

Shop Smart's Jessica Krska 'happy to help' valley groups and teams

By **CHRISTINA HILL**
Correspondent

Getting up at the crack of dawn isn't much fun for most people.

But for Jessica Krska, store director at Shop Smart Food Warehouse in Downtown Cave Junction, getting up early to start her day is something she's been working toward a long time.

"I start at 6 a.m. and get off at 5 p.m.," she said. "My day consists of running the store. It's been fantastic. It's what I've been working toward for the past 14 years."

Krska moved to Illinois Valley from Southern California's Ventura County 15 years ago.

Born and raised in Crescent City, she was "familiar with the area and couldn't wait to move here" so she could raise her daughter, Neetza.

Krska's long road to her success, she said, started more than 14 years ago when she was a checker working the evening shift. Krska took over management of Shop Smart in January 2000.

As store manager, Krska "handles all the paperwork, helps with freight and checks, and works in video."

"I'm basically the back-up person for every department," she said. "I'm literally running around the store all day long. It's my exercise. I'm too tired to work out when I get home. I'll take my dogs for a walk and that's it," Krska said.

Krska loves her job as

much as she loves helping the community, especially children, she said.

"We try to assist any kids' organizations that need help," she said. "Kids are the source of the community. If we don't raise them right, they're not going to benefit the valley."

During her tenure at Shop Smart, Krska said that they have done everything from selling footballs for the football team, to donating food for various organizations, to letting

Krska is happy to help children's organizations and other community-oriented programs.

sports teams bag groceries for tips as fund-raisers.

"We try to help any way we can," she said. "The young people are our future. So many of our sports programs are broke, they need all the help they can get."

"In the past we have donated food for homecoming, prom, sports teams dinners, to the Shining Stars and so many other organizations."

According to Krska, the dollar amount of food donated by Shop Smart ranges from nothing one month to \$1,500 to \$2,000 the next month.

"I pretty much never say 'no'," Krska said. "It's hard to, because when these organizations have to spend all their money buying the supplies, then they're not going to make any money to put toward what they're working for."

While supporting more than 30 different organizations, it's hard to imagine that anyone would need to steal anything from the store, but Krska said that it still happens all the time.

"The amount of stolen goods averages about \$200 a month," she said. "We also have a lot of people who will leave their purse or wallet in the parking lot."

"It's rare when people find and return them, but we've actually had a lot of them returned the past month," Krska said.

"There was one purse that I actually had to dig through until I found a phone number," said Krska, "so I called an answering machine in British Columbia and the lady had left a phone number where she could be reached at her sister's house, so that's how I got a hold of her. That was pretty unusual."

For all the store and its employees to help the community, Krska receives "many 'thank you' letters" all the time.

While Krska isn't busy running the store and hanging up new "thank you" letters, she's busy working on five acres she recently purchased.

"My fiancé and I want to get married on our property at the end of May, so we're trying to get the yard ready," she explained. "It's going to be a medium-sized wedding. I'm going to invite all my co-workers. They're like family to me," Krska said.

"I have everything I have ever wanted in life. It couldn't be any better."

Funding for jail, CJ cops ballot items

Two money issues, both involving the Josephine County Sheriff's Office, are on the Nov. 2 vote-by-mail ballot.

The city of Cave Junction is seeking a three-year operating levy to increase patrol coverage from the current 40 years per week to 80 hours per week within city limits.

If approved, the city would levy a tax of \$1.42 per \$1,000 assessed property valuation on city residents. It is estimated that the levy would raise \$296,713 during the three-year run.

In addition, Josephine County is proposing a four-year local option tax for operating the adult jail in Grants Pass.

The county is seeking .335-cents per \$1,000 assessed property valuation. If approved, the measure would begin July 1, 2005.

Funding would be used to hire additional correctional officers and jail staff, and other costs.

Approval of the proposal, said the county, would allow the jail to increase capacity from its current level of approximately 140, to an approximate level of 230.

During the life of the measure, some \$6.7 million would be raised.

On a property assessed at \$150,000 that would result in an approximate additional \$50.25 per year, according to the county.

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K-9 officer, 'Smitty' retires after six years

Due to age and health issues, "Smitty," a canine deputy nearly 8-years-old, is being retired, said Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO).

"Smitty" has put in "six years of faithful service." His retirement was announced "with regret."

His years with his handler, Deputy Keith Hubbard, "have proven fruitful with many accomplishments including criminal captures, finding illicit narcotics, and locating a disoriented man who had fallen and was helpless in a remote area in winter cold."

The dog is one of the favorites among Josephine County schoolchildren and the general public. Hubbard and "Smitty" have made many appearances in Illinois Valley at schools and various festivals.

"His public appearances always brought praise with his amiable personality and gentle in-

teractions," said JCSO.

"Smitty" is retiring in the care of Hubbard, who lives in the Grants Pass area.

The K-9s are supported solely by public donations, said JCSO. With the retirement of "Smitty" three such dogs remain with JCSO.

"A group of dedicated volunteers comprise the Friends of the K-9s," said the agency. "This non-profit organization continually manages fund-raisers to keep the K-9s routine maintenance costs, training expenditures and equipment purchases in the black," JCSO concluded.

Public Invited

FREE Showing of acclaimed filmmaker Robert Greenwald's new film

'Unconstitutional'

Sunday Oct. 24 at 6 p.m.
Selma Community Center
18255 Redwood Hwy.

This documentary on the Patriot Act explores how detentions and police infiltration of ordinary Americans has been based on unconstitutional directives from the White House and the Justice Department.

There will be a discussion on the Patriot Act with a question and answer period led by retired attorney, now educator, Jan Lofthouse.

For more information phone 597-4407 or the Selma Center at 415-1000.

We are alone, absolutely alone on this chance planet: and, amid all the forms of life that surround us, not one, excepting the dog, has made an alliance with us.

-Maurice Maeterlinck-

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