contact the Josephine County Major Crimes Unit at (541) 474-5153, or the confidential tip line at (541) 474-5160.