

Public safety levy shot down in flames by county's voters

No patrol deputies, fewer prosecutions will follow 126 employees who will be layed off due to lack of funds

"A dark day" in Josephine County history is how county commission Chairman Jim Raffenburg describes the overwhelming defeat of a public safety levy in the Tuesday, May 15 special election.

Voters were asked if they favored a three-year levy that would have resulted in \$42.6 million for the sheriff's office, D.A.'s office and related offices.

Without the levy, and with the loss of federal O&C funds, there will be no patrol deputies, Sheriff Gil Gilbertson stated earlier.

Raffenburg announced

that as of Wednesday, May 16, termination slips would be sent to 126 county employees. The three major sections and their losses: sheriff's office, 42 employees; Juvenile Justice, 28; and D.A.'s office, 11. The layoffs will be effective as of May 31.

"The days ahead will be filled with challenges that will surprise a great many people," said Raffenburg.

During the past few weeks commissioners had discussed the possibility of pursuing a similar levy in September. However, Raffenburg said that if the "No"

vote reached more than 60 percent, "I don't think it would be wise" to make such a request.

County officials and members of the Citizens For Safe Communities (CFSC) political action committee gathered Tuesday night in Wild River Brew Pub in Grants Pass to await election results. D.A. Stephen Campbell initially said that he was "hopeful," but well aware of what lies ahead for his office.

"If it goes down," he said prior to the apparent defeat, "we'll all have very difficult decisions to make

over the next few months."

While some at the pub seemed detached from election night, as they watched a basketball game on TV, it was a completely different scene for the election watch. County commission Vice Chairman Dave Toler and Nerissa Armstrong, president of CFSC, had been dispatched to retrieve unofficial results from the county clerk's office.

At 8:30 p.m. Toler came in with Armstrong close behind. His announcement was mixed. The county had met the required 50 percent turnout; how-

ever, with 25 percent of the votes counted, 41 percent had voted in favor of the levy and 59 percent against.

The group applauded achieving the turnout threshold, but concessions of defeat soon followed.

"This is a dark day for Josephine County," said Raffenburg, "but the people have spoken."

Toler said, "I'm proud of county citizens for coming out for this vote."

By 9 p.m., Wild River had pretty well cleared out. Herb Carter, chairman of the Josephine County Republican Central Commit-

tee, was among those present as things wound down.

"From my standpoint I thank all the Republicans who voted for it though it goes against our grain to support additional taxation," he said.

A few blocks away, there was an eerie silence at the county courthouse as election workers counted ballots behind closed doors. As of 9:17 p.m., 39.56 percent of votes favored the levy, and 16.44 voted "No."

Approximately 72 percent of the total ballots had been counted.

-Scott Jorgensen

Clinic open house Saturday

An open house with a ribbon-cutting and refreshments will be held at Siskiyou Community Health Center Friday, May 18.

The Illinois Valley community event will run from 4 to 7 p.m. The ceremonial ribbon-cutting will be held at 6 p.m.

Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will part of the observance highlighting the new and expanded health center on Hwy. 199 at the north end of Cave Junction.

Tours of the new facility will be provided.

(See the advertisement on page 16).

USPS stamps out old rates

Information in a page 1 story in the May 9 issue about new U.S. Postal Service rates effective Monday, May 14 was incorrect.

Following are some of the more common new -- and correct -- prices and fees. Cave Junction Postmaster Lynne Hval noted that not all prices have risen.

*First-class mail letter (1 ounce), 41-cents (up 2-cents).

*First class mail letter (2 ounces), 58-cents (down from 63-cents.)

After 1 ounce, the new cost is 17-cents per ounce.

*Postcard, 26-cents.

*Priority mail (1 pound), \$4.60.

*Priority mail flat-rate box, \$8.95.

*Express mail (1/2 pound), \$16.25.

*New Express mail (1 pound), \$19.50.

*Express mail (2 pounds), \$21.40.

Other new prices for various services are available from post offices.

County Fair Board aims for fiscal sustainability

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Because the Josephine County Fair Board only has until June 30 to get its financial house of cards in order, a fund-raising series is scheduled to try and close the gap.

In November 2006, the county commissioners learned that the fairgrounds was failing to make payroll, and was \$68,000 in debt.

The fairgrounds have operated at a deficit for the past five years, but the county always made up the difference through a series of short-term loans issued during the slow winter months. Those loans typically were repaid in June, after activities picked up at the fairgrounds.

However, the discontinuation of federal funds prompted the commissioners to stop issuing the loans and order the fair board to make its operations self-sustaining.

During a Wednesday, May 9 board meeting in

Grants Pass, Fair Manager Jackie McBee said that the fair still owes approximately \$52,000 to the county. Community organizations have thus far donated around \$23,000 to help make up the difference, and McBee said that she anticipates other groups will contribute during the next few weeks.

Two fund-raisers were held last weekend at the fairgrounds. A horse event and "Save the Fairgrounds" concert are scheduled for June 2, and wine-tasting June 23.

Fair Board Chairman Steve Swearington said that the board has come a long way toward meeting its fund-raising goals.

"We're going to make it," Swearington said, but added, "There's no 100 percent way to say we're home free."

The Fair Board also is discussing the possible for-

(Continued on page 3)



Shawn Carmody and friend push for pool support. (Photo by Scott Jorgensen/IVN)

It's sink or swim time for CJ pool

On Thursday, May 17, the circus is coming to town.

Culpepper & Merriweather Circus, based in Oklahoma, will bring its tent show to the Junction Inn vacant lot, with shows at 5 and 7:30 p.m.

There will be high wire, trapeze and gymnastics performances, plus clowns. A percentage of funds raised from advance ticket sales will go toward helping Cave Junction Pool Committee with its efforts to repair that facility.

Advance tickets are available at Jefferson State Financial Services, Illinois Valley Visitor Center, SOFCU Community Credit Union, Home Valley Bank, Illinois Valley Family Resource Center, and Sterling Savings Bank.

Pool Committee President Shawn Carmody said that the group must raise

nearly \$200,000 to repair the facility on E. River Street.

"If it is not fixed, it will remain closed forever," she said. "It will not open this year."

"Unless we come up with the funds by the end of this year or early spring next year, there's a good possibility that it will be closed next year as well."

Carmody said that the committee is actively seeking grants. However, most require matching funds, thereby increasing the need for community support.

"If this community wants to have the pool at their disposal, we need its backing," Carmody noted.

"We can't do this alone." The pool needs to be resurfaced and have new tiles, Carmody said. A new pump and filtration system also are required.

"Those are the two big

things," Carmody said. "If we don't have those, the pool's dead."

Also needed, she said, are a new solar heating system, diving board and portable guard stand.

Carmody said that "with repairs, hopefully, we can sustain the pool for another 10 to 15 years."

Besides the circus, I.V. Pool Committee is considering a variety of subsequent fund-raisers. And a Website, ivpool.org, can accept online contributions.

Advance-sale tickets for the circus are \$8 for adults and \$6 for youngsters. Tickets at the show will cost \$11 for adults and \$7 for kids.

Information about serving on the pool committee is available from Carmody at (541) 291-9251 or e-mail shawn@ivpool.org.

-Scott Jorgensen/IVN

Fed funds for JOINT?

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) has received federal funding since the late 1980s for the sake of eradicating marijuana grown on public land -- but the county's financial difficulties may mean the end of such efforts this year.

According to a Sept. 27, 2006 press release from Dave Daniel, former sheriff, JCSO usually hires one full-time officer to lead the Josephine Marijuana Eradication Team (JOMET) and five part-time officers to assist. Last year, funding allowed for one part-time JOMET team leader and three part-time officers.

Under the current budget scenario for fiscal 2007-08, funding for JCSO's Narcotics Unit is nearly identical under the county's proposed Service Level 1 and Service Level 2 figures, due to federal grant money.

County budget documents state that there is "very little change to this program under Service Level 1," in which the county receives no federal O&C funding and the public safety level fails. Both the Service Level 1 and Service Level 2 budgets contain funding for four full-time

(Continued on page 3)

Two fairness bills passed

Two bills "ensuring that all Oregon families are treated with basic fairness and that all Oregonians can live and work free from the sting of discrimination, regardless of sexual orientation or gender" were signed into law Wednesday, May 9 by Gov. Kulongoski.

House Bill 2007, the Oregon Family Fairness Act, creates legal recognition for same-sex couples and their families through Domestic Partnerships. These provide some, but not all, of the protections, rights, and responsibilities afforded to heterosexual couples through marriage contracts.

It is different from marriage in several ways, including the lack of portability to other states and lack of more than 1,100 federal rights like Social Security survivor benefits, supporters said.

Senate Bill 2 outlaws discrimination based on sexual orientation in areas such as employment, housing, public accommodation, public education and public services. Religious employers, organizations and institutions are exempt.



SHOES WITH STYLE were the object when Cave Junction Head Start children met their mentors, 'The Doodlebugs,' from Elaine Barker's Illinois Valley High School art class.



Photos by Scott Jorgensen
'Illinois Valley News'