

Fund OK'd for salmon in 5 states

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns has announced that \$2.8 million in fiscal year 2005 funds will help restore and conserve salmon habitat in Oregon, Alaska, California, Idaho, Maine, and Washington.

These funds are part of the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program's (WHIP) Salmon Habitat Restoration Initiative, first announced in March 2004.

Oregon received nearly \$420,000 in additional funding through this initiative.

"These funds will allow NRCS, state agencies, local conservation groups, tribal governments and others to work with land owners to continue restoring the health of critical salmon habitat in Oregon," according to Bob Graham, state conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Oregon.

Through this initiative, NRCS funds projects that restore habitat for salmon. Projects may include providing shade along streams, restoring gravel spawning beds, removing barriers to fish passages, and reducing agricultural runoff.

Maintaining healthy watersheds will ensure long-term salmon survival, said NRCS.

Including the additional salmon funding, approximately \$600,000 will be available for RFP's through WHIP in Oregon. This year, Oregon is placing a priority on habitat restoration for salmon, sage grouse and other "at-risk" species.

Oregon is now advertising a Request for Proposals (RFP) at fedgrants.gov/ for fiscal year 2005 WHIP funds, including the additional Salmon Habitat Restoration Initiative funds. WHIP is a voluntary conservation program that provides technical and financial assistance to land owners and others to develop upland, wetland, riparian and aquatic habitat areas on their properties.

Since WHIP began in 1998, more than 18,000 participants have enrolled more than 2.8 million acres into the program nationally.

During the first year of the Salmon Habitat Restoration Initiative, NRCS signed 47 contracts and agreements with land owners, tribes and municipalities totaling \$3.3 million to improve nearly 900 acres of riparian habitat and to open hundreds of miles of streams for fish passage across the United States, NRCS said.

I.V. boys end hoop season

Illinois Valley boys varsity basketball team ended the Skyline Conference season with a 0-12 record following its 73-45 defeat by Mazama in Ken Mann Memorial Gym on Tuesday, Feb. 22.

IVHS was led against the Vikings by Kalen Snook, who scored 14 points and blocked eight shots.

Jon Paul turned in nine points; and Ben Latva eight.

It was the final game for seniors James Gerhardt, Paul and Latva.

Overall, the boys team has a 3-20 record.



LORNA BYRNE TOP STUDENTS - Chosen Students of the Month for February are (from left) Kevin Snook, Alexander Hess, Kenneth White, Lorraine Schlabach, Callie Harland (rear) and Christeen Fierro. They were selected based on overall performance in a number of areas including academics, extracurricular activities, school spirit, positive attitude and classroom demeanor.



HWY. 199/LAUREL ROAD CRASH - No injuries were reported in a foggy morning three-vehicle accident at Hwy. 199 and Laurel Road Tuesday, March 1 at approximately 8:15. Emergency personnel from American Medical Response and Illinois Valley Fire District were on scene. Other information was unavailable in time for this issue. (Photo by Shane Welsh)

Vet committee considering aid to military

House Speaker Karen Minnis (R-Wood Village) announced that the House Veterans' Affairs Committee will consider a series of proposals to assist veterans and Oregonians now serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Many of the ideas come directly from veterans and organizations representing veterans.

"The House has already passed legislation that extends some benefits to national Guard members called to active duty, and we're looking at what more we can do," said Minnis.

"The War on Terrorism and the War in Iraq have made us all more aware of the thousands of Oregonians who serve in the military," she said.

House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Donna Nelson (R-McMinnville) said, "Our veterans' sacrifices and the sacrifice of their families, is what impresses me most. They've secured our future, and we've done little to se-

cure theirs.

"These men and women are truly courageous, and we owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude. It's time for us to fight for them."

In a package the Veterans' Affairs Committee is calling "Vet Net," the House will be considering legislation that would:

*"Bridge the gap" of health care, income, and other disparities created by deployment of National Guard and Reserve troops.

*Provide counseling for longtime and newly returning veterans to provide assistance to them in understanding and navigating the complexities of federal veterans' benefits, including health care, education, mental health, pension, and disability compensation.

*Provide education, training, employment and re-employment benefits at the state-level.

*Re-establish the Oregon Veterans Home Loan Program.

*Defer or waive profes-

sional license fees and vehicle registrations, while deployed and upon return.

*Repair, remodel and replace National Guard facilities throughout Oregon. Years of deferred maintenance has left many facilities in disrepair or in need of upgrading, Minnis said.

Record \$6.9 billion noted for Oregon direct travel

Total direct travel spending in Oregon for 2004 reached a new high mark: \$6.9 billion, according to the recent "Oregon Travel Impacts Report" by Dean Runyan Associates.

This represents a 6 percent increase from the preceding year -- the strongest rate increase since 1999-2000. In constant (inflation-adjusted) dollars, travel spending in Oregon is now at its highest level.

"This report reinforces what I've known all along -- Oregon is not only a great place to live and do business, but it's a great place to visit," Gov. Kulongoski said. "Our targeted investments in the tourism market are paying off, and I am confident that as we continue to make strides in growing our economy, tourism will remain a vital part of our state's success."

Highlights of the report:

*Much of the increased travel activity in Oregon was fueled by increased passenger air travel. Approximately 2.6 million domestic visitors traveled to Oregon by air in 2004. This is the same as in 2000, and it represents the second consecutive year of positive growth.

*Overnight visitors in

hotels, motels and bed-and-breakfast inns accounted for nearly half of all visitor spending. During '04 these travelers spent \$3 billion (including one-way air fares), or 48 percent of all visitor spending in Oregon.

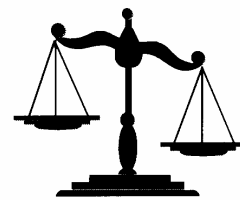
*During '04, direct travel spending generated \$81 million in local taxes and \$172 million in state taxes -- equivalent to \$165 for each Oregon household.

*Direct travel spending in Oregon generated 88,100 jobs with earnings of \$1.8 billion in '04. Three-fourths of these jobs were in accommodations, food services; and arts, entertainment and recreation industries.

*Travel spending in Oregon caused an effect of 127,600 jobs with earnings of \$3.2 billion during '04. This includes direct employment by tourism jobs and secondary jobs including construction, manufacturing and professional services supporting tourism.

The estimates of the direct effects were produced using the Regional Travel Impact Model (RTIM) developed by Dean Runyan Associates. The input data used to detail the economic effects of the Oregon travel industry were gathered from various local, state and federal sources.

MANSFIELD R. CLEARY



Attorney at Law

General Practice in
Illinois Valley
since 1980

Practice includes but not limited to:

Bankruptcy - Eliminate financial problems

Living trusts - Avoid probate

Estate planning - Wills,

power of attorney

Domestic relations

Auto accident - Personal Injury

Criminal - DUII

Real Estate contracts - Foreclosure

592-2195 200 W. Lister

Do You Need Health Insurance?



We help pay.

The state helps qualified individuals and families save up to 95% of monthly health insurance premium costs.

Choose from a variety of health plans or add family members to your employer-sponsored insurance plan.

FHIAP helps people who:

- Have been without insurance for 6 months or are leaving the Oregon Health Plan
- Meet income, citizenship, and other guidelines
- Are not eligible for Medicare

Call 1-888-564-9669 for an application if you can't attend.

Sign up

Thursday, March 10
Stop by between 11 am - 7 pm
Washington Outpatient Center
Conference Room A
1505 NW Washington Blvd.
Grants Pass
Se habla Español

Sponsored in part by Three Rivers Community Hospital & Health Center

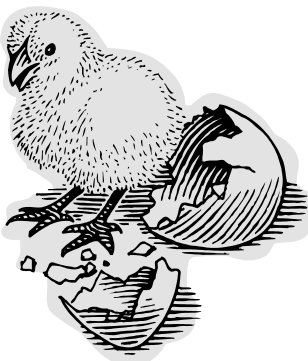
Think you might be Pregnant?

We can help.

Pregnancy Center of the Illinois Valley offers FREE pregnancy tests, support and referrals.

You have options!

592-6058
481 S. Junction Ave.



Support the advertisers in the 'Illinois Valley News.'