

JERRY & KEITH NELSEN (Photo by Christina Hill)

## Sauer's Flat scarecrow scares up biz; Nelsen Family Farm fond of sentinel

By CHRISTINA HILL  
Correspondent

Driving down Sauer's Flat on Hwy. 199 in Illinois Valley, most people can't help but notice a Goliath-size scarecrow in front of a large produce-selling stand.

"We get a lot of people stopping to take pictures with it," said Keith Nelsen, co-owner of the Nelsen Family Farm.

According to Keith, his son and daughter-in-law built the scarecrow "to be funny."

"It was their idea of entertainment," he said. "They've got to re-dress it this year, but I forgot what they're going to put on it. During the fires (the 2002 Biscuit Fire), they dressed it as a fireman," Keith said with a chuckle.

While the giant scarecrow may scare crows, it has the opposite effect on customers: It lures them in.

Customers are greeted by the Nelsens, who wear hats with "Cron Produce"

embroidered on them.

The Nelsens' produce stand, known as Sweet Cron or Sweet Corn, to many, sells hanging flower baskets and a variety of vegetables including corn, tomatoes, peppers, onions, potatoes, squash and pumpkins and hay all grown locally on their 110-acre farm.

"My wife, Jerry, and I got married in '59 and owned the farm since then," said Keith. "Together we run it with our son and daughter-in-law," he said.

"We bought it from the Robinsons," he added. "They were here 42 years. There was an old farm house on the property, but we had our house built, then we added the building that's behind the scarecrow to sell produce out of."

Surrounding the large produce stand are three large green houses.

One of the greenhouses is home to several dozen hanging flower baskets. Jerry grows each basket from seeds and spends much

time nurturing their growth.

The end result is breathtaking. Each basket is filled with up to seven or eight different varieties of flowers featuring shades of purples, yellows, reds, oranges, greens and blues.

While the baskets may be awe-inspiring, Jerry claims that they're not her specialty.

"We grow more than 30,000 peppers and 13 different varieties," her husband noted. "Peppers are my specialty."

The third green house is filled to the brim with towering tomato plants covered large plump tomatoes ripening on the vines.

The stand is currently open seven days a week for selling hanging baskets. It'll open in July with produce.

"We had a late year this year, because of the weather," Keith said.

However, the team of four is working from sunup to sundown to cultivate crops and have them ready for the summer season.



CAVES AVENUE ARSON - Damage to a 1999 Ford 4x4 pickup truck was estimated at \$9,000, said Jerry Schaeffer, Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) fire marshal. IVFD firefighters responded to the 2:52 a.m. fire Sunday, June 26 on Caves Avenue between Hwy. 46 and Watkins Street. The vehicle is owned by Matt Berubee, who had public liability, but no comprehensive insurance, said Schaeffer. The fire began in the passenger seat, and is believed to be intentional. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg, IVFD photographers)



SMOKE O' THE TIMES - An escaped unattended debris burn rampaged across an estimated five acres of tall tick brush at 29247 Old Highway 199 Sunday, June 26. Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) and Oregon Dept. of Forestry responded to the 1:41 p.m. alarm on the Goodwin property, said IVFD Fire Marshal Jerry Schaeffer. Including mop-up, firefighters were on scene approximately two hours. There also was a brush fire on Forest Creek Road last week, but details were unavailable in time for this issue. (Photos by Dale & Elaine Sandberg, IVFD photographers)

## Josephine County fire season begins

Fire season on state and private forestlands in Josephine and Jackson counties began at 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 27.

Wildland fire protection on these lands is the responsibility of the Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF), and fire season is declared by the state forester when weather conditions and dry vegetation make fires difficult to control.

The declaration also applies to Bureau of Land Management lands in S.W. Oregon, on which ODF is contracted to provide fire protection.

ODF's Southwest Oregon District, with unit offices in Central Point and Grants Pass, protects 1.8 million acres of forestland. More than half the land is privately owned; 45 percent is federally managed. The remainder is a mixture of state, county and city land.

Three-fourths of all fires

in the district are caused by human activities, said ODF. The agency annually responds to more than 230 wildland fires, which burn more than 4,700 acres of grass, brush and timber.

Records show that most human-caused fires result from operating power-driven equipment in dry vegetation, and from debris fires or burn barrel fires that escape. However, lightning-caused fires typically burn more acres per year than human-caused fires.

As of June 27, debris burning is prohibited on ODF-protected lands. Burn-barrel fires are allowed in certain structural fire protection districts through June 30. Residents are advised to call their structural fire service provided prior to conducting any open burn.

The information line for Illinois Valley Fire District is 592-2121.

Commercial operations

on forestland, such as timber harvesting, are required to follow Industrial Fire Precaution (IFP) Level 1 regulations. Fire suppression equipment must be on the site at all times, and there must be a watchman.

If the level of fire danger increases in the months ahead, ODF will impose further fire prevention regulations. These regulations are designed to restrict activities that have historically caused wildfires.

If a person is willful, malicious, or negligent in the origin of a fire, ODF is required by state law ORS 477.068 to recover costs associated with suppressing the fire, and those responsible will be billed.

For more information about IFP levels and other fire season regulations, contact the ODF Grants Pass Unit, 5375 Monument Drive, Grants Pass. (541) 474-3152.

## No fireworks, burn barrels -- ODF

As of Friday, July 1, fireworks are prohibited on land protected by the Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) in S.W. Oregon.

Additionally, all open debris burning -- including the use of burn barrels -- is disallowed.

ODF protects state and private forestland, and Bureau of Land Management territory in Josephine and Jackson counties.

Campfires are allowed in designated campgrounds and campsites on state forest land, and on private land where land owner permission has been obtained, said ODF.

Fireworks are not allowed on forestland, said ODF, because wildland fires are easily ignited by such devices. They often emit sparks, skip across the ground, or are carried by running children.

Fires caused by fireworks can result in the user being cited and billed for the cost of suppression, said ODF. Parents are responsible for fires caused by their children.

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## Man injured in robbery

Grants Pass resident Brian D. Williamson, 31, suffered minor injuries during a robbery on Caveman Bridge during which he was thrown to the ground, said Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety (GPDPS).

The incident was reported to have occurred Friday, June 24 at approximately 3:11 a.m.

Williamson said that he was walking on the bridge, and that the suspect demanded his money. There was a struggle, and the victim suffered cuts and scrapes to the knuckles on both hands.

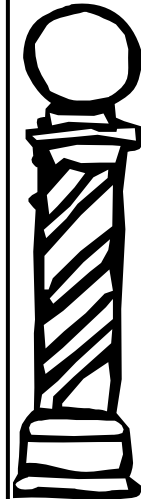
The suspect, who took a wallet with currency and ID, is described as a Black male, 25-30 years old, approximately 6-0 with a thin build.

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welcome

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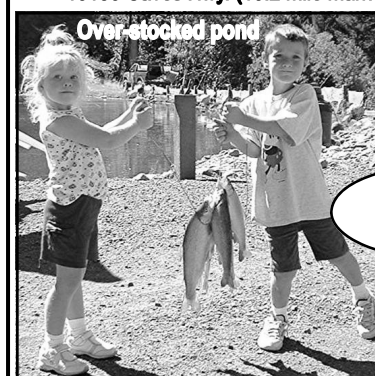


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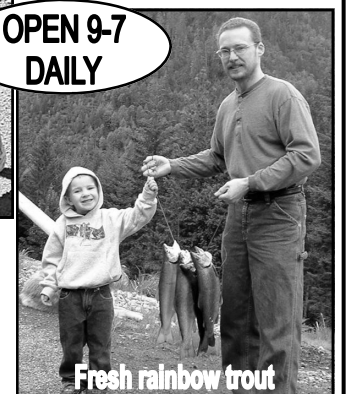
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