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Mass casualty drill preps IVFD response 'Gym collapse' becomes training event

By SHANE WELSH
Staff Writer

About midmorning the alarm was given: Explosion and fire at Lorna Byrne Middle School.

Illinois Valley emergency personnel responded in force.

It was March 23, 1995; and the roof of the gymnasium had collapsed due to overwhelming weight of heavy winter snowfall -- an event that could have been a terrible disaster.

Fortunately, it was spring break, and the school was empty.

The "explosion" was the sound of the roof and its supports collapsing. And there was no fire, although a huge shower of shredded insulation that looked like smoke made it appear that way.

Last week, on Tuesday, Sept. 21, Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) firefighters gathered at Illinois Valley High School to train and prepare for such a disaster that could involve injuries.

As the sun was setting in a peaceful western sky, firefighters last week scrambled to the Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) drill; a simulated roof collapse at the IVHS gym during an assembly.

Upon arrival, fire personnel and an American Medical Response crew immediately established a triage area to treat patients on the front lawn of the school. At this point, it was unknown just what awaited inside, as in a real disaster.

The accident was staged inside the cafeteria. Students from IVHS and Community Christian Academy signed up to volunteer as victims for the drill. Students receive time credit toward community service for their participation. Each student picked out a tag prior to the arrival of IVFD, which identified the various injuries

they sustained.

When the first on-scene entered, their job was to prioritize patient injury by marking them with colored ribbons. This helps rescuers when there are more casualties than they can help at once.

Although this identification can seem somewhat morbid or insensitive to some, it is vital for emergency responders. It enables them to see who needs critical care, and whose injuries aren't an immediate threat.

Said Jeff Gavlik, IVFD deputy chief, "Green is used for patients that are ambulatory or have relatively minor injuries. Yel-

**'Everything I saw
(indicated) that
everyone worked
well together.'**

low is for patients that may have broken bones or something, but don't have life-threatening injuries.

"Red is for critical patients who may have multiple problems, that if intervention isn't done soon, they could die. Black is for patients who are dead or will be soon.

"When you have so many patients," he said, "and so few resources to treat them, there are some people that may still be alive. But their injuries might be so severe, and require so much attention, that it wouldn't be feasible to do that," said Gavlik.

Overall, Gavlik said the exercise went well.

"We set this up as a drill, so we didn't quite have all the realism there," he said. "But it was helpful to give us the understanding of things we need to think about (during this type of situation).

"For some of our new people, it was great. It demonstrated to them some of the things we need

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**Photos by
Shane Welsh**

Tourist season 'successful' at Oregon Caves

By CHRISTINA HILL
Correspondent

This was another successful season for the Oregon Caves, which saw a small increase in revenues in spite of a slight overall decline in tourist numbers.

"Our traffic counter showed a drop in visitation, but our cave tour revenues are up slightly, so it might be that people are carpooling or it might be that our traffic counter has a glitch," said Roger Brandt, chief of visitor's services at the Oregon Caves.

"We're pretty close to what we did last year in terms of cave tours and people going to the visitor's center," Brandt said. But "one year there was a landslide on Highway 199 and that's where a lot of our visitor's come from. Then...there was the Biscuit Fire, the 9-11 terrorist attacks and...huge gas price increases, so we haven't been setting record numbers by any means."

Regardless of the setbacks, the number of cave visitors has remained somewhat steady for the past few years now, he said.

"Right now we're in the vicinity of 107,000

guests to the visitor's center. Last year at this time, we had 104,000 visitors. Also, this year we've had roughly 47,000 people go through the tour and at this time last year we had around 55,000," Brandt said.

Corps,...students aged 16 through 19 who work regular 8 hour jobs, five days a week for a duration of 8 to 10 weeks," Brandt said. "They gain good experience because they're given high responsibilities. Many lead the family tours

plan) the centennial for the Oregon Caves birthday and the 75th birthday (of) Oregon Caves Chateau. It's about 4 years away (and)...we have to start advertising about a year in advance, so we really only have about three years (to prepare)," Brandt said.

A regular tour lasts approximately an hour and a half and leads visitors through many different rooms.

Children must be at least 42-inches tall to go on a regular cave tour. If not, a family-friendly tour is available for those with small children. This tour, which is free of charge, takes families into the first few rooms of the caves.

In addition to family tours, school field trip tours are available.

"We follow Oregon and California schools' curriculum-based guidelines that allow students to take field trips up here to fulfill the requirement for a science class. It's really a great program. It's free and is no cost to the schools," Brandt said.

More information is available online at www.nps.gov/orca/home.html or phone (541) 592-2100.

**Plans for the Oregon Caves
centennial anniversary and the
Chateau's 75th birthday in works
for four years from now.**

"It seems like we keep getting hit hard by all these circumstantial events. It would be nice to have a smooth, even year," he said.

Tourists who aren't deterred by landslides, terrorist's attacks and gas price hikes usually find that they enjoy their experience at the caves.

"(Survey results demonstrate) 100 percent positive feedback from our visitors. We're holding on to a favorable visitor experience," Brandt said.

The successful season at the caves may be because of some people working behind the scenes, Brandt said.

"This is our fourth year of teaming up with the Youth Conservation

or work in the visitor's center. Many will come back to do regular caves tours."

Furthermore, "this year we hired a student from Rogue Community College who spent all summer redesigning our Website and we also hired a young man who came straight out of high school to work here," said Brandt.

"We're reaching out to a lot of people through our Website and it's letting people know what Southern Oregon has to offer," Brandt said.

The caves have been attracting visitors for nearly one hundred years, and Brandt indicated that anticipation is building for an anniversary celebration.

"We're starting (to

Herbicide used to control foliage in right-of-ways

By MICHELLE BINKER
Staff Writer

Brush and woody plants growing up in electrical transmission line right-of-ways are a perennial problem.

Required by law to maintain the right-of-ways free of hazardous trees which could topple lines, and brush which could fuel wildfire sparked by downed lines, Pacific Power hires crews to cut, trim and remove the woody limbs and debris. The process must be repeated every two years or so, as the trees grow back..

Along some right-of-ways in Illinois Valley however, chemical herbicides are being applied to trees which have re-

sprouted since trimming two years ago.

Trees Inc. employee Clarence Harris is applying the herbicide Garlon-4, he said, directly to individual trees and smaller woody plants which could grow up to 30 feet tall

"This causes much less of an environmental impact than sending in crews of men to cut and mow," he said.

Harris, who is a licensed operator approved by Oregon Dept. of Agriculture to use and apply these substances, said "people are generally glad to see us, because (the work done by Trees Inc.) creates a firebreak."

Not everyone is so

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**PAVILION BATTALION -
Volunteers work to assemble a new pavilion at Illinois River 'Forks' State Park, Saturday, Sept. 25. The 36-foot diameter structure, paid for with donations and a grant secured by IVCRT, is designed to host myriad functions.**

(Related story on page 9)

Weather Watch

Cave Junction

Wednesday, Sept. 29
Mostly sunny
High--82, Low--44.



Thursday, Sept. 30
Mostly sunny
High--76, Low--44.



Friday, Oct. 1
Sunny, patchy clouds
High--83, Low--44.



Saturday, Oct. 2
Sunshine
High--80, Low--43.



Sunday, Oct. 3
Partial sunshine
High--77, Low--35.



Monday, Oct. 4
Clouds & sun
High--71, Low--33.



Tuesday, Oct. 5
Partly sunny
High--71, Low--34.



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