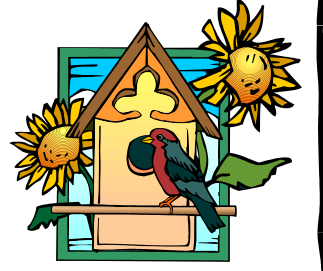


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# Illinois Valley News



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## IVCRT would like to handle welcome mat at visitor center

By CHRISTINA HILL  
Correspondent

During the past decade, thousands of tourists have been welcomed to Illinois Valley Visitor Center in Cave Junction. However, budget cuts threaten to shut it down.

The visitor center is currently under the co-management of several organizations including the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the city of Cave Junction.

But due to a lack of

funding, the forest service said that it will be unable to keep the site open much longer.

However, there might be a change of luck on the horizon. Recently, Illinois Valley Community Response Team (IVCRT), a 501cc not-for-profit organization, submitted a proposal to take over management of the visitor center.

"The visitor center is vital to the valley's economy," said Dennis Strayer, site manager. "Our real goal is to promote the val-

ley as a tourist destination," he said.

Strayer, who has worked at the center for the past eight years, noted that an estimated 250,000 people have come through the site.

"Just last month, we saw an increase of 400 people compared to the same time last year," Strayer said. "A lot of people travel through here, but don't know what's here. Once they get here, we bombard them with information that helps them identify a variety of local

tourist attractions, which helps promote the local economy, so all the money is staying here in the valley."

However, all this could change if the visitor center cash flow runs dry next year.

"The real threat is not this season, but next year," said Ron Phillips, IVCRT executive director.

"The visitor center," he said, "will have to close due to lack of funding from federal agencies. The center is vital to the Oregon Caves National Monu-

ment (20 miles east of Cave Junction) and the local businesses. It's currently a non-commercial operation, and changing the nature of it would make it much more active."

IVCRT recently sent a proposal to all organizations involved with the visitor center, seeking their interest in management options. A date for a board meeting to discuss the proposal has not yet been set.

Under the proposal, IVCRT is seeking a management contract to oper-

ate the visitor center under its organization, Oregon Caves Outfitters. It already has a park service contract for the Oregon Caves concession, including The Chateau restaurant and gift gallery.

"Under the current management structure there is very little commercial activity," said Phillips, "and by taking it under concession, we could take the floor space of a back room and make it a replica of the gift gallery that we

(Continued on page 8)



**WALDO ROAD INJURY ACCIDENT** - Illinois Valley resident Stanley O. Strange, 51, was reported injured when his pickup truck went out of control and crashed on Waldo Road approximately two miles east of Redwood Hwy., said Josephine County Sheriff's Office. The acci-

dent was reported on Thursday, May 13 at 7:22 p.m. Illinois Valley Fire District firefighters extricated Strange from the vehicle. He was taken by American Medical Response ambulance to Three Rivers Community Hospital, where he was reported in fair condition.

## Raffenburg, Brock, Ellis, Walker win; library loses

It appears that Measure 17.01 for a library levy failed in the Tuesday, May 18 primary election; and that there will be runoff in the Nov. 2 general election for two seats on the Josephine County Board of Commissioners.

Those tentative conclusions are based on final, unofficial results received Tuesday shortly before midnight from the Josephine County Clerk's Elections Office.

In the race for Position 2 on the county commission, Jim Raffenburg received 5,853 votes. Jim Brock, who was in Position 3 but challenged long-time Commissioner Harold Haugen for Position 2, received 5,211 votes.

Raffenburg and Brock will compete in November. Haugen got 3,684 votes, in third place ahead

of Gayle Shane's 2,112. For Position 3 it appears that there will be a runoff between Cherryl Walker (8,198) and Dwight Ellis (7,906).

Contenders included Paul Walter (1,773) and Lance Noble (1,214).

The library levy request was defeated. Voting was comprised of 10,003 "yes" vs. 11,055 "no."

The request was for a temporary library tax rate of 20-cents per \$1,000 assessed valuation for three years.

Voter turnout was 46.15 percent, according to the elections office. The levy needed a 50 percent turnout of registered county voters, and a majority of the votes cast.

Other information about the election and its results will be in next week's issue.

## Cougar softball state playoff game Monday, May 24 in CJ

Illinois Valley High School, because its softball team is in second place in the Skyline Conference, will host a state playoff game on Monday, May 24 beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Admission will be charged with prices for adults and students. Children 6 and younger will be admitted free.

The girls have a 16-3 mark in the Skyline. On Monday they will play either Douglas or Brookings, whichever ends up in third place in the Far West League.

I.V. anticipates victory, and would then travel on Wednesday, May 26 to the Portland area to play the first-place team in the Val-Co League.

"We're looking for an exciting game, and hope that there will be lots of Cougar supporters at the game," said Janie Pope, IVHS athletic secretary.

## County fire plan aims for safe homes, community

The Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan has the aim of increasing awareness among county citizens about the risk of wildfire and how to prepare homes, businesses and communities for survival, said Bruce Bartow, head of JoCo Community Development.

The county fire plan, he said, is promoting basic fire prevention messages through flyers and posters at fire protection agency offices. The plan has two main elements: community action and family action.

Following are family actions that the fire plan is encouraging all families to accomplish this spring:

\*Cut dry grass and brush.

\*Clean roofs/gutters.

\*Have a family evacuation plan.

The Spring Fire Prevention Plan is co-sponsored by the JoCo Board of Commissioners and the JoCo Integrated Fire Plan Education and Outreach Campaign. As part of education, a county video, "Living in Fire Country," is available at libraries and video rental stores, Bartow said.

For more information on fire prevention safety, contact Illinois Valley Fire District at 592-2225; or Oregon Dept. of Forestry, (541) 474-3152.



**PRACTICE (FIRE) MAKES PERFECT** - Illinois Valley Fire District volunteer firefighters participated in a successful live fire exercise off S. Old Stage Road on Sat-

urday, May 15. Two structures owned by Les Story were donated for the training. Training Chief Jeff Gavlik directed operations. (Photo by Shane Welsh)