

Established 1937

Illinois Valley News



Wednesday, March 24, 2004, 4 Sections, 28 Pages, Volume 66 No. 1 Cave Junction, Oregon 97523

Single Copy 50-cents

Rock solid efforts at cave complete

By SHANE WELSH
Staff Writer

It was a long, sometimes rocky haul, but the bulk of the restoration at the "Marble Halls of Oregon" is finally complete.

In December 1983, the National Park Service began the process of restoring Oregon Caves National Monument to its original state, in an attempt to undo damage created by poor planning and tourism.

"The first problem was the lighting system," said John Roth, resource manager for the monument.

"The original reason we started the restoration was to look into the electrical system," said Roth. "It was so dilapidated that people were grabbing on to some of the original metal railings and getting a good jolt out of them."

inside the cave to determine if the temperature was being affected by the unnatural airflow caused by the tunnel openings," said Davis.

It was also thought that all the rubble left over and stashed everywhere from the original 1930s excavation was channeling airflow through the cave and should be removed.

Davis collected temperature readings for three months and sent them to National Park Service Superintendent John Miele, now retired. The park service administers the monument, 20 miles east of Downtown Cave Junction.

"The park service's main motivation to remove the rubble was to manage the park and maintain it so future generations could still enjoy it the way it was

'Marble Halls' of Oregon national monument near Cave Junction showcases impressive underground views as season opens.

"At the time, there were 200 75-watt fluorescent fixtures," said former Caves employee "Chaz" Davis, who worked as manager for a former concessionaire.

"The bright light, combined with carbon dioxide from the breath of those taking the tours, provided a perfect growing environment for moss," he said. "As a result, the root systems and their acids were eating away at the natural formations."

Davis also noticed unnatural ice collections on formations inside the cave.

He theorized that freezing air from outside traveling through tunnel openings, including the main entrance, was causing the cave temperature to drop. Abnormal temperatures were allowing ice to accumulate on formations which could damage delicate stalactites and stalagmites.

"I placed thermometers at various locations

originally formed," said Roth.

After analyzing all the data collected, the park service called in one of the top cave researchers in the United States. Tom Aley, a hydrologist for Ozark Underground labs in Protiem, Mo., performed an in-depth study to determine possible sources of damage and make recommendations to alleviate potential problems.

Evidence from Aley's research showed the open tunnels were causing the cave temperature to drop and that an air-lock door should be installed at the exit tunnel.

The asphalt, supports, and stairs that comprise the walkways were also determined to be a source of damage.

"The petroleum base used in the asphalt walkway was leaking into the surrounding material," said Davis.

(Continued on page 8)



Volunteers from various organizations and locations, including Illinois Valley, have worked during the past several years to restore Oregon Caves National Monument to its 'original' condition. Tours of the cave are under way. The schedule is on page 8. (Photos provided courtesy of National Park Service. Additional photo on page 2)

Suspect in CJ slaying in custody

After numerous interviews with citizens and an eyewitness, a 19-year-old Illinois Valley man was arrested and charged with the murder of a young, transient woman last month in Cave Junction.

Detectives with the Josephine County Sheriff's Office took Douglas Alan McCarthy into custody without incident Friday evening, March 19, at the sheriff's office in Grants Pass.

McCarthy is the primary suspect in the killing of 23-year-old Christine M. Martin, formerly of Seattle. Martin's body was discovered on the athletic field at Lorna Byrne Middle School Feb. 26.

The suspect's last known address was on Takilma Road.

Along with forensic evidence linked to the crime, Detective Ken Selig said that investigators located an eyewitness, as well as other corroborating evidence and witness statements.

Selig said the sheriff's office is grateful to the many people who phoned with information "about this horrible crime."

McCarthy was scheduled to be arraigned Monday, March 22. A call to the district attorney's office yielded no further information.



Douglas Alan McCarthy (Sheriff's office photo)

Thieves harassing I.V. fire stations

By SHANE WELSH
Staff Writer

"I'm concerned about increased vandalism and theft of our community's property," said Illinois Valley Fire District Chief Harry Rich.

On Wednesday, March 17, an unknown vehicle crashed into Selma Station 2; severely damaging an apparatus bay door and one corner of the building. Rich estimated the damage at more than \$3,000.

In February, vandals broke into Station 1 in Cave Junction and stole more than \$1,000 worth of rescue equipment.

"We do not know how they got into the building,"

said Rich.

Apparently, the thieves took the time to lock the station before they left.

"These people took articles that belong to the community," said the chief.

"These are items that we need to treat or help people," said Rich.

Among the items taken were flashlights, a chainsaw valued at more than \$400, a medical kit worth \$450, and nearly \$800 in portable radios.

Several months ago, thieves entered Station 2 and took numerous items including swift water rescue team equipment. And recently, Takilma Station 6

was broken into.

"We have asked for increased sheriff patrol around the stations and asked nearby residents to help keep an eye out for suspicious activity," said Rich.

In addition, he said, "I will contact a security company to survey locations and put in cameras and alarms to alert the sheriff's office."

"We need the community to please help us watch our stations," Rich added. "If someone sees activity that is suspicious, they should call the police immediately."

Sheriff deputies are continuing investigation.



**I can think of no more stirring symbol of man's humanity to man than a fire engine.
-Kurt Vonnegut-**



RAISIN' THE ROOF - Illinois Valley volunteer firefighters underwent training in extrication methods to free injured persons from motor vehicle accidents on Tuesday night, March 16 at Cave Junction Station 1. For information about volunteering, telephone 592-2225.

