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Fire district begins plan to replace two staffers

Action on how to fill the slots left by two paid staff resignations was taken by Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) directors during their meeting Thursday night, May 12.

Chief Harry Rich advised the board, during its meeting at IVFD headquarters, that Division Maintenance Chief Joe Feldhaus, and Administrative Chief Beth Beards had tendered their resignations.

Beards, who was with the district 6 1/2 years, resigned Wednesday, May 4 due to health reasons, Rich said.

Feldhaus quit Wednesday, May 11, said the chief, citing personal reasons. He had been with the district for more than seven years.

Rich sought board permission to use a "head-hunters" agency to seek replacements. Director Joel Downing recommended using the same one that

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Library chief dismissed by county board

"The Josephine County Board of Commissioner's office would like to announce a change in the organizational structure of our Library.

"Effective May 11, 2005, the position of Library Director has been eliminated. Duties of this position will be assumed by current staff."

That is the extent of an announcement dated Wednesday, May 11 and received May 12 from the county board, affecting Sue Luce. Her annual salary was \$78,852.

"Current staff" refers to Cessa Vichi, a former head librarian for the Illinois Valley Branch in Cave Junction. Now access services manager, Vichi will at least temporarily take over the duties of Luce.

Luce had returned May 10 from a 10-day vacation. Contacted by the county personnel department, and advised of the board's decision, she declined to resign, although the board had voted to dismiss her without cause. She had held the job since late-2000.

The board has offered her a six-month severance package, which she is considering. She also is consulting an attorney.

Compensation Meeting Scheduled Wednesday

In another brief announcement, received Thursday, May 12, the county board announced an "Employee Compensation Meeting to discuss the total compensation for Josephine County employees."

The gathering will be held in Anne Basker Auditorium, adjacent to the county courthouse in Downtown Grants Pass.

The meeting will begin following the board's 6 p.m. weekly business session.



KIDS 'N' PETS were in plentiful supply Saturday, May 14 during the eighth annual I.V. Children's Fair & Pet Parade at Jubilee Park in Cave Junction. The event was co-sponsored by a myriad of organizations. (Clockwise from top left) Aveline Franks and her bulldog, 'Candy', both 5; Kimberly Rodriguez, 9, and her Beagle, 'Snoopy'; Cord Wise and his nameless duckling; Candy Crow and her minihorse, 'Sugar Plum'; and 'Nori', the Alpine goat, cleverly disguised as a Monarch species goat, shown by Kaya Cerecedes, 2. Also featured were numerous craft and Nature activities including one (below) by the National Park Service about bats.



I.V. artistic events highlight student work

Special fine and performing arts events, open to the public, will be held this week in the Illinois Valley High School cafeteria.

The annual free Spring Concert will begin at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 18. It will be the first concert directed at IVHS by Kevin Soon, new music teacher.

The concert will feature the band and choir.

On Thursday, May 19

and Saturday, May 21 at 7 p.m. Kelly Tate's drama class will stage "Forever We Dance," based on Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew." There is an admission fee.

The production was written and will be performed by students. Leads include Katherine Baker, Kylie Reynolds, Dakota Frisk, and Ashley Withers.

A third presentation

involves students of art teacher Elaine Barker. Their work during the semester will be displayed free through May 21 for concert and play-goers. It also can be viewed Thursday and Friday during school hours.

Viewers can vote for their favorite piece. The artist who receives the most votes will receive art supplies provided by the IVHS Art Dept.

Groundbreaking for new clinic set

Siskiyou Community Medical Center notes partnership with Asante group

Groundbreaking on a 7-acre site for the new home of Siskiyou Community Medical Center in Cave Junction is set for Aug. 11.

The announcement was made during a presentation Wednesday evening, May 11 at Taylor's Sausage Country Store.

Construction on the \$3.1 million facility -- with 10,000 square feet of space -- is planned to begin this year, it was announced by Susan Scheufele, medical center CEO; and Carol Meyers, the organization's development director.

More than \$1.7 million of the project's total cost already has been secured, they reported. Included is \$165,000 guaranteed by developer Larry Osborn. In addition, persons including Jim Frick, of Century 21 Harris & Taylor, have pledged their personal financial support.

Scheufele noted that a major factor for the new facility is that the medical center, known locally as "the clinic," is partnering with Asante Health System, which operates Three Rivers Community Hospital, among other medical sites, in Grants Pass.

"The new building," said Meyers, "will not only provide an improved facility, but offer room for other specialty services and expanded lab and X-ray services through the partnership with Three Rivers."

The full-service lab and X-ray portions will be available to anyone, said Scheufele; not just clinic patients.

The entrance to the new facility will be off Redwood Hwy. between Wild River Brewing & Pizza Co. and the Illinois Valley Golf Course. The first building entrance will be to the clinic.

A wide drive will go down the north side of the facility, leading to parking at the other end of the building, which will provide the entrance to the Asante side.

The site was purchased three years ago by the I.V. Medical Center Board, and it is debt-free.

To help raise the necessary funding for construction, the medical center is seeking donors for tax-deductible contributions and pledges through its "Choose to Care" program. Information is available from Meyers at 955-6053, Ext. 1140 in Grants Pass; or cmeyers@siskiyouhealthcenter.com.

She noted that the health center is federally funded, but that those funds, along with patient fees, cover operating costs. Capital dollars are not received from the federal government, "and therefore we depend on the generosity of the community when we want to expand our facilities



to meet ever-increasing needs," she said.

She added that many of those who use the facility are either uninsured or underinsured. "Last year," she said, "30 percent of our patients used our Sliding Discount Program; another 41 percent had the Oregon Health Plan; and 16 percent had Medicare coverage."

During 2003-2004, more than 14,000 patients received medical and dental care at Siskiyou Community Health Center.

The new medical site "is designed to meet the needs of the growing community." It was noted that some 400 new homes are under construction or planned in the city limits of Cave Junction.

"The population of the whole valley is expected to increase," said Meyers, "as retirees and young families arrive; attracted by affordable housing and the rural atmosphere."

One goal for the new facility is to encourage people to use it rather than going to Grants Pass to the hospital emergency room.

Noted Three Rivers Administrator Paul Janke, in a written statement, "There definitely are a large and growing number of individuals who don't have access to good health insurance, and yet still need health-care services.

"As a place of last resort, these individuals will show up at our emergency department."

The new medical site will not be an E.R., but will be able to handle urgent care situations.

Besides news of the groundbreaking and related data, Scheufele announced that a new physician, Dr. Mary Gold, will come to the clinic this summer from a

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Z Coffee robber sets off alarm

Sheriff's deputies are seeking the whereabouts of a ski-masked bandit who pointed a gun at a Z Coffee employee, set off a panic alarm, and left with cash.

Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) responded to an alarm at 5:08 a.m. Saturday, May 14 to Z Coffee at the north end of Cave Junction on Hwy. 199.

Employee Nicole Hendrickson, 19, told JCSO that the robber, wearing a mask, gloves, yellow jacket and blue jeans, said, "Give me the money and don't call the cops." He inadvertently activated the panic alarm while reaching in to get the cash.

He then walked away.

Approximately \$50 was taken, said business co-owner Wendy Zabriskie.

She added that the suspect's car was located later, and that a plastic gun was also found.

Deputies are looking for the suspect.