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HOLLAND HOME DESTROYED - A fire of unknown origin destroyed a tri-level hill-side home among trees above Holland Store Friday, April 9, said Chief Harry Rich of Illinois Valley Fire District. The alarm came at 10:22 p.m., and a glow in the sky was visible from a long distance. Home-owner Jim Ewing told the district that he went downstairs after hearing a popping noise, and then left the area upon encountering smoke and flame. Because of a 45-degree sloping narrow drive to the home, said to be in a remodeling stage, only two brush rigs could reach the site. Firefighters put a wet line around the blaze to protect wildland, but the home burned to the ground. Rich said that home owners in the area will be contacted about their driveways, as neither fire trucks nor water tenders can navigate 'nearly impassable' roads or driveways. It would have taken a 1,000-foot hose lay to reach the site. Firefighters from the Holland, Cave Junction and Selma stations responded with numerous rigs; many of them standing by with American Medical Response at Holland Store.

Deer Creek landscape plan studied

By SHANE WELSH
Staff Writer

Fire suppression, land management and forest health in Selma were among subjects discussed during a public meeting.

The evening gathering was held by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Selma Community and Education Center on Wednesday, April 7.

BLM officials from the Grants Pass Resource Area presented displays and answered questions from area residents relating to a planned landscape management project. It's located within the south half of the Deer Creek watershed.

The site, called the South Deer Landscape Management Project, is located southeast of Selma

in the McMullen Creek/Thompson Creek road areas.

The project encompasses 7,441 acres of BLM land and will involve BLM and residential lands within the site.

Community comment was sought, as the project could begin in two years.

Of the site acreage, 2,626 acres are within riparian reserves - areas containing intermittent or seasonal streams; 409 acres are located in Owl Core reserves - spotted owl habitat areas; 18 acres at Lake Selmac; and 98 acres in a Bald Eagle reserve near Lake Selmac. Regulations for land use and

maintenance within the protected reserves will differ from the 4,290 acres located outside reserves or water resource areas.

Abbie Jossie, field manager for BLM, said the questions and input from residents will be helpful when finalizing and implementing plans to begin the project within the next two years.

"This was a pretty good turn out; lots of people with a wide variety of opinions," said Jossie. "Most residents I spoke with seem to be concerned with access to roads and creek water sources on or behind their property," she said.

Project coordinators will be looking at issues

(Continued on page 5)

Biscuit recovery consensus complex

By MICHELLE BINKER
Staff Writer

Some 90 people attended a forum held to promote community dialogue and a sense of involvement in the Biscuit Fire recovery project.

The Biscuit Fire consumed 500,000 acres of timberland in mid-2002, and nearly caused evacuation of Illinois Valley's 15,000 residents.

The Illinois Valley Community Forum, supported by Illinois Valley Community Response Team (IVCRT), hosted the event Thursday night, April 8 in the Josephine

County Bldg. in Cave Junction.

Before the assembled crowd broke into small groups to share feelings, hopes and concerns, a panel of six speakers representing various perspectives on the recovery project gave brief presentations.

The speakers represented the U.S. Forest Service, the timber industry, regional tourism and the Siskiyou Regional Education Project, as well as a forest ecologist, and a community anthropologist.

As the panelists spoke, each to his own area of

expertise or concern, the nature of the difficulties in reaching communitywide consensus became evident.

For instance, while Roger Brandt spoke encouragingly of promoting tourist resources in order to grow economically; Don Smith, executive director of the Siskiyou Regional Education Project (SREP) warned that dependence upon tourism and growth for economic vitality could be the biggest problem the valley soon will face.

Similarly, while forest ecologist David Odeon

(Continued on page 5)



Electric power to Cave Junction was interrupted when a pole was sheared off.



Driver falls asleep; shears off pole

Electric power to much of Cave Junction was interrupted on Easter Sunday, April 11 when a car crashed into a utility pole in front of Fire Station 1, shearing it off, dropping power and telephone lines.

Cave Junction resident Donna Luella Nelson, 62, fell asleep while driving a four-door hybrid Honda westbound on Caves Hwy., said Chief Harry Rich of Illinois Valley Fire District. It was not immediately determined how fast the car was moving, but one firefighter estimated a high speed.

The car veered onto the lane for eastbound traffic, took out the district's mail box and a utility pole; then continued westbound, coming to rest in a ditch approximately 50 yards from the point of impact.

The crash, reported at 7:56 a.m., drew many spectators from the neighborhood. Firefighters assisted American Medical

Response in getting Nelson from the car. She was taken to Three Rivers Community Hospital in Grants Pass, said Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO). She was released the same day.

There was no electricity for 1,460 customers, said Pacific Power, whose crews had power restored by about 10 a.m. Telephone service to the affected area, which included Downtown CJ and its traffic signals, was restored later.

Besides traffic signals being "out," a number of burglar alarms sounded at some businesses. Firefighters and a JCSO volunteer worked to direct traffic.

Because the pole and lines were down in front of Station 1, all emergency rigs there except a small rescue truck, were blocked.

Rich said that Station 1 would not have been able to respond to a structure fire had an alarm come in.

The chief also noted that Nelson's car withstood the impact well. "It's a testimonial to that hybrid," he said.

Firefighters initially blocked Caves Hwy. traffic at Redwood Hwy. and at Laurel Road. Later, Caves Hwy. was blocked between Old Stage Road and Laurel, with traffic rerouted on Old Stage to E. River Street.

Rich said that firefighters were at the crash scene for several hours.

And once the scene was cleared, he said, it was discovered that the power interruption had affected computers and other electrically powered equipment in the main station. It serves as headquarters for the fire district.

On Monday, April 12 the chief and staff were evaluating the situation.

Some equipment might have to be replaced, Rich indicated.

Fire station sale, rig purchase decided

By SHANE WELSH
Staff Writer

A conditional sale of the current Selma Fire Station and purchase of two used brush fire rigs were approved by Illinois Valley Fire District director during their meeting Thursday night, April 8 in Cave Junction City Hall.

Directors OK'd, with a stipulation, the sale of the Selma site to Volunteer Firefighter Steve Zabriske.

His offer of \$45,000 met 5-0 approval of the board, under the stipulation that the district seek counsel to determine if any legal issues need to be addressed before privately

selling the property.

"This money will be put back into our building fund to purchase equipment" or other related items, said Chief Harry Rich.

Preliminary research conducted by district officials estimated the value of the property at \$50,000.

If approved by legal counsel, occupation of the property by the new owner would occur after construction of the new Station 2 in Selma.

Purchase of two brush trucks at a total cost of \$32,000 also met unanimous approval.

"Brush trucks are our

first line of defense for rescue and prevention," said Rich. "We need more type 6 engines to ensure rapid response."

According to Rich, he made an offer of \$32,000 to Oregon Dept. of Forestry, owners of the vehicles. The price is for both trucks, existing equipment and emergency lights.

"They are both white, diesel, and have 200-gallon tanks on them," said the chief. "The only items they will need are radios and our logo."

Currently, the district has \$59,000 in its budget for purchase of emergency equipment.



**I.V. Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt
& season-opener 2nd Friday Art Walk
photos on page 8**

