



## Lack of O&C funding prompts proposals to fill budget holes

By SCOTT JORGENSEN  
IVN Staff Writer

Congress adjourned Saturday, Dec. 9 without reauthorizing payments given to rural counties in lieu of declining timber receipts.

In anticipation of almost certain budget cuts, Josephine County officials and department heads met Monday, Dec. 11 at the Josephine County Public Works Bldg.

in Grants Pass to discuss what the future might hold.

Commissioner Jim Raffenburg was present, along with sheriff-elect Gil Gilbertson, forthcoming undersheriff-appointee Don Fasching, and commissioner-elect Dave Toler.

"Over the long-term, this is going to have to be worked out with the federal government," Raffenburg

said. "In the short-term, we're on our own next year."

Raffenburg attended a meeting with directors of the O&C Counties Association last week, where a possible solution was proposed.

The National Forest and Schools Stabilization Act would set aside 1.2 million acres of O&C lands in a reserve. The other half would be sold to private

owners for forest resource use. Development would be prohibited, and the land would still have to be open for public recreation.

Profits from the sale, estimated at \$12 billion, would go into four separate trust accounts. One \$4 billion trust would replace the funds lost by the September expiration of the Secure Rural Schools and Communi-

ties Self-Determination Act.

Another \$4 billion would be earmarked under an O&C Land Grant Counties trust, to be managed by the 18 O&C counties.

A third trust, \$3 billion, would go toward Oregon schools, and be managed by the Legislature and Gov. Kulongoski. The fourth trust would go to the Bureau of Land Management for man-

aging the remaining 1.2 million acres.

Raffenburg said that the actual wording of the National Forest and Schools Stabilization Act has yet to be completed. However, he said, drafts of the bill have been shown to leaders in the Congress and Senate, and the response has thus far been positive.

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## Fear of job loss casts pall over courthouse

A bulletin board hangs on a wall of the hallway in the Josephine County Courthouse outside the Personnel Dept. office.

At any given time, the board advertises vacant positions within the county government.

Last week, only three positions were posted. However, that may change quite soon, as uncertainty regarding the continuation of federal O&C funds hovers like a dark cloud over the entire building.

The county is currently in a "holding pattern" with regard to personnel issues, according to Josephine County Human Resources Officer Kent Granat. He said that no positions are being eliminated or added as of yet, and he isn't expecting any resignations during the next few months.

However, Granat added that he is prepared to deal with such a scenario should it arise.

"I don't think there's been a recent change in morale, because this is not a new issue," Granat said.

"It's coming to a head, but it's not an issue people didn't know was coming."

A short walk away, at the sheriff's office, outgoing Sheriff Dave Daniel sits in his mostly empty office. Daniel has just a couple of weeks left on the job, and a box full of books and other items rests on his desk.

The two-term sheriff admits that morale is low within his organization. Possible funding cuts, combined with a new incoming sheriff, are causing much unease among rank-and-file sheriff's deputies, he indicated.

"Those two things put together have a lot of people on edge," Daniel said. "I do know that people are looking for other jobs, and I don't blame them."

So far, there have been only a few resignations at the Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO). Undersheriff Brian Anderson, who lost to sheriff-elect Gil Gilbertson in November's election, will resign at the end of the year. A clerk and

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## Fire protection for rural areas studied by special committee

By SCOTT JORGENSEN  
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Large portions of rural Josephine County -- not including Illinois Valley because of the I.V. Fire District -- lack adequate fire protection.

Because of the gap in some areas, the county board of commissioners has assembled an 11-member committee to examine options. The areas are those which fall between established protection districts.

The Fire Protection Committee is comprised of citizens and fire district personnel, as well as persons representing real estate agents, insurance agencies and home builders. Fes Lellis, an insurance agent selected as the committee's chairman, said that public pressure caused the board to form the committee.

"The county directly outside the city of Grants Pass is maybe behind the rest of the unincorporated areas as far as fire protection," Lellis said. "The state of Oregon looks at it as an unprotected area without a fire district."

Home insurance rates are based largely on available fire protection, Lellis said. And existing conditions within the county have caused headaches for that and other industries, he said.

"The insurance industry can't fathom the idea of there not being a public fire department for a given

area," Lellis noted. "They don't know how to deal with that."

The Fire Protection Committee met Thursday, Dec. 7 at the Josephine County Courthouse in Grants Pass to establish its goals and timelines. Its recommendations on rural fire boundaries, standards and rates will be given to the board by the end of March.

During Thursday's meeting, committee members reviewed seven options for rural fire protection, and weighed the pros and cons of each.

One option would develop a franchise for a single service provider, which would be governed by the board. Deputy State Fire Marshal Charles Chase said that such a plan would be "simple and easy to start." Committee member Brian Robinson added that a contract with one service provider would be easier to supervise than one involving multiple providers.

Another committee member is Harold Haugen, a former longtime Josephine County commissioner who now represents the real estate industry. He said that within a few years most of the area within the Grants Pass Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) will be annexed into the city. Haugen said that would "have some effect" on fire protection.

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SECOND FRIDAY ART WALK's final program of 2006 included impromptu fire dancing by 'Sunshine' on the

Caves Pharmacy parking lot Dec. 8. Additional photos on page 10. (Photo by Scott Jorgensen/IVN)

## Man who hiked through snow to aid family died of hypothermia

A San Francisco father of two who hiked through snow in a remote area between Grants Pass and Gold Beach to get help for his stranded family died of hypothermia, Oregon State

Police reported after an autopsy.

James Kim, 35, was located Wednesday, Dec. 6 by searchers in a helicopter. He was lying on his back near Big Windy Creek near

the Rogue River. It is speculated that he walked at least 10 miles and possibly 16 in what is being described as an heroic effort.

His wife, Kati, 30, and their two children, Penelope,

4, and Sabine, 7 months, became stranded some time during the evening of Nov. 25. It is reported that they were trying to reach Gold Beach via Bear Camp Road, which although paved, becomes snowbound in winter.

The whole family stayed with their car until Dec. 2, when Kim decided to hike out. His wife and daughters were located by rescuers Dec. 4.

In the wake of the tragedy, which was reported nationwide, there are calls for better signs to deter persons from the route during winter. Additionally, it is reported that the entire situation might have been avoided except for a vandal who cut a lock on a gate.

It is speculated that the family took a wrong turn in the dark onto a logging-type road because of the gate being open. Josephine County Sheriff's Office is investigating to locate whomever is responsible for cutting the lock.

The sheriff's office and numerous other agencies and volunteers were involved in the search for the family. Several similar situations have occurred on the same road during past years during winter.



A PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE ceremony took place Thursday, Dec. 7 at Cave Junction City Hall to mark the 65th anniversary. (From left) Honor Guard Max Roesberry; District Cmdr. Clyde Stafford; bugler Samantha Heller from Illinois Valley High School and Jim Fuller, commander of Glenn Morrison American Legion Post 70. Also participating were Auxiliary members Michelle Weighman, Joyce Mustol, Kay Mowery, and Ellie Buell, who placed a wreath (inset). To highlight the surprise of the attack, a tribute was held at 9:53 a.m. to correspond with the Oahu time of 7:53 a.m. when the attack began. A special guest was Bob Perkins, a former U.S. Navy sailor, who recalled the horror of that Sunday morning. (Photos by 'Illinois Valley News')

Gina Pitts is offering gymnastics instruction for all skill levels and ages. See page 18.

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Fuel tank discovery during CJ water line installation. See page 6.

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Caterer Kate Dwyer shares construction advice for easy gingerbread house project. See page 11.