

Sheriff's office will relocate operations from courthouse to county jail

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Josephine County Sheriff Gil Gilbertson announced last week that he plans to move sheriff's office operations from the current location at the Josephine County Courthouse to the county jail.

The move is one of many cost-saving measures being considered by Gilbertson's administration because of possible discontinuation of federal funds threatening the county's financial future.

A countywide vote-by-mail election on a public safety levy is scheduled for Tuesday, May 15. But Gilbertson said that he is doing everything he can to prepare for a worst-case scenario if it fails.

"We're being charged for the space at the jail and charged for the space here," Gilbertson said. "We'll be reduced to almost nothing, so it's silly to have two places. It just makes more sense to put everything under one roof."

Information on rental fees paid the county public works department was not available for this issue.

Gilbertson said he has been considering moving his office "for a while." A date has yet to be set, but Gilbertson said he wants to do it "as soon as I can."

"It's in the planning stages," the sheriff said.

Although he has yet to determine definitive figures, Gilbertson said that the move will result in "substantial savings," which

will enable him to put more resources toward staffing.

"I would rather spend money on personnel than space," Gilbertson said. Personnel is what gets the work done."

Gilbertson said that operating from the jail also will have the effect of improving relationships between correctional and patrol deputies.

"Working this much closer with one another is going to have a bonding effect, if you would,"

Gilbertson said. "It's going to enable them to work better together."

Gilbertson said that he and his personnel will have less room to work with from the jail, but that taxpayers will be better serviced.

"It's a tight, confined area, so it's not going to be comfortable," Gilbertson said, "but with what we're facing, I think it's the only prudent thing to do."

Other cost-saving measures also are being considered. On Monday, April 9,

Gilbertson met with members of the Deputy Sheriff's Association (DSA) to discuss the terms of employees' contracts.

DSA agreed to a one-year extension of its current contract with no pay increases. Gilbertson said that the agreement will help buy the agency a little more time until long-term funding issues can be resolved.

"They stepped up and made that recommendation to us," Gilbertson said. "I applaud them for that."

Daniel suit on staffing reversed

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

The Oregon State Court of Appeals ruled on Wednesday, April 11 that the Josephine County Board of Commissioners has the authority to set the salaries and number of deputies within the sheriff's office.

Last week's ruling vacated and reversed a lower court judgment that favored Dave Daniel, former sheriff, who sued the commissioners during 2005.

The dispute originated shortly after commissioners Jim Raffenburg and Dwight Ellis were sworn in to their positions. Daniel attempted to promote Sgt. Howard Banks to the rank of lieutenant, and the commissioners denied his request.

"That basically started the whole thing," Daniel said Monday, April 16. "Because they wouldn't bend at all, and they wouldn't talk to me about it, I had to take them to court."

Ellis said Friday, April 13, that the commissioners were entirely within their authority to make such decisions.

"(Daniel) came back and said to us that once we approved his budget, he could do anything with it that he wanted to. We didn't agree with that," Ellis said.

"Our contention," he added, "is that once the budget was approved, we also approved the number of positions and deputies that he had (Continued on page 8)

Guv in D.C. for O&C \$\$\$

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Gov. Kulongoski plans to visit Washington, D.C. this week to push for federal O&C funding for the state's rural counties, according to his spokesman, Anna Richter Taylor.

Kulongoski had scheduled such a trip in February, but a statewide snowstorm prevented his departure.

"This is our make-up trip," Taylor said.

Kulongoski will arrive at the nation's capital on Wednesday, April 18 to meet with members of the Bush administration, Congressional leaders and federal cabinet members to emphasize the importance of the safety net funding.

"He'll be in D.C. to deliver the message to the White House to sign the bill," Taylor said.

Legislation authorizing the funding has been in (Continued on page 8)



NO ONE WAS AROUND when Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) and Josephine County Sheriff's Office personnel arrived at a Selma roll-over accident Thursday, April 12 at approximately 6:26 p.m. The crash occurred across from 1305 Reeves Creek Road. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg/IVFD Media Dept.)

'No compromise' seen on Measure 37

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

In November 2004, Oregon voters approved Measure 37, which requires municipalities to either compensate land owners for restrictions that lowered the value of their property or to waive such restrictions.

But several issues surrounding the measure, and the future of Oregon's land-use laws, remain unresolved.

The battle over Measure 37 has shifted from the courtroom to the Legislature during recent months, where lawmakers had hoped to hammer out a compromise on the various sticking points. A joint Land-Use Fairness Committee was formed, co-chaired by Sen. Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene) and Rep. Greg Macpherson (D-Lake Oswego). Legislators have met for nearly two months to try to reach an agreement, but a solution has thus far proven elusive.

On Thursday, April 12, a Measure 37 "framework" was announced, and House Republicans responded with a press release the next day.

"It has become apparent to us that our input and suggestions have been and will continue to be ignored, and that no bipartisan Measure 37 compromise will be forthcoming this session," the release said.

Demos Express Shock

Macpherson said he was shocked by House Republicans' reactions to the proposed framework.

"I'm surprised by the statement that has been put out, but unfortunately, the history of this issue is that there's a lot of pushing and hauling involved because it has divided Oregonians so significantly," Macpherson said. "It's a very contentious issue."

Land-Use Fairness Committee member Rep. Patti Smith (R-Corbett) said

that despite tremendous efforts by all involved, committee members remain divided on several key issues. "It's been very difficult to work within the process of the joint committee," Smith said. "It's not from a lack of trying."

Smith said that there are still major disagreements around the maximum lot sizes that should be allowed.

"It was determined that we would do a hard cap," she said, "so as to alleviate the word 'subdivision.' Now the difference is over what is going to be that cap on lot size," Smith said.

Another sticking point has been the definition of "high-value farmland." Smith said that the proposed framework would eliminate many buildable lots in the state and unfairly burden rural land owners.

Committee member Bill Garrard (R-Klamath Falls) (Continued on page 7)

I.V. Fire District pondering effect lack of law enforcement will have on its responses (Story next week)

Without federal O&C funding, no patrol deputies will be employed by Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO), said Sheriff Gil Gilbertson.

If the May 15 public safety levy fails, JCSO staffing will be reduced from 88 to 40. "This is more than a 50 percent cut," said Gilbertson, "and will necessitate elimination of all patrol deputy positions."

"Jail staffing also will be reduced, and I anticipate an inmate reduction of 50 percent and the release of 70 inmates. The jail will house 30 local prisoners, and 30 to 40 U.S. Marshal and Immigration prisoners, which brings in \$500,000 in revenue," the sheriff said.

He added that budget discussions are continuing, but that "at this time we do not anticipate any additional funding. We are continuing to control costs."

For the May 15 levy election, the ballot will have Measure 17-19: "Three Year Local Option Tax For Criminal Justice System Operations."

The measure will pass only with at least a 50 percent turnout of voters.

The ballot question: "Should Josephine County impose \$2.496 of assessed

value for criminal justice system operations for three years beginning 2007-2008? The measure may cause property taxes to increase more than 3 percent."

The county would use the revenue to provide funding for three years for the sheriff's office, Juvenile Justice Division, and the district attorney's office. The funding is necessitated by the loss of federal funding historically derived from O&C timberland.

"Without the revenue provided by this measure, Josephine County would reduce the number of sheriff's deputies; close the juvenile shelter facility; and reduce staffing levels in the district attorney's office," the ballot measure notes. It adds that:

"It is estimated that the proposed rate will raise approximately \$13,481,000 in fiscal 2007-08; \$14,263,000 in fiscal year 2008-09; and \$14,904,000 in fiscal year 2009-10, for a total of \$42,648,000.

"The approximate tax increase for a home with an assessed value of \$125,000 would be \$312 per year, or approximately \$26 per month. The revenue from this measure would be used for criminal justice system operations only."

SFI Deer Creek open house scheduled Sunday, April 22

A public open house will be held in Selma at Deer Creek Center for Field Research and Education -- locally known as "John Wayne's ranch" -- on Sunday, April 22.

Open house events at the former Deer Creek Ranch will run from 2 to 6 p.m. The open house is the first public celebration for the nonprofit Deer Creek Center.

Its partners are the Southern Oregon University (SOU) Foundation, based in Ashland; and Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI), an Illinois Valley-based nonprofit specializing in providing field-based natural history courses.

"This is a great chance to see not only a beautiful piece of property that has notable cultural and ecological significance, but also to learn about the opportunities the property affords the public in terms of education and research," said Donna Chickering, SFI development coordinator.

SFI is housed in the historic ranch house containing 6,000 square feet of space.

Among highlights of the day there will be a guided hike led by naturalist and professor Michael Parker of SOU at Ashland. There also will be tours of the historic ranch house and campus property, and presentations about the Deer Creek Center project and plans for site renovation and development.

Visitors also will be provided a glimpse into some of the research projects being conducted on the 850-acre property that is SOU's official field station for research.

Anyone with personal knowledge about ranch history is invited to be interviewed as part of an oral history project by SOU researchers Jean Maxwell and Echo Fields.

Deer Creek Center for Field Research and Education is located at 1241 Illinois River Road. It's approximately 1.5 miles west of the road's intersection with Hwy. 199 at the Selma Post Office, across from Ray's Food Place.

Those interested in attending the open house can phone SFI at 597- 8530 for the schedule.



ILLINOIS VALLEY SAFE HOUSE Alliance conducted a 'Take Back The Night' event in Downtown Cave Junction Thursday, April 12. Approximately 24 persons marched in support of preventing domestic violence. Following the march, participants gathered at Taylor's Country Store for a program of featured performances and Josephine County Undersheriff Don Fasching spoke on the importance of combating domestic violence. (Photo by Scott Jorgensen/Illinois Valley News')