

O'Brien fire damage set at \$60,000

Family friends say everything was lost; fund at Home Valley

By SHANE WELSH
Staff Writer

"The fire was so big that people were calling in from all over the valley to report the glow," said Division Chief Joe Feldhaus regarding an O'Brien home that burned Saturday, May 8.

Damage to the building and its contents was estimated at \$60,000. It took four tenders supplying more than 20,000 gallons of water to fire engines to extinguish the blaze.

Illinois Valley Fire District firefighters from all I.V. fire stations responded to the fire reported just before 11 p.m. at a residence at 1500 Lone Mountain Road.

According to Jerry Schaeffer, fire marshal, the two-story cabin, owned by Mark Crutchfield, was fully engulfed in flames when firefighters arrived. The owner was not present at the time of the fire.

Schaeffer said the efforts were mainly to control the blaze to protect surrounding structures and land. He reported that there were numerous small pops and explosions from ammunition in the residence.

The cause is under investigation.

(Editor's Note: An account to assist those made homeless by the fire has been set up at Home Valley Bank in CJ under the name, Blair Family Fund.)

Internet tax ban looks successful

Internet Tax Non-Discrimination Act (S. 150), legislation extending the ban on multiple and discriminatory taxation on Internet access and online sales, was recently passed in the Senate.

The legislation bans three types of taxes that single out the Internet.

They include taxes on Internet access, double taxation (for example, by two or more states) of a product or service bought over the Internet, and discriminatory taxes that treat Internet purchases differently from other types of sales.

The Internet Tax Non-discrimination Act extends the original Internet Tax Freedom Act of 1998, authored by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Rep. Chris Cox (R-Calif.). The moratorium created by that legislation, and extended in 2001, expired last November.

The Senate approved an amendment written by Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) to the underlying Allen-Wyden legislation, renewing and refining the original law and extending its protections for the next four years.

"The Senate has preserved the Internet as a thriving conduit of commerce and communication for all Americans," said Wyden. "This vote has protected consumers from a host of new Internet taxes on everything from web access to e-mail," he said.

Knowing when to spread your manure an important issue for ODA

A good local weather forecast can tell you when to take an umbrella, when to wear sunscreen, and now perhaps when to spread manure.

At least, that's the hope of the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture (ODA) as it begins deploying 10 automated weather stations throughout parts of western Oregon.

A \$44,000 water quality grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is helping ODA and the dairy industry ultimately establish something called "a manure spreading index."

"We're very excited about this," said Jim Krahn of the Oregon Dairy Farmers Association. "It's not the total answer, but it gives us one more tool to make good decisions about manure application."

As a generally accepted and encouraged management practice, confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) apply manure to pastures and crop fields. Application of animal waste should take place when weather conditions are optimum. A rainy day could wash that waste into a nearby stream or river. Any help the weatherman can give to a CAFO operator would be welcome.

That's where ODA meteorologist Jim Little comes in. He has helped put together a demonstration project that utilizes all sorts of weather data to help establish the manure spreading index. The data can tell a specific farmer in a specific location whether or not conditions are OK for application of animal waste. It can also tell farmers when conditions might be better.

"Under this system, operators won't have to look at a lot of meteorological mumbo-jumbo, but simply go to our website to find out when is a good time to spread manure," said Little.

The 10 weather stations should all be up and operating sometime this summer. They are located up and down the Willamette Valley and along the Oregon Coast.

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