



‘SQUATTER’ DWELLING DESTROYED - A 20-by-8-foot trailer was destroyed by fire reported at 3 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 19 in the 10000 block of Takilma Road, said Chief Harry Rich, of Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD). The chief said that the occupant was trespassing on private land, and that he was ‘uncooperative.’ The loss was estimated at \$7,000. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg/IVFD photographers.)

Recent valley fires outlined by IVFD

By SHANE WELSH
Staff Writer

A report detailing fire-fighting efforts to extinguish two fires in Kerby and a fatal residential fire in Takilma was issued by Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) Chief Harry Rich.

Rich presented a slide show during an IVFD Board of Directors meeting Thursday evening, Sept. 16 in Cave Junction City Hall.

His first presentation detailed a 25-acre fire that ignited Sept. 1 in Kerby behind Kerbyville Farms; where I.V. resident Lois Matthews lost her belongings and the trailer in which she was living.

“This fire had great potential,” said Rich. “It moved very rapidly. It seemed like we were chasing the fire as soon as we got there.”

Despite the speed of the fire, fire crews were able to douse the flames before they could reach nearby homes.

IVFD Division Chief Joe Feldhaus added, “The grass had not been grazed in several years. So all the old dead stuff was down at the base and created a little more challenge.”

Jerry Schaeffer, IVFD fire marshal, detailed Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) findings as to the cause of the fire.

“Through their (ODF) investigation, they determined the origin to be in a blackberry patch,” he said. “In that area, they found some lighters. They man-

aged to locate two children nearby who eventually confessed to (starting) the fire.

“The 8-year-old was dared by the 10-year-old to light the fire, and he did. They are adjudicated to go to the Juvenile Fire Safe class in Medford,” said Schaeffer.

The second presentation regarded the Takilma Road house fire on Saturday, Aug. 28 that claimed the life of John Levi Iker, 85, of Cave Junction.

Rich said, “We knocked this fire out in 45 minutes. We saved about half the structure, but it was determined a total loss.”

IVFD firefighters attempted to rescue Iker three times, but were hampered by intense flames, smoke and exploding ammunition, said Rich.

Schaeffer explained the results of his investigation following the fire.

“The son (John Daniel Iker) said he went into the kitchen to get something and when he came back into the living room, he stepped onto a lighter that shot out a flame and caught the bottom of the couch on fire.

“Immediately it sounded a little strange. We determined the couch was an old vintage model that had a polyester cover on it. It was all foam inside except for a few springs.

“The whole story seemed to work very well. The garden hose (he said

he used to try to extinguish the fire) was in place. We got the same make and model of the lighter. That lighter is a model that slides to turn on. You can actually slide it with a bare foot to turn it on.

“That pretty much confirms his thoughts about what happened. It’s unfortunate that a gentleman died,” said Schaeffer.

The last slide presentation detailed a more recent trailer fire in Kerby at Kauffman Wood Products on Sunday, Sept. 12.

“There was a family living in this trailer,” said Rich. “They said they got up to cook some coffee and saw sparks and smoke coming out of the bathroom.

“These folks were extremely lucky,” he said.

Schaeffer added his findings. “The cause, I suspect, was they had numerous extension cords plugged into a power source,” he said.

“When you do that, you end up with a lower voltage at the other end than you should have,” said Schaeffer. “That puts stresses on all the wires. If you’re draining out lower voltage and drawing more amperage, this causes overheating (of the wires).”

Last month, IVFD firefighters responded to 30 emergency medical service calls and were involved with six public assists, including the fires, said Rich.

West Nile Virus detected in Jo Co

A horse has tested positive for the West Nile Virus (WNV), the Josephine County Health Dept. and Oregon Dept. of Human Services announced Friday, Sept. 17.

The infected horse tested positive in the Leonard Road area of Grants Pass. Another horse in the Jerome Prairie area also tested positive for WNV.

WNV infects the central nervous system in horses and causes encephalitis. Symptoms to be aware of are weakness or paralysis of hind limbs, hyperexcitability, and ataxia (uncoordination).

As a public service to all Southern Oregonians, Dr. Gary Buckmaster will hold a horse vaccination clinic on Saturday, Sept. 25 from noon to 3 p.m. at

Green Acres Supply at 870 Redwood Hwy., across from the fairgrounds in Grants Pass.

The WNV vaccine will cost \$25. Other vaccines also will be available.

Horses need an initial dose of the WNV vaccine and a booster dose three weeks after initial dose. Adequate protection is provided approximately 10 days after the booster dose. Annual boosters are necessary to maintain protection. Veterinarians should be contacted for further information.

It is important to note that the WNV virus is passed from mosquitoes, not by horse-to-horse, or by horse-to-human contact. Also, WNV is an infection that lives in birds. The county health department

has reported that it has tested seven birds. Four of the birds tested were positive for WNV.

The health department urges all residents to take precautions against mosquito bites. The hours between dusk and dawn are feeding times for mosquitoes, so the health department advises staying inside or apply mosquito protection with DEET.

Other precautions include removing standing water from around homes, and fixing holes in screens and doors that allow mosquitoes to enter homes.

For more information, contact the health department WNV information line at (541) 474-5326 or go to the health office at 714 N.W. “A” St., Grants Pass, for a pamphlet.

Letters to the Editor

(Continued from page 3)
don’t care if they belong to anyone

“Oops, I broke the rear window. Oh, we will just climb in and see what we can find. Oh, !#*?!*, I cut myself on broken glass.”

I’m asking parents to be suspicious and ask their kid or kids, “Where did you get that keyboard and those other things I haven’t seen before?” Also, “How did you get that nasty cut? Did you bleed much?”

“When did you do that? Was it between Monday night, Sept. 13 and Tuesday morning, Sept. 14?

“Now don’t lie to me, you little darling.”

IVFD Volunteer and Staff Firefighters to the Rescue

Monday, Sept. 13

*12:24 p.m., grass fire, 400 block Deer Creek Road.

*1:11 p.m., smoke investigation, Rockydale Road/Martin Road.

*3:25 p.m., smoke investigation, 6000 block Lakeshore Drive.

*5:23 p.m., motor vehicle accident (MVA), 18000 block Redwood Hwy.

*5:38 p.m., medical aid, 7000 block Rockydale.

*7:14 p.m., medical aid, 200 block O’Brien Road.

*7:38 p.m., public aid, Rockydale/Waldo Road.

*11:24 p.m., unable to locate reported explosion, Redwood Hwy./Caves Hwy.

Tuesday, Sept. 14

*1:24 a.m., structure fire, 30300 block Redwood Hwy.

*11:41 a.m., medical aid, 200 block N. Redwood Hwy.

*7:59 p.m., MVA, 24500 block Redwood Hwy.

*8:17 p.m., public aid, 800 block Lakeshore.

Wednesday, Sept. 15

*2:30 a.m., medical aid, 2800 block Caves Hwy.

*12:16 p.m., vehicle fire, Redwood Hwy./Rockydale Road.

*5:55 p.m., medical aid, 600 block S. Junction Avenue.

*5:55 p.m., district-wide medical standby for American Medical Response.

Thursday, Sept. 16

*10:15 a.m., medical aid, 600 block S. Junction Avenue.

*4:39 p.m., MVA, 1600 block Reeves Creek Road.

Friday, Sept. 17

*9:26 p.m., MVA, 13300 block Redwood Hwy.

Sunday, Sept. 19

*12:44 a.m., medical aid, 8500 block Deer Creek Road.

*9:43 a.m., medical aid, 400 block S. Junction Avenue.

*1:35 p.m., medical aid, 200 block Crest Drive.

Bicyclist stabbed in arm; cops nab likely suspect

A Grants Pass man, Phillip E. Foster, 42, was stabbed in the upper-left arm while riding his bicycle through an alley behind Goodwill and 7-Eleven in Grants Pass, according to Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety (GPDPS).

Initially, when officers arrived, no victim was found. However, two people were located on bikes behind 7-Eleven. During the investigation, officers arrested Jason Page, 17, for unrelated charges, GPDPS said.

It was unclear whether Page was charged in connection with second-degree assault/stabbing.

On Thursday, Sept. 16 at approximately 6:20 a.m., officers responded to

a citizen call reporting a stabbing victim lying on the ground in the alley, said GPDPS.

Further investigation revealed that Page had been involved in the stabbing. Apparently, while confronting Foster in the alley, Page called him names and at one point brandished a knife, according to a GPDPS report.

Page then stabbed Foster before he was able to flee on his bike to Three Rivers Community Hospital where he was treated and released, said GPDPS.

The knife used in the assault was located on the roof of a nearby business. Page was lodged in the Grants Pass Juvenile Justice Center.



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ACCORDING TO SELLERS, SILENCE ISN'T ALWAYS 'GOLDEN'

By Luz A. Moore

Century 21 Harris & Taylor

When trying to sell a home, silence isn’t always golden especially when you’re expecting your real estate agent to phone. In fact, it’s one of the leading complaints among sellers in the real estate market. Oftentimes an agent is more than willing to take on your listing, but once the relationship is made, the seller enjoys getting a call at least once a week.

A seller should establish with the agent up front the expectation that regular communication will occur. Even if it’s just a check-in, the seller will be more satisfied being kept ‘in the loop.’

Keeping the communication lines open between the two parties assures the seller that the agent is keeping them apprised of any and all offers. In addition, agents often provide valuable tips on why prospective buyers weren’t interested. Oftentimes, an agent is privy to the buyer’s dislikes of the property. For instance ‘this room’s too dark’ or ‘the kitchen has a funny smell.’ This allows the agent to give the seller constructive feedback and offer important tips on how to make the home more attractive to buyers.

If you’re a seller and are not hearing from your broker, be sure to keep phoning them until they get the message that you expect a regular update. If the broker doesn’t return your calls, leave a message for your broker’s office manager. The manager will see to it that your broker becomes more attentive to your listing.

Selling a home can be a lot of work and sometimes quite stressful. It is incumbent upon an agent to satisfy the seller’s expectations of routine updates, this will ensure the possibility of future business; not to mention a successful sale. Furthermore, as a seller you must demand the communication exchange between you and your agent. If both parties work in a cooperative effort, the selling experience will be more successful and enjoyable for both the agent and the seller involved.

If you have any questions about selling and buying a home, you can reach me at (541) 592-3966, 474-2014 or 592-3181.

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