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Smokeyjumper base attains National Register

The former Siskiyou Smokejumper Base at Illinois Valley Airport has been accepted into the National Register of Historic Places by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office.

The base is the last of the original four smokejumper bases established when the smokejumping program was established in the 1940s. It includes the oldest smokejumper parachute loft in North America.

The nomination was submitted by members of the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum Project (SSBMP) in spring 2005 and was approved for submission to the National Register by a governor's appointed review board in Oc-

tober the same year. The nomination was forwarded by the State Historic Preservation Office to Washington, D.C., where a panel of authorities on history reviewed and approved placing the historic base on the National Register.

Acceptance of the base into the National Register is a confirmation of the site's national significance in U.S. history. The designation opens the door for federal tax breaks for Josephine County and grants to preserve the buildings and fund the development of exhibits and waysides, said Roger Brandt, SSBMP secretary.

"This validates what we have known all along about the importance of the base,"

said Sharon Westcott. She is a member of a group of residents associated with SSBMP, who have been working during the past two years to make the site into a heritage tourist attraction.

"This is a place with a history that is full of action and adventure," she said. "We are lucky to have this one-of-a-kind tourist story in Josephine County."

The group recently made a presentation to the Josephine County Airport Advisory Board. It submitted a draft business plan and a draft interpretive development plan that outlines the steps that need to be taken to make 2 acres of the site into a heritage tourism attraction.

"The airport board has

been very supportive of our efforts, and some of the members have met with us to provide support and advice," said Brandt. "The members of the board are all volunteers, and the amount of support they have dedicated out of their personal time is remarkable."

Some airport commission members who have helped or offered to help SSBMP are Bill Gettles, owner of The Flying Machine at the airport; Bob Bleadon, a professional pilot living in Selma; Andy Chen, a business woman and resident of Illinois Valley who also has offered financial support; Luz Moore, of Century 21 Harris & Taylor

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TAKELMA TRIBAL ELDER 'Aggie' Pilgrim has written a book about ways to encourage world peace. See story on page 7. (Photo by Josiah Dean/I.V. News')

Fed money for counties 'top priority' for Wyden

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Fresh from a series of town hall meetings held throughout the state, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) held a conference call on Monday, Jan. 29 to discuss federal issues with reporters.

The three main topics addressed were federal county payments legislation, the Iraq war, and Wyden's recent health-care proposal.

Wyden emphasized the importance of renewing O&C payments to local counties, calling such legislation his "top priority."

"I think there's great awareness around the state that getting this legislation reauthorized is literally about survival for small, rural communities around the state," Wyden said. "With the federal government owning more than half of the land in our state, it's about keeping faith."

Wyden said he believes that the bill has a broad base of support in the House and Senate.

"I think it's getting more visibility," Wyden said. "I introduced the bill with senators all over the West from both political parties, and I think we have the chance to grow a lot of support."

Asked about the Iraq war, Wyden said, "It's not clear" whether or not the Senate will respond positively to President Bush's call for an additional 21,000 troops to supplement security forces in Baghdad.

However, Wyden said that he is not seeing much

public support for such a plan.

"On the basis of my town hall meetings over the weekend, Oregonians are not convinced that overstretching the military still further is the way to go," Wyden said. "There are substantial questions, I think, around the state about what 21,000 more people would accomplish that hasn't yet been accomplished by the more than 300,000 people that are already there."

Oregon Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) introduced a resolution last month that would require Bush to seek congressional approval before any potential military action against Iran. Wyden said he supports the resolution in principle.

"I happen to believe in the basic proposition that the president should have to come to Congress," Wyden said. "DeFazio is saying the same thing should be done with Iran, and I support that view."

Last year, Wyden introduced the Healthy Americans Act, which would replace employer-based health care with a universal private insurance system.

"With the amount of money we spend today, we could guarantee every person in the country private, affordable coverage that's at least as good as what their member of Congress gets," Wyden said.

Wyden said that the current health-care system is "not sustainable," and that he hopes to build bipartisan support for his proposal.



WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE was the order of the day as Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) conducted Insurance Service Office (ISO) flow tests. IVFD demonstrated that crews and apparatus can maintain a 250-gallon per minute flow for two hours, including filling

and dumping water supplies. ISO ratings affect fire insurance actuaries. The district currently has ratings of 5 and 8B, with hopes of eliminating the 'B,' which could result in reduced fire insurance rates. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg/IVFD Media Dept)

Levy plan pondered pending loss of O&C funding

Josephine County commissioners hold first of several community presentations on effects

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Josephine County commissioners got an earful during the first of several public workshops regarding the likely discontinuation of federal O&C funds on Monday night, Jan. 29.

Approximately 114 residents packed Anne Basker Auditorium in Grants Pass as officials explained the financial crisis that the county soon will face.

Commission Chairman Jim Raffenburg said that county government "has worked very hard" during the past two years to reduce costs. Raffenburg cited benefit reductions among employees; reduction of county staff from 700 to 377 employees; and the privatization of some county government functions as examples of newfound efficiencies.

"We've done our part,

but we can't cut and save our way out of the problem," Raffenburg said. The county stands to lose some \$12 million annually if O&C funding is not renewed by Congress.

Raffenburg, sitting with fellow Commissioners Dave Toler and Dwight Ellis, said that the biggest effects have thus been felt on the county's criminal justice system.

"We have a new jail that we've never been able to utilize" to its fullest extent, Raffenburg said. "The loss of that revenue makes the existing problem even worse."

Library services have been drastically affected.

District Attorney Stephen Campbell stated that the federal funds have enabled Josephine County to have the lowest tax rate in the state.

"That is not the norm," Campbell said. "To some extent, we've been spoiled by O&C funds."

Campbell said that without the federal funds or anything to replace it, his office would be limited to two and a half prosecutors.

"We could only prosecute the most serious of felony person crimes," he said. Those crimes would include murders, manslaughters, assaults and rapes, along with child abuse and kidnapping cases, Campbell said.

Property crimes such as burglary and theft, as well as drug crimes, would fall by the wayside.

Campbell said that in such a scenario, the Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) would have extremely limited patrols; the county jail would only be able to house between 20

and 30 inmates; and the juvenile shelter would have to close.

"We're standing at the edge of a cliff here in Josephine County. We need to be proactive," Campbell said. "We have to plan and prepare for this disaster."

A survey was given audience members to gauge the public's responsiveness to two possible levies. The first would cost between \$2.25 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The second, dubbed the "Criminal Justice Systems Enhanced Levy," would cost between \$2.75 and \$3 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Sheriff Gil Gilbertson took to the podium amid enthusiastic applause. he told the audience what services his office could provide under the differing options.

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ILLINOIS VALLEY BOYS varsity basketball team took their Skyline Conference mark to 0-7 with a 66-33 loss to Rogue River in Ken Mann Memorial Gym Friday night, Jan. 26. Sam McMahan scored 11 points for the Cougars. RR's Ryan Castro and Carson Frantz teamed for 37 points for the Chieftains. At Rogue River Friday, the Cougar girls defeated the Chieftains 58-51. I.V.'s Leilani Tausaga led all scoring with 21, and Shannon Look netted 16. (Photo by Dale Sandberg for 'Illinois Valley News')