

Fear of job loss casts pall over courthouse

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a volunteer coordinator have also been lost, Daniel said.

However, those resignations were anticipated, and not necessarily related to pressing funding issues. Still, Daniel admits that many deputies are preparing for the proverbial pink slip.

"All of a sudden, everybody is down about the possibility of layoffs," said the lame duck top county officer. "There's big uncertainty in Josephine County."

Daniel said that even though he isn't expecting any "mass resignations," potential cuts "may end county government as we know it today." Sheriff's patrol, detective and record clerk positions would be lost, making it extremely difficult to perform even the most basic law enforcement.

"We're looking at losing three-fourths of the department," Daniel said. "It would be an absolute disaster."

The Josephine County Community Justice Dept. is currently processing more than 1,000 felony cases, said Deputy Director Abe Huntley. It handles parole, probation, community service and work crews involving adult and juvenile offenders.

Huntley said that although the adult programs are funded "almost entirely" by the state, countywide cuts would cause a "ripple effect across the entire system."

"We lose the ability to do our job effectively if our partner agencies lose funding," Huntley said.

"It is a system," he said. "If the D.A.'s office is affected, we will be, and if the jail is affected, we will be."

Like many departments, the district attorney's office

relies heavily on the county's general fund. But fewer prosecutions would eventually mean bad news for Community Justice, which receives state funding according to the number of cases it handles.

"If the courts shut down today, we would be fine for

ately affected by budget cuts, Huntley said, along with other crucial supervisory functions.

"It affects our ability to sanction people to work crew and community service," Huntley said. "The people we supervise realize that if we arrest them for

to the people of the county," Toler said.

The commissioner-elect said that he is "cautiously optimistic" that Congress may renew the O&C funding for one more year. He plans to help lobby members of Oregon's delegation.

However, Toler said that the county ultimately will have to become more self-reliant and stop depending on the federal government to pay its bills.

"Beyond any doubt, we're looking at having to rely more on ourselves to provide resources to some of the services the county delivers," he said. "I don't necessarily think that's all bad," Toler said.

"I really believe in self-reliance, and I believe in local control. If there's money coming in from D.C., we really do lose local control," he said.

Commissioner Jim Raffenburg said that there is "zero chance" that the federal government will turn the O&C lands over to local counties. But he said there may be room for some sort of compromise.

"From a practical standpoint, we have a much better chance to persuade the BLM to let us manage the land in a trust," Raffenburg said. "There may be some serious interest in that in Washington."

However, until a solution can be found, county employees will continue trying to do their jobs as best they can -- although that may prove difficult.

"It's hard to do your best work when you're planning for a worst-case scenario," Huntley said.

- Story and photo by Scott Jorgensen



a while," Huntley said. "But we would eventually lose our referral source."

Huntley said the department has one vacancy right now, but that filling it may be somewhat difficult under existing circumstances.

"It's hard to recruit good, quality people with the state of flux the county is in," Huntley said. "It takes a long time to recruit good people, hire, train and get them on the job."

The county's work crew program would be immedi-

failing their terms, we will have to release them."

Planning sessions have been scheduled among county agencies and officials to try and prepare for the worst. Josephine County commissioner-elect Dave Toler, an Illinois Valley resident, said that he will begin attending those sessions in an attempt to work out some sort of a solution.

"We have to come up with better ways to do things and come up with the resources to deliver services

Belleau Woods subdivision plat OK'd by CJ

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

During its Dec. 11 meeting in city hall, the Cave Junction City Council voted 5-0 to approve a final plat request for the Belleau Woods Subdivision.

The 12-unit development will be located off Burgundy Lane.

According to a Nov. 1 letter from Copeland Paving's Jerry Reed to City Recorder Jim Polk, all work on the project is complete "except for sidewalks and a final punch list from (public works supervisor) Gary Biggs."

In the letter, Reedy requested that the city allow the developer to bond for the project's sidewalks because "sidewalks installed before construction begins get broken up and need to be replaced anyway."

The estimated cost of the sidewalks is \$19,906, and the driveway approaches will cost \$20,400, Reedy wrote. As such, Reedy suggested a bond in the amount of \$41,000.

In a Nov. 9 response letter to Reedy, Polk wrote that the city would require a bond of \$60,459 "to allow for the additional costs that

may be incurred by the city in the event the bond must be utilized."

During Monday's meeting, Polk said that the city has received the bond.




Councilor Tom Green moved to approve the plat, on the condition that Copeland could prove that the property's two abandoned wells have been filled. Councilor Dan Fiske seconded the motion, which was then approved.

The council also voted 5-0 to accept the project's infrastructure, as well as a sanitary sewer lift station.

In a Nov. 27 letter to the

city, James Armstrong of The Forks development company requested that the city take over ownership of the lift station "effective immediately." The city's public works department recommended accepting the infrastructure, which Polk said will serve 200 lots.

Polk added that the approval of a bond and plat for the proposed Laurel Pines development will be addressed during the council's next meeting on Jan. 8.

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Fire protection for rural areas under study

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As Grants Pass rural neighborhoods are annexed, residents who had previously subscribed to fire protection services cancel them. Once they are in city limits, citizens pay city taxes and receive city services, including police and fire protection from the Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety.

Two of the proposals involve establishing a fire district without taxation. Committee member Brett

Fillis, of the Applegate Valley Fire District, said that any annexation would reduce service subscriber numbers under those options.

Haugen pointed out that the county has many parcels zoned for forest use. As such, the Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) provides fire protection for neighbors of those areas.

"There's no reason for those people to participate in the district," Haugen said.

Another option would be to establish a fire district


with taxation, but allow the district to operate independently. Fillis said that such an option would solve the problem of some neighbors not participating in the district.

However, concerns were raised that establishing a fire district would be a lengthy process.

The Fire Protection Committee will meet again on Thursday, Dec. 21 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 157 of the county courthouse. The public can attend.

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