

Illinois Valley News

Wednesday, March 21, 2007, 1 Section, 16 Pages, Volume 70 No. 1 Cave Junction, Oregon 97523

illinois-valley-news.com

Major growth seen as IVCDO adds loan fund

By MICHELLE BINKER
IVN Staff Writer

Huge opportunity for growth is seen for Illinois Valley Community Development Organization (IVCDO), as it has been chosen to take over a regional microenterprise development center.

Medford-based Southern Oregon Women's Access to Credit (SOWAC) dissolved its operations as a nonprofit organization on Feb. 15. By law it must transfer its assets to other nonprofit agencies. This portfolio included a loan fund based on a USDA small business development grant.

SOWAC lists \$50,000 out in loans, and \$110,000 in reserve.

Although other such funds are being returned to their originators, IVCDO was tapped to inherit SOWAC's USDA fund, as it has prior experience working with such a revolving loan fund.

The addition of this loan fund to IVCDO represents "huge growth" for the organization, said Kenny Houck, board chairman.

"This is a testimony to the credibility our organization and loan board have gained throughout the region," Houck said.

To date, IVCDO has loaned some \$344,000 through its revolving loan fund to facilitate small business development in Illinois Valley -- with only two defaults.

Unlike the USDA fund IVCDO currently administers, the loan fund inherited from SOWAC is not limited in scope to the few census tracts within Illinois Valley. This will allow IVCDO to branch out to loan to clients in Grants Pass, rural Josephine and Jackson counties.

The bottom line, stresses Bob Schumacher, IVCDO's executive director, is that the organization has money to lend.

"We would rather have the money out there as loans," Schumacher said.

By expanding the range of its activities, IVCDO also is well-positioned to administer grants and other monies allocated regionally, as from the state, Schumacher indicated.

SOWAC was in operation for little more than 10

(Continued on page 2)

'Fairly' close to the wire

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Last December, the Josephine County Board of Commissioners ordered the county fair board of directors to fix finances by the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

Now, with that deadline rapidly approaching, some issues have yet to be resolved, to the consternation of some county officials.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Josephine County Fair Board of Directors and the county government has yet to materialize, although one nearly was ready in December.

One main issue involved is that county commissioners appointed three new board members in January, said commission chairman Jim Raffenburg.

"The MOU was ready to be signed by the previous fair board, but the new people wanted to put their mark on it," he said. "That slowed the whole process down."

Fair Manager Jackie McBee said that the new fair board members needed time to familiarize themselves with the MOU before signing off on it.

"They had never seen it as of the February meeting, which was their first meeting," McBee said.

The MOU also contained language regarding the chain of command between the commissioners, fair board and fair manager. Marie Hill, county chief operating officer, said that issue has also caused delays with the MOU.

"We're really working on how we work together,"

(Continued on page 12)

Three girls found dead in rural GP fifth-wheel

Three young girls having a sleep-over in rural Grants Pass were found dead, possibly from suffocation due to a fire in the fifth-wheel trailer they stayed in, said Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO).

The victims were identified as Samantha Jean Hauptman, 11; her sister, Tiana Jill Hauptman, 8; and a friend, Skylar Ann Pettit, 12.

JCSO provided the following scenario:

At 8:42 a.m. on Saturday, March 17, Gary Lee Pettit, 50, father of Skylar, phoned 911 to report that his daughter and two friends were the apparent victims of a fire at his residence at 355 Cheslock Drive.

Emergency personnel found the three girls all deceased in a fifth-wheel trailer near the main residence. It often was used by guests, and the girls had asked to use it.

The father reported that when he awoke around 8 a.m. he smelled smoke. When he knocked on the locked door, there was no response. He forced open the door, discovering that there had been a fire and that the girls were dead.

Oregon State Police fire investigators are aiding JCSO detectives to determine the cause of the fire. It apparently was confined to the interior of the fifth-wheel. JCSO said that is not unusual, as the windows and doors were closed, and that once a fire consumes all available interior oxygen, it goes out.

No foul play is suspected, said JCSO. Autopsies will be conducted, and a further announcement is anticipated late Thursday, March 22.



NO INJURIES were reported following a roll-over accident in the 1300 block of Caves Hwy. at 7:16 p.m. Monday, March 19. A Chevrolet Suburban towing a trailer

with large logs fishtailed out of control on a curve and ended up on its top in the ditch. Illinois Valley Fire District responded. (Photo by 'Illinois Valley News')

I.V. Airport park tenants actively recruited

Growth of valley, increased employment tied to efforts of two advisory board directors

Solid steps to boost employment and help the economy by securing tenants at Illinois Valley Airport are being taken by two members of the Josephine County Airports Advisory Commission.

Besides serving voluntarily on the commission, Illinois Valley residents Luz Moore and Andy Chen are entrepreneurs. Moore is an agent for Century 21 Harris & Taylor; Chen operates CLL Investments.

"We live in the valley, and we want to see it grow and prosper," said Moore. "And we believe that utilizing the light industrial park at the airport is a key step toward accomplishing that goal," she said.

This week, she and Chen are in San Francisco addressing the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, as Chen speaks Chinese.

"I'm the facilitator, and Andy is the translator," said Moore with a smile.

Additionally, the two have planned their own trade mission to China during early May.

"There are many Chinese who want to export to this country," said Moore, "so we want to introduce them to I.V. Airport and the valley."

Later this month, Moore will tour the airport with representatives of what she describes as one of the largest suppliers of raw gems. It's possible, she said, that the company would want to lease the whole industrial park, rather than a portion.

"They want to build a huge warehouse," she said. "They have told me that they initially would have 115 job openings, and that more could be hired later."



ANDY CHEN and LUZ MOORE ('Illinois Valley News' photo)

The possibility of at least one small cargo aircraft using the 5,200-foot-long runway also is on the agenda.

Another potential prospect for the industrial site, said Moore, is a new com-

pany that would make a nontoxic, biodegradable fire suppression product.

"It's an environmentally friendly product," said Moore, "and the company is awaiting a license related to mass production."

On another front, Moore said that she is working with an aide in Gov. Kulongoski's office. Economic development is a goal of the governor, and Moore wants to be sure that the airport industrial park is in the state's view.

"The idea," she said, "is to fully utilize the site to boost employment."

"That's a goal of the airport commission, and that's what we're working toward."

She added that tenants will be accepted on a first come-first served basis, and that she'd like for one to take the entire site.

Oregon Caves tours will open for season March 24

Oregon Caves National Monument will open for another season of cave tours, ranger programs and children's activities on Saturday, March 24, announced Craig Ackerman, site superintendent for the National Park Service.

The opening at the site, 22 miles east of Cave Junction, once again coincides with spring break for Oregon schools. Tours will be provided through Nov. 27. Cave tours last approximately 90 minutes and will operate on the following schedule through Labor Day:

***Spring schedule, March 24 through May 25, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with tours at least once per hour.**

May 26 through June 23, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; tours at least once per hour.

***Summer schedule, June 24 through Sept. 4, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; tours at least every 30 minutes.**

All tours are currently on a first-come, first-served basis. Ackerman stated that the new Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act requires that the fees charged for recreational services are comparable with private sector operators.

Ackerman added that the Monument has requested a waiver that allows acceptance of the "America the Beautiful - The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass Program"

documents. They now include the new Interagency Annual Pass, the Interagency Senior Pass, the Interagency Access Pass and the Interagency Volunteer Pass for admission fees for the basic cave tour.

The National Park Pass, Golden Age Passports, and Golden Access Passports will continue to be honored according to the provisions of the individual pass. The Monument will retain 100 percent of all monies collected for cave tours for projects that improve Monument facilities or have a di-

rect benefit to visitors.

Besides supporting the tour guide operation, cave tour fees are funding roof replacement on the historic Chateau and new interpretive displays this year.

Visitors to the Monument should be prepared for cool temperatures in the low 40s inside the cave year-round. Those planning on taking a tour should bring warm clothing even during summer months. The cave is fully lighted - flashlights are not necessary.

Cameras with flash units are permitted although

there are some restrictions in bat roosting areas. The height restriction on the general cave tour will remain the same. Children must be at least 42 inches tall to safely negotiate the cave stairs and passageways encountered on the tour.

Food, lodging and gift shop services will open in the National Historic Landmark Chateau later this spring.

For more information on cave tours phone (541) 592-2100. For lodging or reservations at the Chateau phone (541) 592-3400.



OREGON STATE POLICE issued a citation for careless driving to Cave Junction resident Michelle Blankenship, 39, following a collision at 25870 Redwood Hwy. on Friday, March 16 at 7:41 a.m. Blankenship's vehicle struck the rear of a car that was stopped, waiting to make a turn. Its driver was CJ resident Mary Halvorsen, 49. Minor injuries were reported. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg / I.V. Fire District)