



Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) firefighters responded to an early morning structure fire in Takilma. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg/IVFD Media Dept.)

Takilma house fire loss \$10,000; two men hurt

Two men were reported injured in a Takilma Road structure fire during which a neighbor is said to have become irate after being told he could not be allowed to enter a hazardous area, said Chief Harry Rich.

Illinois Valley Fire District personnel received an alarm at 4:40 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 13 that a two-story home in the 9300 block was ablaze. Rich said that a brush rig arrived some 10 minutes later, and the first-run engine from Cave Junction at 4:59 a.m.

Takilma Station 6 is a short distance from the fire scene, but there are no volunteers from Takilma to staff it, Rich said. "We've tried and tried, but no one comes forward," he said.

Damage to the home, and contents is estimated by Rich at \$10,000. The wooden structure was a total loss. The cause of the blaze is attributed to improvised wiring to a heater, he said.

One of the home's two occupants was identified as Justin Leavitt, who leaped from the second floor and suffered some leg burns. Another man, unidentified, also was reported injured. Both were taken by American Medical Response (AMR) to Three Rivers Community Hospital in Grants Pass, the chief said.

It is reported by Takilma resident Linda Corey that donations for Leavitt, who "lost everything," are being accepted. They can be taken to The Tea House at 9340 Takilma Road across from Jim Rich's blacksmith shop.

The other occupant might have been Otis Jones, but that is not confirmed. Rich added that the property is owned by Edward & Kitty Crow, believed to reside out-of-state.

Rich said that besides one engine and AMR, responders were comprised of three water tenders, four brush rigs and two staff units.

"We do not use brush rigs on structure fires," said

the chief, "so the first on-scene firefighter in a brush rig provided size-up information. He then began trying to open a tank-to-pump valve on his rig" in case the fire spread to vegetation.

"The valve was hard to open, but it was not frozen," stated Rich. The firefighter then elected to be sure that everyone was out of the structure, and await the arrival of the engine.

The chief added that no hoses were frozen, as some have claimed.

Those in the home, which did not have smoke alarms, had been alerted by a neighbor, identified as Edward Wayne Dudley. His unidentified wife apparently also was on-scene.

Regarding a confrontation at the site, Rich provided the following scenario:

A man believed to be Dudley wanted to use an outhouse on the property. It is located between a house on the road, that incurred some fascia damage, and the one behind it that was on fire.

Because of the hazardous situation, the chief told the man that he could not be allowed in that area. The man then "got in his face" and pushed Rich's chest with both hands. Because of the uneven ground and losing his footing, the chief grabbed one of the man's arms.

Josephine County Sheriff's Office was called, and while dealing with the man, he broke away and ran. It is unknown where he went or if and when he returned.

The man's wife is claiming that her husband was assaulted. He could be facing a charge of interfering with a firefighter in the performance of his duties.

The chief further indicated that the burned structure appeared to be of make-shift construction. He added that a trailer, either on the property or adjacent to it, appears to be dilapidated, but with occupants.

Youth club plan in CJ to include city center

Preliminary planning for a \$3 million Boys & Girls Club building with a community center in Cave Junction was announced to Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce directors.

The building, at a location to be announced, would contain approximately 25,000 square feet of space, said Diane Roe Gilbertson, a member of the board of directors of Boys & Girls Club of the Rogue Valley.

Besides Gilbertson, the chamber board heard from Principal David Valenzuela, of Evergreen Elementary School, about the value of the club's varied and wholesome programs. They are currently based at Evergreen and Lorna Byrne Middle School for Illinois Valley youth.

Valenzuela said that the programs currently serve some 125 children daily. The potential for at least doubling that number with the planned project is indicated, he and Gilbertson said.

Besides a club facility with community center, there would be a separate "teen center," Gilbertson told chamber directors during their meeting Tuesday, Jan. 9 at Wild River Brewing & Pizza Co. in Cave Junction.

Although planning is preliminary, the project is moving toward finalization, she said, with a projected facility completion date of 2009. The potential location apparently is located in the central area of the city of Cave Junction, but a formal announcement of the specific site is pending.

"There is a community need for this type of facility," Gilbertson said, adding that it also "is wanted and desired." And partnerships with the city and Evergreen Elementary continue to be forged by the club.

Gilbertson noted that by dovetailing the Illinois Valley project with those being undertaken by the club's Medford operation, there are opportunities for major grants. Besides the estimated \$3 million construction cost, the club plans a \$3 million endowment fund.

She explained the importance of same for maintaining and operating the facility and program. "We learned from our experience with the new facility in Grants Pass," she said.

Regarding the project in Cave Junction, an alternative school also could be included "down the road," Gilbertson indicated.



CAVE JUNCTION POLICE uniforms from more than 20 years ago hang in the former city jail. Will there be a new city police department? See page 3. (Photo by Michelle Binker/Illinois Valley News)

Big brouhaha in Grants Pass

Several persons were injured in connection with a fight in Grants Pass, a little distance south of the Josephine County Courthouse, involving a knife, said the city Dept. of Public Safety (DPS).

Two victims were identified as Daniel Messer, 20, and Randy Q. Araque, 21, both said to be Grants Pass residents. They suffered minor stab wounds.

Several others suffered minor injuries as a result of the fight, said DPS, but they refused treatment.

Several phone calls were received on Saturday, Jan. 13 at approximately 1:23 a.m. about a fight in the area of Fourth and H streets. It was reported that 10 to 15 men were fighting. As officers arrived, numerous persons fled on foot.

Two suspects have been identified, but the information has been referred to DPS detectives. Anyone with information about the incident is asked to phone 474-6370.

Pam Bode leaving USFS Illinois Valley/Galice job

Pam Bode, Galice and Illinois Valley District ranger, has accepted a new position as the Natural Resources staff officer at Bridger-Teton National Forest in Jackson Hole, Wyo.

In her new job she will administer the timber, range, wildlife, fish and recreation program.

Her last day at the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest will be Friday, Jan. 26.

Subsequently, Forest Supervisor Scott Conroy announced that Joel King has accepted a reassignment to Bode's current position. King will assume his new position effective Monday, Jan. 29.

"Joel will do an outstanding job as the ranger for Illinois Valley and Galice Ranger District," said Conroy. "He is familiar with the land and the communities in the area, having served as acting district ranger at the Illinois Valley District in the 1990s," said Conroy.

"This is a real exciting opportunity for all of us," said King. "I look forward to working with the local communities as partners on mutual issues surrounding natural resource management."

ment."

He will leave the Prospect and Butte Falls Ranger District, where he has served as ranger since 1999.

In his new job, King will be responsible for contributing to the management of approximately 509,343 acres of national forest land in multiple communities with diverse natural resource programs.

King has served in a variety of positions for the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest including the Powers, Illinois Valley, Galice, and Ashland Ranger districts. He also has worked as the planning team leader for Siskiyou National Forest in the 1990s.

In 2002, Bode became the district ranger at the Galice and Illinois Valley District. Under her tenure she has been involved in numerous projects including the Biscuit Fire Recovery Project and consolidation of the Galice and Illinois Valley Ranger District's workforce.

Her leadership contributions also include the design and construction of the Illinois River Recreation Development Plan, and agency contributions to the Josephine County Fairgrounds.

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Fair idea looks fair

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

A new business plan should put the Josephine County Fairgrounds on the fast track to solvency by June 30.

Such an approach became necessary after it was revealed in November 2006 that the fairgrounds operation was \$68,000 in debt. To solve the problem, the Josephine County Board of Commissioners ordered the fair's board of directors to work with county Chief Operating Officer (COO) Marie Hill to develop an arrangement.

"We plan on it being in the black at the end of the fiscal year," Hill said. "In my opinion, it's very much doable," she noted.

Revenue enhancements under the proposal include shortening the horseracing season, instituting a hiring freeze at the fair, and raising rental fees for fair facilities.

According to Fair Manager Jackie McBee, commercial entities will be charged an additional 10 percent for rentals. Booth fees will rise \$25.

"It's not a lot, but it will bring in \$3,000 extra," McBee said.

McBee said that the fee increases were designed so as to not "impact any one thing greatly."

Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been drafted to clarify the relationship between the fair board and the commissioners. Under the MOU, the fair board will operate the fairgrounds autonomously, with the commissioners providing financial and administrative oversight.

Changes also have been made in how the fairground's finances are to be handled. Up until now, the funds always have gone through the county treasurer's office. But under the new plan, the county's finance department will track those funds.

Hill said that the move will make the fair's finances more transparent, and easier for fair management and the

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Fire chief's pact studied

A new contract for Chief Harry Rich, whose current agreement expired Sunday, Dec. 7, likely will be the topic of a vote by Illinois Valley Fire District directors during their Feb. 8 meeting.

Directors devoted an hour to a review of his proposed pact during an executive (closed to the public) session during their meeting Thursday, Jan. 11 at administrative headquarters.

The board reconvened into regular session, but took no action on the covenant with the chief. Indications were that they would continue reviewing the multi-page proposal put forth by the chief.

Rich took the position of chief on Dec. 16, 2003. He was officially hired on Jan. 7, 2004 under a three-year agreement, and the board classifies him as an excellent employee.



THIS IS ONE OF FIVE roll-over accidents that occurred on Laurel Road at Old Stage Road in Cave Junction on Monday, Jan. 15 due to an isolated patch of ice. Additional photos on page 12. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg/I.V. Fire District Media Dept.)