

County jobless rate shows decline

Despite losses in some sectors, some 320 persons found jobs in Josephine County during March, dropping the unemployment rate to 8 percent from 8.4 percent the previous month.

Oregon Employment Dept. (OED) added that payroll employment reached 25,760. The gain was attributed to increased employment in retail trade (+70), health care and social assistance (+40), and leisure and hospitality (+180). The increase in the latter category

is attributed by OED to several new restaurants.

However, the rise still represents a drop of 90 jobs from March 2006, when the unemployment rate in the county was 7.2 percent. The losses occurred mainly in construction, manufacturing, and local government. The last category represents in local education a loss of 90 of 220 jobs that disappeared.

Josephine County also recorded losses during March in food-and-beverage stores (-30); professional-

and-business services (-20); and information (-20).

Unemployment rates for Jackson and Douglas counties during March were 6.5 and 8.6 percent. Both were lower than postings during February, OED said.

Josephine County's rate for March was greater than 22 counties and lower than seven. Oregon's seasonally adjusted jobless rate for March was 5.2 percent, down from 5.3 for February; and less than the March 2006 rate of 5.4, OED said.

Sen. Atkinson enthused about session

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

A legislative update to real estate agents was provided by Oregon Sen. Jason Atkinson (R-Central Point) on Thursday, April 19 at the Century 21 Harris & Taylor office in Grants Pass.

Atkinson was upbeat in his assessment of the current legislative session, and said that the previous two weeks had been his best, "probably

ever," as a lawmaker.

Among other points, Atkinson described his tenuous relationship with Gov. Kulongoski. The governor recent produced a list of three bills he intended to veto, Atkinson said, and "I offered two of them."

Atkinson said he has spent the last six years working on legislation that would eliminate Oregon's capital gains tax, which is

the second highest in the nation. That proposal received a hearing, which Atkinson claimed as a major accomplishment.

Another of his proposals would extend the state's political tax credit, currently given for campaign contributions, to donations made

Report: SAR efforts best under sheriff

Primary responsibility of search-and-rescue (SAR) efforts should remain under the jurisdiction of county sheriffs.

That's the gist of a report delivered to Gov. Kulongoski by the SAR Taskforce, which he appointed in January to review state laws, administrative rules and related policies to make recommendations for changes "necessary to ensure proper coordination, communication and effective pooling of resources at every level of government during SAR operations."

The report lists 15 recommendations primarily focused on four areas: command and control, commu-



FIRE DESTROYED a small shed on Caves Avenue just off Caves Hwy. Thursday night, April 19. Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) responded and extinguished the flames quickly. The old shed was a complete loss. The cause is under investigation. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg/IVFD Media Dept.)

nications, training, and resources.

The governor appointed the committee following an incident in December involving the James Kim Family, of San Francisco.

Area Expertise Noted

The Kim Family became lost on snowbound Bear Camp Road, which runs between Josephine and Curry counties, and Kim died of hypothermia while trying to hike out for aid.

"One position I held in January -- and hold today -- is that the primary responsibility of search-and-rescue should remain with the local sheriffs," said Kulongoski. "They know their terrain, their county, and

have relationships with local volunteer organizations.

"They are the best officials to lead SAR missions," the governor said upon receiving the report. "That said, I wanted the task force to review how the state can best support these local efforts, and this report offers a solid framework for how to move forward to ensure that the state is serving its role in protecting the safety of Oregonians and our visitors."

The task force was comprised of 15 representatives from local, state and federal jurisdictions, including state legislators, officials from the Oregon Office of Emergency Management

(Continued on page 9)

I.V. Pregnancy Center born 20 years ago

A 20th anniversary celebration for The Pregnancy Center of Illinois Valley will be held Saturday, April 28 from 4 to 6:30 p.m. at I.V. Senior Center.

There will be a buffet dinner by Carlos' Mexican Restaurant, and music by "Wings of Love."

Tickets are available at Home Valley Bank in Cave Junction, and from the pregnancy center on S. Junction Avenue just past Fountain of Life Assembly of God Church. The center is open Mondays through Fridays

from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Regarding the center's history, Executive Director Mary Lefner said:

"On April 1, the doors of Living Alternatives opened at 116 Redwood Hwy. A group of people felt that God was leading them to do more than pray against abortion and the desperation that sometimes accompanies an unplanned pregnancy.

"The center has grown and expanded in many ways during the past 20 years, but two things remain the same:

"Belief in God, and a

mandate to share His love with others.

"Offering alternatives to abortion.

"Many times, all it takes is providing information to a client about the actual procedure (there are several, based on the gestational age of the baby). It's amazing in this day and age that many people do not know how abortions are performed, yet they believe this is the answer.

"Many assume that an abortion will 'erase' the pregnancy and all memories

(Continued on page 9)



AMAZING RIVER RESCUE - A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter from Humboldt Bay, Calif. plucked 69-year-old Linn House, of Petrolia, Calif., from atop his car in the middle of Smith River Tuesday afternoon, April 17, said California Highway Patrol. He was on Hwy. 199, a few miles north of Hiouchi, when he lost control on the wet road on a curve and went into the fast-moving river, with the car being swept some 100 feet down-river, said CHP. He was able to climb out through the rear window and perch there while Del Norte County rescuers got him a life jacket and security line. He was on the car approximately an hour; then was flown to Sutter Coast Hospital in Crescent City, where he was treated for hypothermia. (Photos by 'Illinois Valley News')



Suspicious ticking parcel squirted by bomb squad

Fire, police responders discover alarm clock

An Oregon State Police bomb squad used a water cannon on a remote-controlled robot to open a suspicious ticking package, said Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety (GPDPS).

The incident began at approximately 2:37 p.m. Friday, April 20, when the U.S. Postal Service related that a mail carrier had removed a ticking package from his vehicle.

He placed it on Wineteer Lane. The sound became louder and faster, so emergency personnel notified area residents to stay inside and at the rear of their homes.

After the package became opened by the water cannon, it was discovered that items in the package included an alarm clock.

The package then was delivered to the addressee by the Postal Service.

GPDPS added that when shipping electronic devices, the batteries should be removed.



ILLINOIS VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT (IVFD) personnel and American Medical Response (AMR) were sent to a single-vehicle accident near milepost 21 of Redwood Hwy. at approximately 6:30 a.m. Monday, April 23. IVFD said indications were that the southbound pickup truck drifted across the lane for northbound traffic, went into a ditch, grazed a madrone tree and catapulted some 15 feet, striking a fir tree, then spinning and catching fire. The driver, tentatively identified as L. Tillett, 19, of Cave Junction, was taken by AMR to Three Rivers Community Hospital. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg/IVFD Media Dept.)

Ballots set for law levy on May 15

Ballots for the Josephine County criminal justice system levy proposal in the Tuesday, May 15 vote-by-mail election are to be mailed Friday, April 27.

The county clerk's office added that ballots must be received by the clerk's office by 8 p.m. the 15th. They also can be deposited in the ballot box at Cave Junction City Hall by 8 p.m. the same day to be counted.

Submitting ballots earlier than later is suggested.

For passage, Measure 17-19 requires at least a 50 percent voter turnout. The title is, "Three Year Local Option Tax For Criminal Justice System Operations."

The ballot asks, "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 by more than 3 percent."

Sheriff Gil Gilbertson said that if the levy fails, there will be no patrol deputies. Other than maintaining the sheriff's office at current levels, the levy would provide funding for the Juvenile Justice Division, and the district attorney's office.

Revenue from the levy would be used only for operating the criminal justice system, according to the measure. Funding is needed because of a loss in federal funding.

Emergency personnel await cops

Should the criminal justice system levy fail in the May 15 election, Illinois Valley fire and medical protocol about not entering hazardous situations without a deputy entering first will be exacerbated.

I.V. Fire District (IVFD) and American Medical Response have historically staged nearby hazardous situations that require the presence of a law enforcement officer.

Such situations include domestic disturbances, stabbings, shootings and assaults, and drug overdoses. If the levy fails, and there are no patrol deputies, standing by for whatever officer will be made available could take a considerable time.

"We will not put personnel in harm's way," said IVFD Chief Harry Rich. "We want to make sure that situations are safe before sending in fire and medical personnel who are neither trained nor equipped to deal with law enforcement."

He noted that during the past two weeks there have been two incidents involving "near-deadly" beatings. Rich added that the IVFD directors will be approached with a proposal to specifically identify the district's approach should there be no patrol deputies.

- Fire flap, page 11
- I.V. scholars, page 16
- JoCo woes, pages 3, 18