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Job scene for county, state cited

Oregon's economy remains too weak to absorb unemployed workers or continued growth in the working-age population.

Analysis figures of unemployment and jobs released by Oregon Center for Public Policy (OCP) show Oregon economy failing job recovery. According to OCPP:

*The gap between jobs and the working-age population has grown to 150,000 since 2001. The number of unemployed Oregonians remains above 160,000.

*Josephine County's unemployment rate reached nearly 10 percent in January, up from 8 percent in December. Total payroll employment in Josephine County fell by 520 jobs in January.

According to data released by the Oregon Employment Dept.:

*Annual average employment for 2003 in Josephine County rose by 2.9 percent from the prior year, while the statewide average fell by 0.7 percent.

*In 2003, payroll employment rose by 480, a growth rate of 2.2 percent. Josephine County's retail trade sector gained 120 jobs. Construction employment had an over-the-year gain of 140 jobs, reflecting the strong housing market and continued growth the county has been experiencing. Tourism-dependent leisure and hospitality sector gained 140 jobs.

OCP showed Oregon's seasonal employment fell by 3,600 jobs in January. Although four of the last seven months registered small positive job growth, employment remains 7,400 lower than levels from January 2003 and 50,000 lower than January 2001. Oregon has added an average of 1,500 jobs per month since June, 2003.

Even though some economic indicators improved during last year, employment in Oregon declined by 7,400 jobs, while the working-age population is estimated to have grown by more than 30,000.

In January 2004, the number of unemployed workers in Oregon was 164,000; down from 166,000 in January 2003.

OCP reports also showed that employment in Oregon has declined 50,000 since January 2001, and the working-age population is estimated to have risen by 100,000.

Oregon's economy needs to create 150,000 jobs to provide employment to workers that have lost jobs since 2001, in addition to the continued growth in the working-age population.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) available to workers is diminishing.



LBMS CAREER DAY - Lorna Byrne Middle School students participated in the annual Career Day on Wednesday, March 3. Among participants were I.V. Fire District Training Officer Jeff Gavlik and firefighter Carrie Sherman, who used one student as a model for turnout gear. Many valley business owners and professionals attended.



Josephine County Sheriff's Office Deputy Keith Hubbard and 'Piko' demonstrated suspect apprehension at the direction of Sgt. Stephen V. Clarke. Dr. Jim Nordal (above) of CJ Family Medicine spoke to students about careers.



Dr. Daniel J. Vidlak, an optometrist with Eye Care Group, used a pig's eye to help LBMS students understand the inner workings of eyes and how they function.

Signage, cash topics of CJ Council

By **MICHELLE BINKER**
Staff Writer

Improved signage for a business south of town, and surplus cash from a development grant were among agenda items tackled by the Cave Junction City Council during its meeting Monday, March 1 in CJ City Hall.

The council heard a request from Dave and Liz Paulsen to place a sign within a city right-of-way in front of their business on Hamilton Avenue.

The Paulsens, co-owners of Dave's Outdoor Power Equipment Inc., asked to place a 4-by-8 foot carved redwood sign within the city easement, and to improve and maintain the ground around it with sod.

Councilman Dan Fiske wondered aloud if approv-

ing this sign placement might cause trouble for the city if other businesses wanted to erect signs in a public right-of-way. The request was approved 4-0. Councilman Sandi Lund was absent.

In other council business, the Downtown Revitalization Project has been completed. All the trees have been planted, and approximately \$30,000 remains from the original Oregon Community and Economic Development Dept. grant, which must be spent on improvements to the downtown corridor or returned.

The council will hear about options for spending the money on April 12.

Also on track for the April 12 meeting, the coun-

cil will consider a parcel of land off Shadowbrook Drive for annexation. A public hearing will be part of the meeting.

The question of annexation by registered voters has been dispensed with and an "emergency" declared in order to expedite the issue for the property owners who wish to proceed with development plans.

The council has also drafted a letter in response to a letter of complaint from the Cave Junction Lions Club regarding a facility use fee for Jubilee Park.

The city indicated in its letter that it regrets the Lions decision to pull its support of city beautification projects, but that user fees for the city's facilities help defray costs to city taxpayers.

IVHS football field a \$600,000 project

By **SHANE WELSH**
Staff Writer

You can almost hear it -- the buzzing bright lights; the bone-crunching thud of high school athletes crashing headlong into each other to the delighted roar of the crowd.

Three Rivers School District has been working to finish a new \$600,000 football field behind Illinois Valley High School in Cave Junction.

In the past, IVHS Cougars football team used the Lorna Byrne Middle School (LBMS) field for games. Not only was the short commute time consuming, but it cost the school extra money to haul athletes and equipment to and from home games.

After a \$24 million school bond passed three years ago, IVHS was forced to give up using the Lorna Byrne field to allow \$9.1 million worth of new construction and remodeling at the middle school.

Gary Thornhill, assistant principal and athletic director for IVHS, said, "This was where we played our games. We had the whole light set-up down there to play Friday night games."

Currently, the school has used a temporary field consisting of goal posts stuck in the ground. And because of the lack of lighting, games were played during daylight hours on Saturdays.

Cave Junction resident Dave Toler, chairman of the district board of directors, administered the purchase of a 10-acre site last year after a site committee, composed of parents, school staff and students, helped determine the best location for the new field.

The new field is going in behind IVHS, south of the baseball field. Cope-land Gravel in Grants Pass and Adroit Construction in Ashland (the builders of LBMS), are doing the construction.

Since construction began, the project has been faced with a few major problems.

Kathy Krouse, director of fiscal services for the district said, "The original estimate of \$300,000 made by architect Crown Clay, was too low to complete the field. The total estimate for the project is

Wetland area caused adjustment of site before work could begin

\$600,000."

The first location considered by the district contained the IVHS baseball diamond. It was decided that the area would be too small to accommodate the diamond and still allow for a football field, bleachers, and the track that will eventually be built surrounding the new field.

"We would have liked it to be closer to the current locker room and restroom facilities, because there is no septic system at the new site," said Thornhill. "We will have to look at adding eight to 10 porta-potties," said Thornhill.

After the new location was agreed upon, it had to be adjusted when preliminary site research discovered that a wetland area existed in the vicinity where construction was slated to begin.

IVHS wanted the field to run from north to south. Otherwise, the Sun would face the bleachers during evening games, making it difficult to watch games and uncomfortably warm for fans. Taking the wetland into consideration, the field position had to be redesigned to run from east to west instead.

Additionally, when the field was planted in late spring 2003, some of the seed was washed out due to severe rain. Erosion control had to be consid-

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I.V. Chamber Citizens of the Year
Jennifer and 'Link' Phillippi, co-owners of Rough & Ready Lumber Co., received a plaque on Tuesday, March 9 as 2003 Citizens of the Year from I.V. Chamber of Commerce. In presenting the award, Vice President Bill Reid cited their diligence in resurrecting R&R. The couple noted that their roots run deep, and that they enjoy being in the community and aiding the economy.