

Solar use can gain tax credit

There’s good news for those who claim that there’s nothing new under the sun when it comes to saving on energy bills.

Experts say that new benefits and current conditions are making solar energy systems a practical reality for a growing number of home owners.

With rising energy prices and concerns for the environment and about national security, home owners are looking at solar energy options. A new federal tax credit, plus some state and local incentives, encourages adopting solar systems.

The government offers a tax credit for 30 percent of the cost of a solar electric or solar water heating system. There is no cap for business owners; home owners receive a maximum \$2,000 credit for each system.

These credits make solar energy systems a feasible solution for hot water heating and electricity production for many building owners. Many home owners already benefit from solar heating for their pools and spas without government incentives.

“As awareness grows, along with summer air-conditioning bills, we expect thousands more to consider their solar options,” said Brad Collins, executive director of the American Solar Energy Society, based in Boulder, Colo. “With continued rising energy costs, consumer interest in clean, renewable energy from secure U.S. energy sources, and federal tax incentives, we believe more home owners and business owners will look for sustainable alternatives,” he added.

In most states, another advantage of solar electric systems (also called photovoltaic or PV) is the option to send excess energy back to your local utility grid. For example, if you are a residential customer, your system may generate more electricity than you need during the day when your family is away at work and at school.

Net metering allows sending this excess electricity to the grid, spinning meters backwards, and reducing or offsetting the electricity you use at other times.

Today, solar energy equipment is high quality and reliable; it is backed by warranties from large, reputable firms and installed by experienced contractors. There are also many resources to learn more about solar energy.

“FindSolar.com is a great starting place to learn more about solar energy and to assess the option for your own particular home or building,” said Julia Judd, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Solar Electric Power Association.

“With minimal inputs, including your state, county, utility, and typical monthly energy bill, the site provides you with estimates of system size, costs, savings and other benefits.”

More information about solar energy benefits -- plus a solar calculator and directory of qualified local solar installers -- is available at www.FindSolar.com as a free public service.

(NAPS)



OSP canine officer ‘Cookie’ with marijuana and cash at Central Point HQ. (Photo provided by OSP)

Troopers seize marijuana, \$3,900 in I-5 traffic stop

Two Seattle-area residents were arrested after Oregon State Police (OSP) troopers and a drug dog found approximately 9.5 pounds of marijuana in their vehicle that had been northbound on Interstate 5.

Subsequently arrested at Valley of the Rogue Rest Area were Karl Ringbloom, 29; and the passenger, Robert Riley, 54.

At approximately 6:06 p.m. Monday July 3, OSP Sgt. Mark Byrd stopped a 2001 Chevrolet Cavalier for a traffic violation approximately 7 miles south of Grants Pass.

During the stop, Byrd was joined by OSP Senior Trooper Greg Costanzo and his drug dog, “Cookie.” While walking around the car, “Cookie” alerted on the trunk area where troopers discovered numerous packages containing approximately 9.5 pounds of marijuana.

Ringbloom and Riley were lodged at Jackson County Jail in Medford on charges of felony unlawful possession, manufacturing and distribution of marijuana.

Besides the seized marijuana -- with an estimated value of \$5,000 to \$7,500 -- troopers seized approximately \$3,900 cash that “Cookie” alerted on in one of Riley’s pockets.

Additional assistance at the scene was provided by Senior Trooper Pam Gaither and Trooper Stephanie Bigman.

County mental health work under Options of S. Oregon

By MICHELLE BINKER
IVN Staff Writer

Options of Southern Oregon is taking over the bulk of mental health services for Josephine County as of Saturday, July 1.

County commissioners signed the agreement Friday afternoon, June 30, transferring most services to Options. It is an organization which offers assistance to low-income individuals and people with psychiatric disabilities. It is now in charge of outpatient services, two residential treatment facilities and the Crisis Resolution Center.

The goal of the reorganization is to streamline programs; make more resources available for mental health in Josephine County, focus on collaborative and coordinated service provision, and respond quickly to changing needs, the agency

noted.

It’s anticipated that most services and teams will remain in the same locations, and existing contractual arrangements will remain the same for at least one year, according to Options’ transition plan.

However as those aspects change, information will be provided consumers, contractors, community partners, and employees.

Most of the 130 county employees whose jobs are affected will remain as employees of Options.

Options’ mission is to offer consultation, training, and innovative programs while supporting clients’ participation as respected members of the community.

Options for Southern Oregon Inc., is an Oregon nonprofit, 501(c)3, corporation based in Grants Pass since 1982.

Vacation studies taken seriously

A recent study conducted by MSN and Harris Interactive says that 75 percent of U.S. adults who have ever taken a vacation visit three or more Websites when researching and booking travel plans.

For example, a site called BookingBuddy.com, which has been around since 2003, searches more than

130 travel brands to help consumers find the best deals. Another advantage to a site such as BookingBuddy is that it searches the other online travel agencies as well, thereby eliminating the need to go to a bunch of other sites.

To learn more, visit www.bookingbuddy.com. (NAPS)

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BLM lists changes at timber sale

Modifications to landscape work planned at Illinois Valley sites by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have been developed.

The project areas are parcels of BLM land east and west of Hwy. 199 north of Selma to Hay’s Hill. One treatment area is south of Selma between Reeves Creek Road and Hwy. 199 south of Selma.

Copies of the environmental assessment are available at the interagency office in Grants Pass, 2164 Spaulding Ave.

An addendum -- developed to provide additional analysis of environmental effects as well as clarification and slight modifications to proposed action -- supplements the 2003 Anderson West Landscape Management Project Environmental Assessment (EA). Based on this supplemental information, new decisions will be made regarding the timber sale, road work, and use of a “slash buster,” said BLM.

Decisions made in the 2003 Anderson West Decision Record/Finding of No Significant Impact regarding fuels reduction, young stand management, and grazing remain valid, said BLM, and will not be readdressed.

Those with questions or comments about the project can submit them in writing to the office address above, email them to or110mb@or.blm.gov, or phone Dave Maurer, project team leader, at 471-6637.

Information as to when the review and comment period will end was not provided.

Tenn. EA, too

Public comment on the recently completed environmental assessment (EA) for Tennessee Lime Landscape Management Project near Kerby is being accepted.

Located on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered land east and west of Kerby, the project addresses a number of activities and proposals from forest stand thinning to wildlife habitat enhancement and fuel hazard reduction work, said BLM.

Copies of the EA are available at the interagency office in Grants Pass, 2164 Spaulding Ave.

Those with questions or comments about the project can submit them in writing to the office, email them to or110mb@or.blm.gov, or phone Dave Maurer, project team leader, at 471-6637.



VALLEY SMOKE-EATERS from Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) and Oregon Dept. of Forestry responded to a brush fire at 1950 Lakeshore Drive in Selma on Tuesday, July 4 at approximately 8 p.m. The fire burned a small area of grass and was quickly extinguished. It is possible that the blaze was caused by someone tossing a flammable item from a moving car, said IVFD Deputy Chief Jeff Gavlik. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg/IVFD Media Dept.)

Peaking oil production examined

While most people understand that we are facing a worldwide shortage of one of our most precious commodities, reasons behind the oil deficiency remain somewhat vague.

Some experts believe that the world’s oil production may be peaking.

“As peak is approached, what is left in the major fields is becoming harder to extract, reducing the growth of oil supply,” said Roger L. Cory, president of Mammoth Resource Partners Inc.

For more information: mammothresource.com. NewsUSA

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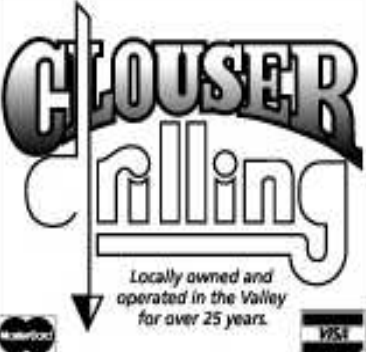
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Congratulations to Kamela Culver, our 2006 Academic Scholarship recipient; and to Tiffannee Griffin, our 2006 Bill Broeffle Vocational Scholarship recipient who each receive \$2,000. Our two scholarship recipients in 2007 will each receive \$2,500!

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- Desmond Tutu -