

Funds hang in balance for counties

Josephine County commissioners and the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) want it known that simply because the Bush administration is supporting extension of the “county payments” program, that doesn’t make it an accomplished fact.

Federal officials have told senators from the Northwest that they support renewing the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Reauthorization Act for at least another year.

Josephine County receives approximately \$15 million of the funds as replacement payment that compensates counties that used to depend heavily on a cut of the sales from federal forest timber harvest. That funding will expire this year unless Congress renews it.

Josephine County Commissioner Jim Raffenburg will be in Washington, D.C. Sept. 13-14 on a mission to help ensure that the monies will continue.

He’ll be among a con-

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MIKE’S GULCH LOGGING is under way by Silver Creek Timber Co. The sale involves nearly 9 million board feet of salvage timber from the 2002 Biscuit Fire that nearly caused evacuation of the entire Illinois Valley. No roads are part of the sale. All salvage yarding is being completed by helicopters. The forest service has closed Eight Dollar Road during the sale for the safety of the public and others. (Photos courtesy of Sonny Moore)



(Photos by Dale & Elaine Sandberg)



FATAL CRASH MEMORIALS abound along Hwy. 199 between Illinois Valley and Grants Pass. At many locations where persons have died as the result of motor vehicle accidents, such as those in the valley shown here, memorials have come and gone. But many remain as silent reminders of the need for traffic safety. A burned tree (upper right) is all that’s left to note a spot in Sis’s Gap where five persons died in a head-on crash resulting in fire. Emergency personnel urge motorists to be especially cautious during the Labor Day holiday weekend.



3-day Labor Day Festival to feature parade, music

Three days of fun, food, displays, entertainment and vendor booths -- plus a parade through Downtown Cave Junction -- will mark the 35th annual Labor Day Festival presented by Illinois Valley Lions Club.

The festival in Jubilee Park will be open Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

The parade will begin at 11 a.m. Monday, Sept. 4, Labor Day; proceeding from Evergreen Elementary School to Redwood Hwy. and through the middle of town to the Junction Inn.

Longtime I.V. Lion Jerry Buell is being honored as the grand marshal.

Festival features will include free Child ID Kits available at a booth sponsored by Kerby Belt Masonic Lodge. And David Anderson Excavating again is sponsoring its booth for free school supplies.

Plus the I.V. Lions Train will provide free rides, and there will be a watermelon seed-spitting contest.

A special I.V. Lions Club section -- including the three-day schedule of events -- is on pages 5 through 8. Also in the section are two pages of merchant greetings, and stories about the grand marshal and the school supplies booth.

CJ Council hears county facing titanic money pit

Without federal O&C funding, many services and programs will be trimmed or eliminated

Although Cave Junction City Council held a brief meeting, there were some noteworthy topics -- not the least of which is a mammoth financial quandary that could drastically affect Josephine County government.

Mayor Tony Paulson briefed the council at the conclusion of the 35-minute meeting Monday night, Aug. 28 in city hall regarding the county’s bleak funding picture. He attended a meeting earlier in the day in Grants Pass, called by the county commissioners to address the prospective loss of federal O&C funding.

Paulson referred to a report prepared by Commissioner Jim Raffenburg on the matter. Should the O&C monies not be forthcoming, drastic changes, some of which already are under way, would take full effect

as of the end of March 2007. Paulson advised that the county is due to receive a check for \$13 million on Oct. 1, but that unless O&C funding is extended, that will be the last of the federal safety net money.

Raffenburg points out the following significant aspects about funding and how services to the public would be affected due to the loss of employees because of not enough money:

*During fiscal 2005-’06 the sheriff’s office received 49.9 percent (\$7.96 million) of the general fund discretionary revenue. Without O&C funds, the sheriff’s office would get \$3.39 million for fiscal ’07-’08, a \$4.56 million decrease.

*During ’05-’06 the Juvenile Division received 11.9 percent (\$1.88 million) of

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Chamber seeks move

Illinois Valley’s Chamber of Commerce directors want to relocate the chamber office in the I.V. Visitor Center in Cave Junction.

Directors also want to clarify the chamber’s role at the visitor center.

Dulcie Moore, chamber secretary and office manager, has been relocated to an area behind the front counter at the center. The room formerly used by the chamber has been turned into a gift shop.

Directors held a special meeting Tuesday, Aug. 22 at Wild River Brewing & Pizza Co. to discuss the situation. At the end of the one-hour meeting, the board voted to request a change.

Following is the letter sent to Craig Ackerman, National Park Service (NPS) superintendent at Oregon Caves National Monument. NPS owns the visitor center, now being operated by Illinois Valley Community Development Organization (IVCDO).

The letter, signed by chamber President Terri Hill, reads in part:

“The Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce board met to discuss the Visitor Center Board meeting attended by Alice Schaffer and Jim Frick. The chamber board has the following recommendations:

“The current set-up with an office shared by the chamber and the forest service is not working for the

chamber. The chamber would like to request the use of the back office. It has a separate entrance and would provide more privacy.

“We would appreciate your consideration for this move.

“Also, it was brought to our attention that the wording in the Visitor Center Operating Plan is not what was agreed on in the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). The chamber is requesting that Section E. Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce, should read: ‘The Chamber may utilize a designated portion of the facility for the purpose of conducting Chamber business and providing general visitor information and staff support to the center.

“The Chamber is authorized to maintain an office space to conduct Chamber of Commerce business. Office space will be limited to one desk and two file cabinets and will be allocated in a manner which most efficiently meets the needs of the Center and Chamber.

“The Chamber Secretary or other representative shall be responsible for assisting the IVCDO (Illinois Valley Community Development Organization) in providing visitor information as needed. The Chamber will have a separate telephone line and will be responsible for all associated charges.”