Military veterans given more educational help

Veterans interested in a college education can now take advantage of increased educational aid offered by the state of Oregon.

Additionally, members of the Oregon National Guard or Reserves now have an extra tuition remission opportunity available at Oregon colleges.

State educational benefits have increased for Oregon veterans who are studying full time at state, private, or vocational schools. Monthly benefits have increased to $150 from the previous $50 amount.

This allowance cannot exceed the total number of months served in the Armed Forces or 36 months, whichever is less. Attendance at an Oregon school is required unless the training is not available at an accredited institution within Oregon.

Oregon State Educational Aid cannot be received concurrently with a federal educational benefit earned as a result of military service.

The Voyager Program is a joint effort by Oregon colleges under the University System to answer the governor's request for Oregon schools to provide more educational benefits to service members. The program offers a "last dollar award," providing fee remission for no more than the difference between campus tuition benefits granted each individual student.

To be eligible for the Voyager Program, a student must be admitted to an Oregon university; must be seeking their initial bachelor's degree on full-time status and have been a member of the National Guard or Reserves called to active duty; and served in a combat zone since Sept. 11, 2001.

For more information, contact veterans' coordinators at campus financial aid offices.

Carpenter, coalition

(Continued from page 1)

the task of assigning some of the 18 major roles and responsibilities identified in managing this comprehensive program, said Carol Ronan, IVFC executive director.

She said that an important step for the project, after recruiting teen-agers and customers, is to provide training for the teens in the following areas:

*Work skills including safe use of yard and other hand tools.

*Work ethics.

*Age and gender communications.

*Record-keeping and finance.

These important skills will be a valuable asset to the teens and will assure customers that they receive qualified and committed workers, said Ronan.

Community projects, she said, will be selected by the steering committee based on their overall values to the community.

IVFC partners serving on the steering committee so far are:

Roger Brandt, National Park Service; Jann Taylor, Three Rivers School District administrative office; Scott Thornhill, Illlinois Valley Section of the Grants Pass Boys & Girls Club; Gary Thornhill, vice principal at I.V. High School; and IVHS students Victoria Prince and Alexis Medina.

Also, John Lopez, of Rogue Community College; James Sargent and Sherri Stratton, of the Job Council; and Maureen Goodrich and Ronan, of IVFC.

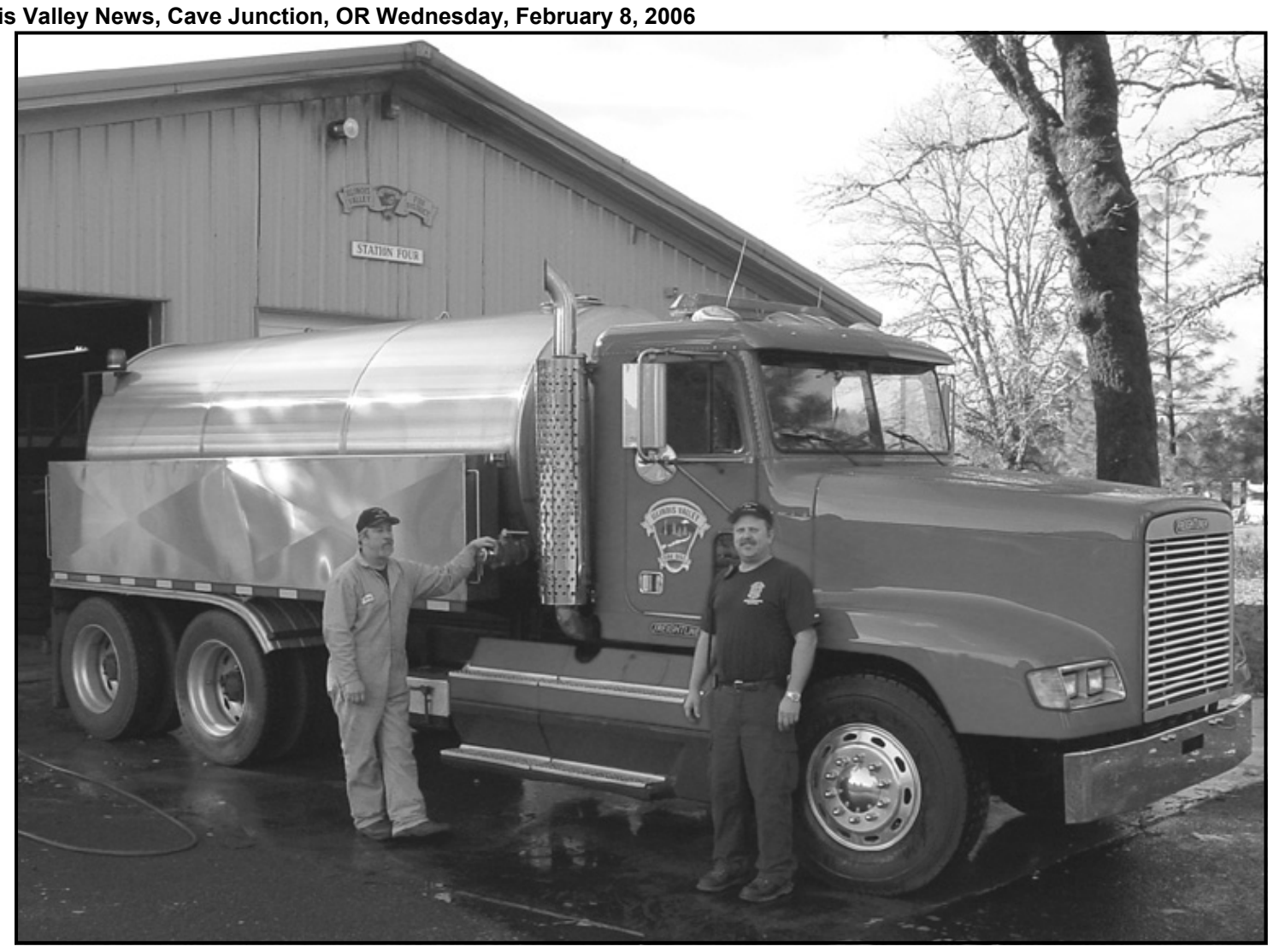
Two additional teen-agers will be added to the steering committee from the IVHS leadership group. The project also is soliciting participation from the Cave Junction City Council and I.V. Senior Center.

IVFC conducted a public meeting Jan. 20 to answer questions, and received many valuable suggestions to make the project more effective, Ronan said.

The coalition is recruiting teen-agers for work crews, and senior citizens and disabled persons with work projects. Phone 592-6139 to sign up. To recommend a community improvement project, contact IVFC or any member of the steering committee.

"The coalition is receiving strong support from the community and is particularly grateful for the financial support from the Carpenter Foundation and the Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation," said Ronan.

She added, "There is an additional funding request pending with the Collins Foundation to participate in the Teen Community Services Work Project."



ILLINOIS VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT (IVFD) is scheduled to take possession of its new administrative HQ (bottom photo) on Caves Hwy. on Friday, Feb. 10. Chief Harry Rich (right) confers with Batzer Inc. project manager Scott Heroux. Current admin. offices will be closed Feb.13 through 16 during the relocation. The top photo shows the new 3,300-gallon water tender the district acquired for $45,000 from an Alabama agency. The rig is described as 'good as new.' (Photos by Dale & Elaine Sandberg/IVFD)

Man injured

Grants Pass police are seeking information as to how a young man found with a serious head injury in a restaurant came to be hurt.

The victim was identified as Jasper Allen Paul Miller, 18, of Grants Pass.

Patrol officers, and fire/rescue personnel from Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety (GPDPS) responded Saturday, Feb. 4 at 1:28 p.m. to McDonald's Restaurant on Allen Creek Road.

They found Miller on the floor. He was having a seizure and bleeding severely from a head injury, said GPDPS.

Information about the incident can be given to Detective Enda Pierce.

Roadside farm stands gain relaxed ruling from LCDC

Administrative rule amendments designed to increase the ability of farmers to directly market Oregon farm products at farm stands have been adopted by the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC).

The farm stand revisions clarify that:

*Processed crops and livestock grown on a farm or in a local area may now be sold along with fresh crops and livestock.

*Farm products from throughout Oregon may be sold at any farm stand. And Oregon counties bordering Washington, Idaho, California and Nevada may sell products from adjacent counties in those states.

"These amendments for farm stands will not only clarify existing rules, but will give the owners of farm stands greater flexibility to promote and sell Oregon-grown products," said Lane Shetterly, DLCD director.

For more information on the farm stand revisions, contact Ron Eber, Farm/Forest Specialist, at (503) 373-0050, Ext. 247, or at ron.eber@state.or.us.

Man does not live by words alone, although sometimes he has to eat them.

- Adlai Stevenson -

Tax News

USE FRINGE BENEFITS FOR A DOUBLE TAX BREAK

If you want to motivate or reward your employees in 2006, consider giving them a tax-free benefit. The cost of certain benefits that you offer your employees can be nontaxable to them and tax-deductible to your business.

Offering as many tax—free benefits as your business can afford might also help you hire and retain the best-qualified workers. Some fringe benefits you might want to consider offering your employees:

• Pay your employees' health insurance premiums or reimburse them for medical expenses.
• Pay certain mass transit or parking costs.
• Provide a company car for business use.
• Pay the premiums for up to $50,000 of group term life insurance coverage. Amounts paid for insurance in excess of $50,000 are taxable to your employees.
• Reimburse new hires for their qualified moving expenses.
• Allow employees to purchase your company's merchandise at a discount. As long as the discount rate doesn't exceed the gross profit percentage on the merchandise, the benefit is free of tax to the employee.
• Provide child or dependent care services to employees as part of a written plan.
• Pay for employees' education expenses under an educational assistance program.
• Provide job training that maintains or improves the required job skills of employees. This benefit can improve employee morale while giving your company a more competent work force.

Most of these benefits must be provided equally among all your employees. If you discriminate in favor of certain key or highly compensated employees, the benefits could be taxable to them. Also, keep abreast of any changes in the tax law; Congress continues to eye fringe benefits as a source of additional tax revenue.

For a review of the fringe benefits you might want to offer your employees, give us a call.

Federal, Oregon, California, and other state tax returns.

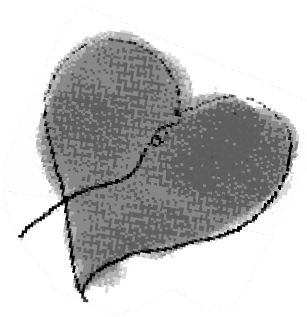
Karen M. Bodeving, CPA PC
We've Moved to 564 N.E. E St.
Grants Pass OR 97526
Phone: 479-3625

Grants Pass Office hours:
9 to 3 Mon. - Fri.
Other hours by appointment

I live in Cave Junction, so arrangements can be made to save you a trip to Grants Pass.

Celebrate With Us!

Hear the Latest News About Your New Siskiyou Community Health Center Medical Clinic



Meet Dr. Margaret Gold and Your Siskiyou Provider Team

February 9th
5:30PM —7:30 PM

Wild River Pizza
"The Pizza Deli"
249 N. Redwood Highway
Cave Junction

For more information, call Carol Meyers, Siskiyou Community Health Center
541-476-2700

SISKIYOU COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER