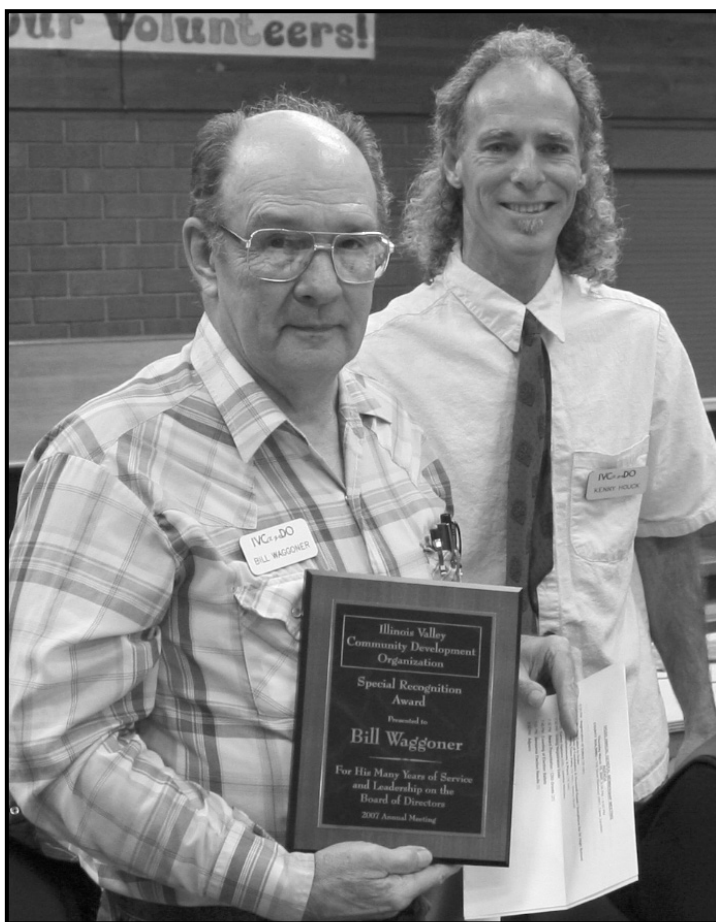




HOMETOWNE INTERIORS held a cribbage tournament to benefit Illinois Valley Safe House Alliance. More than 30 players turned out and raised close to \$400. (Photo by 'Illinois Valley News')



ILLINOIS VALLEY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (IVCDO) recognized the efforts of several people Thursday evening, March 15, during its annual general membership meeting at the Josephine County Bldg. in Downtown Cave Junction. Kenny Houck, chairman of the IVCDO board, presented a certificate of appreciation to Bill Moore (above, left in left photo) who has been coordinating mentorship, job training, and business development activities for IVCDO, Houck noted that Moore has counseled some 140 clients with their business ideas and problems. He also was instrumental in formation of Illinois Valley Merchants Association. Moore has accepted employment with Rogue Truck Body in Kerby, and is stepping down from IVCDO; Bill Waggoner (left) was recognized for his extensive service as a member of the IVCDO board; Rebecca Pearson (above) was honored for her involvement in Second Friday ArtWalk, and recognized for having brought BeBe's Art For Everyone gallery to Downtown C.J. (Photos by Michelle Binker/IVN)

Contractors Board urges use of its new Website

Just when home owners begin to think about spring home improvement projects, the Oregon Construction Contractors Board (CCB) has rolled out its new consumer-friendly Website at hirelicensedcontractor.com.

"The agency's primary Website includes a lot of information important to construction contractors," said Gina Fox, spokesman for the CCB. "The new Website is all about what a consumer might need to help make a project run smoothly."

Helpful information on the site includes these time-tested tips that CCB recommends to all home owners contracting for work:

- *Make sure the contractor is licensed with CCB. Before hiring, check the contractor's license and complaint history at the Website or phone (503) 378-4621. Take the time to make an informed decision. You wouldn't trust an unlicensed driver with your car. Don't give the keys to your most precious investment to an unlicensed contractor.

- Licensing is required for those that offer painting, roofing, carpentry, siding, plumbing, electrical, floor covering, concrete, asphalt, window, insulation, manufactured dwelling installation, inspection services, heating and air conditioning, and most other construction and repair services.

- *Use a written contract. Put all agreements, and all changes, in writing. Generally, the more detailed a contract, the fewer problems that occur later. A big project needs more than a vague contract: "Remodel master bedroom, \$19,500" is insufficient.

- Know what your contract does, and does not cover. Don't sign unless you understand everything.

- *Get more than one bid, but don't automatically accept the lowest bid. The old saying, "You get what you pay for," applies to construction projects. A higher bid may be worth the price in better materials, workmanship and reliability.

- A large number of CCB complaints are a result of home owners accepting an unrealistically low bid and then being unhappy with the low quality of work.

- *Communicate. Asking lots of questions before the job starts helps prevent problems later. Talk to your contractor throughout the project. Most disputes happen because people fail to communicate at every step.

- *Check references. Learn as much as you can about the contractor you are hiring.

- *Get building permits. Most home improvement, repair or remodeling jobs require permits from the appropriate city or county building department. Usually, contractors get them because they know what permits are required. But ultimately, the owner is responsible for making sure the required permits are obtained.

- Failing to get building permits doesn't save you money -- it can cost you your safety and sense of security.

- According to CCB, most construction projects go smoothly when consumers do their homework by checking out their contractor, set realistic expectations, and make wise, informed decisions during the project.

- CCB is a state agency licensing more than 44,000 contractors. Anyone who is paid to repair, improve or build a home must be licensed by the CCB.

ID theft protection announced

A new legislative package to strengthen protections for Oregonians against ID theft was announced.

The Oregon Consumer Identity Protection Act (Senate Bill 583) would establish new standards for safeguarding personal information. It would ensure that consumers are notified promptly if the security of their information has been compromised, and gives the public the right to freeze their credit files if they become a victim.

"Identity theft remains a major problem plaguing Oregon families and businesses alike," said Gov. Kulongoski. "Once a victim discovers a crime has been committed, it can sometimes take years to clear up the damage," he said.

"This legislation would help protect consumers and give them the tools to take back control of their credit," he said.

He made the announcement with Sen. Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene) and

Rep. Larry Galizio (D-Tigard), flanked by fellow lawmakers, business leaders, and consumer advocates.



SHADES OF TOM SAWYER - Painting the fence for Picket Fence Fabrics in Cave Junction was accomplished as a fundraiser by members of the Illinois Valley High School football team on Friday, March 16. Coach Bob Thornhill said that the project will help boost funds for the team come next season. (Photo by 'IVN')

Mandatory school health insurance approval disliked by some

Oregon House Democrats passed legislation last week to increase education administrative costs by \$99 million, said House Republican Leader Wayne Scott (R-Canby), who led the fight against SB 426.

The bill would establish a mandatory health insurance pool for school districts, community colleges and education service districts.

Scott said that the bill will increase education costs, take money away from the classroom, and take away local control.

"Our local school boards tell us SB 426 will cost them \$99 million in its first year, forcing them to direct taxpayer dollars away from the classroom," Scott said.

"This bill does not save tax dollars; it only undermines our local elected officials and school administrators."

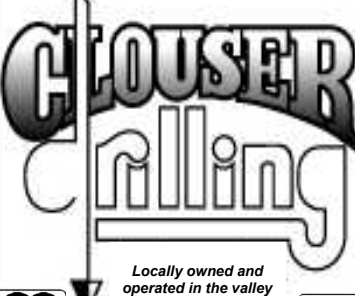
House and Senate Republicans have supported amending SB 426 to author-

ize an independent actuarial study, and to implement the program if true savings were found. On a party-line vote, Democrats rejected this amendment in committee.


Republicans were not alone in opposing SB 426. The bill also is opposed by the Oregon School Boards Association, the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, Oregon Community College Asso-

ciation, League of Oregon Cities, Association of Oregon Counties, Special Districts Association of Oregon, Oregon Association of Health Underwriters, and the Oregon Association of School Business Officials.

SB 426 was pushed by the Oregon Education Association, which gave more than \$355,000 to House Democrats during 2006.



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