

GP firemen nix disaster

What could have been a disastrous fire, that began in a sawdust bin, was extinguished Sunday night, Feb. 19, said Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety (GPDPS).

Fire crews arriving after the 5:42 p.m. alarm found smoke coming from a large elevated sawdust and wood chip storage bin at Timber Products on S.E. Mill Street.

Fires of this nature have the potential to become explosive due to the large amount of sander dust and finely ground sawdust, which has the consistency of flour. A second alarm was struck, and additional engines from Rural/Metro Fire Dept. responded along with American Medical Response.

In order to fully extinguish a fire of this type, the bins must be slowly emptied, and the burning material removed by a tractor and then spread out for final extinguishment. At one point a large fire ball completely engulfed the sawdust storage structure.

The fire was brought under control by GPDPS and support from Rural/Metro. A total of 21 firefighters fought the blaze, which was brought under control with minimal damage to the structure and no injuries.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Air heads monitoring ill causes

Oregon scientists now have more evidence that statewide efforts to reduce toxic air pollution must continue to protect public health, said the state's Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

The statement comes on the heels of the EPA releasing its latest National Scale Air Toxics Assessment. Oregon's overall health effects from "air toxics" appear higher than national averages, DEQ said.

The assessment confirms DEQ's belief "that two sources -- vehicle exhaust, and various forms of wood and debris burning -- are among the largest contributors to toxic air pollution."

The assessment provides an inventory of air toxics emissions using 1999 data from a variety of sources. It also attempts to characterize potential public health risks related to toxic emissions.

DEQ said the assessment confirms its belief that more information on toxic air pollution specific to Oregon is needed. And that further action is needed to reduce these pollutants around the state.

Vagrant held for burglary

Following a burglary in Downtown Grants Pass, city police arrested a transient, John Edward Rains, 42.

He was charged with second-degree burglary, second-degree criminal mischief, and third-degree theft.

A call was received at 1:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 23 that a man had broken a glass door at a hair studio at 111 S.E. G St., said Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety.

The suspect was located nearby. Police said that they appreciate several witnesses who stayed in the area and helped officers during the investigation.

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BOY SCOUT TROOP 880 is a newly organized unit sponsored by Glenn Morrison American Legion Post 70. The troop meets Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Legion Hall on Caves Hwy. Boys 11 to 18 can join. Information is available from Scoutmaster Bob Stafford at 592-2105. (front, from left) Post Commander Dan Warden, Jim Fuller, and past commander Don Stafford. Other leaders and scouts are (rear, from left) Bud Chapman, Tom S., Fred Ball, Billy Dillard, Cooper Chapman, Erin Adams, Justin Norvell, Donnie Dillard, Charles Stafford, and the Scoutmaster. (Photo provided courtesy of American Legion Post 70).

Bandon site possibly 10,000 years old

OSU researchers find artifacts including evidence of a stone hearth

Researchers from Oregon State University have analyzed a second archaeological site on the Southern Oregon coast that appears to be almost 10,000 years old.

And they are hopeful that their newly fine-tuned methodology will lead to the discovery of more and older sites.

Results of their study were recently published in the journal, "Radiocarbon."

The site, located on a bluff just south of Bandon, included a large number of stone flakes, charcoal pieces and fire-cracked rock, according to Roberta Hall, professor emeritus of anthropology at OSU and principal investigator in the study. There also is evidence of a stone hearth, Hall added.

"There are a lot of rock outcrops nearby that would make good sources for tools," she said, "and it appears that tool-making is one of the activities the site may have been used for. We only dug two pits, each two meters long by a meter wide, so there is potential to find much more there."

Funded by Oregon Sea Grant, the project builds on a 2002 study when the OSU researchers analyzed a site in Boardman State Park along Hwy. 101 between Brookings and Gold Beach which eventually was dated at nearly 12,000 years old, making it the oldest coastal archaeological site in Oregon.

Both sites are unusual, not only because of their age, but in how they were discovered, Hall said.

The OSU research team -- comprised of Hall, geoarchaeologist and field work supervisor Loren Davis, graduate student Samuel Willis, and soil scientist Matthew Fillmore -- developed a model using geologic features, soil type and radio-carbon dating to pinpoint

locations most likely to include the oldest sediments.

Their theory: these older sediments hold the greatest potential for holding late Pleistocene (older than about 11,000 years) or early Holocene sites. The discovery of a second ancient site in this manner validates their methods, they said.

Most archaeological sites are unveiled by the discovery of early signs of human activity such as the finding of a projectile point or stone flakes. But the Oregon coast is a notoriously difficult place to conduct archaeological research because of the weather, changing sea levels, and tumultuous geologic events, including earthquakes and tsunamis.

Humans may have come to Oregon earlier than 12,000 years ago, the researchers said, but finding evidence of their habitation is agonizingly difficult.

"At that time, the ocean was much lower and the shoreline was a few kilometers west," Hall said, "meaning that any site that was on the coast during the late Pleistocene is now under water."

Rarely do the sites include any bones or other organic matter, she pointed out. The combination of wet weather and highly acidic soil hastens decomposition. However, sites that contain a lot of mollusk shells -- particularly clams, mussels and barnacles -- will often include bones because the shells lower the acidity of the soil, slowing decomposition.

But the farther away sites are from where the old coastline lay, the less likely researchers are to find mollusk shells.

"It can be quite frustrating," Hall said. "Likewise, the river valleys are difficult to excavate because they

either have so much alluvium on top you'd need to dig down the equivalent of a three-story building, or all the material has been washed away in floods."

The Bandon-area site was excavated down to 235 centimeters, which is considered very deep, and the OSU researchers discovered charcoal in all the uppermost levels.

Artifacts, primarily stone flakes, were found as deep as 215 centimeters, which corresponds to a date of just more than 10,000 years old. More sophisticated stone tools were found at a shallower depth and obviously were younger.

Findings of charcoal and fire-cracked rock were abundant.

Absent from the site was evidence of much obsidian, which was plentiful at the Indian Sands site several miles north of Brookings, though it was not local in origin.

OHSU aims to fill shortage of nurses with extra class

Seventy-three "extra" students graduated with bachelor's degrees from the Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) School of Nursing during December.

These students began two years ago as the first mid-year cycle admissions in many years. OHSU supported this extra group in recognition of the acute shortage of nurses in the Portland metropolitan area as well as statewide.

The extra bachelor's class was admitted in part to fill needed nursing jobs due to several health systems opening new hospital space.

This graduating class has been offered employment at OHSU Hospital and Clinics, as well as other health systems around Portland.

Twenty-six students have accepted jobs at OHSU. Some are still deciding on job offers from OHSU, and some are going to other health systems; 20 are staying in Oregon.

"It is a wonderful news for health care in Oregon that OHSU School of Nursing is infusing our community with 73 additional new nurses," said School of Nursing Dean Kathleen Potempa.



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You may include a little spicy, warm food and drink to increase circulation and relieve swelling. Orange spice and cinnamon tea are good choices. Omit dairy and cold foods. Stick with warm, easily digested foods, such as soups or hot cereals, well-cooked. Keep warm and out of drafts.

Chinese medicine can help to reverse painful damp diseases. Each person is unique. A treatment plan for chronic disease involves acupuncture, herbal treatment, and dietary and lifestyle changes.



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Tax News

DOES THIS APRIL 3 DEADLINE APPLY TO YOU?

If you reached age 70½ last year, April 3, 2006, could be an important deadline. That's the last day you can take your 2005 required minimum distribution (RMD) from your traditional IRAs. If you miss that deadline, the penalty could be a 50% excise tax on the amount you should have withdrawn.

Here's how the rules work. Once you reach age 70½, you must start taking annual distributions from your traditional IRAs. Normally these distributions must occur by December 31 of each year. But a special rule lets you defer the first distribution until April 1 of the year after you reach age 70½. That deadline is April 3 this year because April 1 falls on a Saturday. So if you turned 70½ last year, April 3 is the deadline for your 2005 distribution. Be aware that you'll still need to take your 2006 RMD before the end of this year.

Generally, the amount of the RMD for any year is based on your age. You take the balance in all your traditional IRAs as of the last day of the previous year, and divide by a factor representing your life expectancy. The IRS has published a standard life expectancy table to use in the calculation. Special rules might apply if your spouse is more than ten years younger than you are.

Because all or part of your distribution may be taxable income, it is important to include RMDs in your tax planning. Ideally you should start planning for RMDs several years before you reach age 70½. But whether you're planning in advance or looking at a distribution on April 3, contact our office for more detailed advice.

The RMD rules don't apply to Roth IRAs. Unless you're still working, this deadline also applies to your other retirement accounts.

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

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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.

