

Mohr gun safety ...

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popular gunsmithing classes offered at Rogue Community College.

While attending RCC, Mohr met an NRA training counselor through whom Mohr was encouraged to also earn his certification.

Now he offers concealed handgun courses through his business, Reliance Concepts, at his business on Garner Road.

There students undergo a combination of classroom and range work.

Besides basic handgun and firearm safety, Mohr teaches about the laws associated with carrying a concealed gun, what to do in case someone is involved in a shooting, and how to visualize and think through scenarios before they happen.

The training includes lessons on how to carry a concealed weapon, and the practice of firearm presentation (drawing a weapon).

Class members then head to Mohr's range to prove that they can demonstrate what they have learned, and so that Mohr can ascertain areas in which they may need practice.

Joe Latva could be found taking Mohr's course Saturday, Jan. 21.

"I was in the military for 21 years," Latva said. "It has been a great refresher."

According to Mohr,

enrollment has been good. He said that his students are men and women, typically older, and that the oldest person to take the course was in their 70s.

Completing the course for handgun safety and competency is only the first step to receiving a concealed handgun license.

An application must be submitted to the Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) along with \$50 cash or money order, as well as a \$15 check or money order made out to the Oregon State Police.

Fees cover the costs of a mandatory background check and processing.

When applications are submitted, the applicant will be fingerprinted and photographed, said JCSO.

For a full list of requirements, go to the Josephine County Web page at www.co.josephine.or.us/ and under the Departments category click on the sheriff's link.

On the left-hand side of the sheriff's page, click the Concealed Handgun License link to find a detailed list of procedures and requirements for obtaining a license in Oregon.

Mohr is accepting students for his concealed-carry handgun class. He can be contacted at 592-6692 or 660-9824.



LORNA BYRNE MIDDLE SCHOOL honored January Students of the Month on Thursday, Jan. 26. They are (rear, from left) eighth-graders Logan Emonds and Paige Ragsdale, and seventh-graders Audrey Mechling and Zach Anderson; and (front, from left) Tyler Robbins and Brandi Wollerton. They were selected based on their overall deportment, as well as grades. (Photo by 'Illinois Valley News')

Complaint unresolved; teacher quits

On paid administrative leave since late November because of a complaint against him, Steve Morton, a teacher and girls basketball coach at Illinois Valley High School, has resigned.

His resignation was accepted Jan. 23 by directors of Three Rivers School District (TRDS).

TRSD reached no conclusion on the complaint that Morton had inappropriate contact with a girl student. An investigation by the Josephine County Sheriff's Office into the same complaint found no basis for

criminal charges.

He will not receive payment beyond salary during his time of being on leave.

Morton taught history and social studies at IVHS for five years. As coach of the girls basketball team, he directed it during last year's season to the second round in the state playoffs.

In a related matter, Morton is under separate investigation by the Oregon Teacher Standards & Practices Commission because of two complaints last year by TRSD. He has not been charged with any violation

of conduct.

During the last week's TRSD board meeting, Sheena Cole, one of the girls team leaders, told directors that the allegation of inappropriate conduct has nearly shattered the team.

She indicated that the complaint is without merit and that Morton is respected by the team.

She made similar supportive statements during the Dec. 12 meeting, with the whole team surrounding her at IVHS.

Technology boost noted by Asante

Asante Health System has received nearly \$500,000 to bring telemonitoring services to as many as 525 Rogue Valley Medical Center (RVMC) and Three Rivers Community Hospital (TRCH) Home Care patients.

The telemonitoring technology allows health-care workers to remotely monitor the vital signs of their sickest patients in rural areas, as data is automatically sent to central stations at the RVMC Home Care office in Medford.

Asante expects to have the technology installed and operating this spring.

It's an extraordinary technical achievement for a rural community, providing a means of daily contact to improve care and quality of life for hundreds of home-bound patients, Asante said.

The Telemedicine and Distance Learning grant was awarded on behalf of the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development program.

This is Asante's fourth telemedicine grant from RUS for a total of \$2.3 million to enhance health-care services in the most rural areas of this region.

Rural group seeks folks

Applications to develop a pool of applicants for the Josephine County Rural Planning Commission are being accepted by the county board of commissioners.

The commission consists of nine members from different geographical areas within the county. No more than two members shall be engaged principally in the buying, selling, or developing of real estate for profit either as individuals or for a company or corporation.

No more than two members shall be engaged in the same kind of occupation, business, trade or profession.

The Rural Area Planning Commission has final jurisdiction over land-use matters as specified incountry law for the areas outside the urban-growth boundary. The commission also reviews and makes recommendations regarding zone changes, comprehensive plan map amendments and site specific changes.

Applications are available at the Commissioners Office at the county courthouse, Room 154, Grants Pass; or phone 474-5221 for more information.

Beer is living proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy.
- Ben Franklin -



Early prospectors to Illinois Valley traveled with all their gear on pack animals. (Photo courtesy of Josephine County Historical Society, and Roger Brandt)

Illinois Valley's Josephine Creek site of first Oregon gold discovery in 1851

By ROGER BRANDT
Special to IVN

Illinois Valley is considered to be the location of the first gold discovery in Oregon, but the tale of how this happened does not come without its entanglements.

During this year of Josephine County's sesquicentennial (150 years of existence), no celebration would be complete without looking back at this important moment in Oregon history.

The story of the discovery of gold in Illinois Valley began when prospectors in the California gold fields began to migrate northward for new gold discoveries. By 1850, some of these prospectors had made small gold

strikes in Siskiyou County in California immediately south of Josephine County.

Although the 1850 strikes attracted some attention, most people agree that



the landmark year for mining activity in this region was 1851. This year started with a big gold strike in Yreka, Calif.; and within a couple of months, more than 2,000 prospectors had migrated into the area.

Some were from Oregon; others came from California.

Later that year, gold was discovered in Illinois Valley, and from the available information, it appears that the discovery was made almost simultaneously by two groups that came into Illinois Valley from opposite directions.

The group that came from the south consisted of prospectors from California, and they might have wanted to avoid the calamity of the boom camps in Yreka and

headed toward Oregon to find gold deposits of their own. They likely came up Indian Creek from Happy Camp, Calif. following the general route of the Jefferson State Byway.

The group that came in from the north was comprised of Oregonians who had been traveling on the Applegate Trail toward Yreka. They reportedly met Native Americans who somehow let them know about the gold in this area. This group came into Illinois Valley following the general route of Hwy. 199 from Grants Pass.

Regardless of who got here first, both groups apparently found their gold on what would later be called Josephine Creek. This discovery is considered by many to be the first mining locality discovered or worked in Oregon.

And for that reason, Josephine Creek is a significant site in Oregon history.

To reach Josephine Creek, drive 5 miles north of Cave Junction on Hwy. 199 and turn left on Eight Dollar Mountain Road. This road takes you into the Wild and Scenic River corridor. Look for Josephine Creek in the canyon on the left just before the green bridge over Illinois River.



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