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Bush OKs bill for one-year O&C fund extension



MEMORIAL DAY HONORS were observed at Laurel Cemetery in Cave Junction on Saturday, May 26 by Glenn Morrison American Legion Post 70 and Boy Scout Troop 880, which it sponsors. (Clockwise from



top, left) Justin Bartow, Jordan Bartow and Roy Bartow, assistant scout master in training; Post Cmdr. Jim Fuller; and Kathy Van Trease, of Kerby, whose great-uncle was Glenn Morrison. (Photos by 'I.V. News')

Meth fight to continue

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

His department may be battered by budget cuts, but Josephine County Sheriff Gil Gilbertson said that he still is determined to combat the methamphetamine problem.

The discontinuation of federal O&C funding, given in lieu of declining timber receipts -- combined with a failed May 15 public safety levy plan -- has forced deputy layoffs and discontinuation of patrols after Friday, June 15.

Limited patrol, basically for emergencies only, will continue until that date. Last week the sheriff had pegged May 27 as the last day for patrols, but because of the uncertainty of the staffing and financial aspects facing the county, that has changed.

Despite the loss of federal funding for normal operations, Gilbertson said that the sheriff's office will continue to participate in the efforts of Josephine County Interagency Narcotics Team (JOINT). Other agencies involved in JOINT are Oregon State Police, Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety and the Josephine County District Attorney's office. The Drug Enforcement Agency and other federal agencies also cooperate in investigations, Gilbertson said.

He said that Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) staffing cutbacks will not affect JOINT operations.

"It's not just deputies on patrol that deal with this," Gilbertson said. "Their role is (Continued on page 6)

Patrol gap alleviated

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

It was overcast but dry on Saturday, May 26, as spectators crowded the sidewalks along Hwy. 101 for the annual Azalea Festival Parade in Downtown Brookings.

And the overall mood was good. But beneath it all was the real fear stemming from Curry County's pending fiscal crisis.

A series of sirens wailed amid enthusiastic applause, as the procession was led by a Brookings Police Dept. (BPD) vehicle. Right behind it was a Curry County Sheriff's Dept. patrol car -- and the latter may be a rare sight in a matter of weeks, as 16 deputies already have been laid off.

On Friday, May 25, President Bush signed a one-year extension of the county payments program, which has long funded Curry, Josephine and other timber-dependent areas. The \$425 million plan was part of \$8 billion in domestic spending offered as a compromise between the president and congressional Democrats.

Bush agreed to include the spending if Democrats excluded a timetable for withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq in the emergency appropriation. It includes approximately \$95 billion for that war and the conflict in Afghanistan.

However, those federal dollars won't arrive until November, leaving officials in rural counties with a funding (Continued on page 6)

R&R biomass project awaits public hearing

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

A \$5 million biomass plant at the Rough & Ready Lumber Co. is quickly becoming a reality.

"It's the end of a long process," said R&R President "Link" Phillippi.

An Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) informational workshop for the project permit was held on Wednesday, May 23 at Lorna Byrne Middle School. A formal public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, May 30 at 6:30 p.m. at LBMS. Once that hearing is completed, Phillippi said, a permit may be issued within the next few weeks.

Under the proposal, R&R would replace its existing wood-fired boiler with a newer one with twice the capacity, Phillippi said.

Market forces have caused a greater demand for dry lumber, which prompted R&R to seek ways to produce more steam to aid that process.

"From a business sense, the company for many years

has needed to increase its boiler capacity," Phillippi said.

However, the necessary equipment upgrade proved to be cost-prohibitive.

"It's a huge capital expense," Phillippi said, "that's unaffordable for a business our size."

That all began changing in 2005, when rising fuel costs and environmental concerns created demand for alternative energy. The U.S. government, along with state governments, adopted new programs to encourage biomass and other similar energy sources. As such, grants and other incentives began to appear, which made it easier for R&R to pursue its plant.

Not that it was easy. "There were a lot of hoops we had to jump through to make it happen,"

Phillippi said. "It's a lot of work, and a lot of forms."

Part of the paperwork included air quality analysis



R&R's 'Link' & Jennifer Phillippi

to measure the plant's potential emissions and its effects on a 13-kilometer radius of the facility. R&R hired consultants to create air dispensation models, with three separate boiler operating scenarios, and submitted the results to DEQ.

Nitrogen oxide levels were exceeded at all three scenarios, which prompted a study of the effects on six areas within a 48-kilometer radius. The Kalmiopsis Wilderness area, located 12 kilometers from R&R, was modeled separately.

The results of those tests were successful, as well as a visibility analysis for the Kalmiopsis, in which "plume blight" was measured.

Phillippi said he is pleased that the plant plan met the standards set forth by federal and state regulatory agencies.

"It was a real learning experience," Phillippi said. "But we've done everything we're supposed to have done, and more."

If issued, the permit would expire on June 1, 2012, and Phillippi said he would hope to have the plant operational by September or October of this year.

"It's a triple win," Phillippi said. "It will provide renewable power, forest restoration and jobs."

JoCo plans to receive \$12 million in O&C funds

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Friday, May 25, President Bush signed a one-year extension of federal payments to timber-dependent counties with Josephine County standing to receive \$12 million from the \$425 million program -- the same amount it obtained last fiscal year.

Therefore, patrol by sheriff's deputies will continue, using reserve funds, until the anticipated payment arrives in late October or early November, said Dave Toler, vice chairman of the county board of commissioners. The money will be included in the budget for the 2007-08 fiscal year, which begins July 1.

County officials will have to adopt a supplemental

budget in order to accept those funds, Toler said.

"I think that's what we're looking at," Toler said. "We'll reconvene the Budget Committee in early June."

During its Thursday, May 17 meeting, the commissioners planned to place a public safety levy on the ballot in September. That action came two days after voters rejected a proposed three-year, \$42.6 million levy for public safety.

However, the last-minute federal appropriation means that the county no longer will pursue a September levy.

Also on May 17, the county Budget Committee adopted the Service Level 1 budget, which did not include federal funds. Toler said that

the county still will operate under that budget, meaning that many employees still will be laid off. But most of the cuts to public safety operations will be restored.

"Most of the budget will continue," Toler said. "The libraries will still be closed and all the other cuts at all the other programs, we're going to keep those, except criminal justice."

Toler said a 5 percent reduction in public safety is "likely," but will be accomplished through attrition.

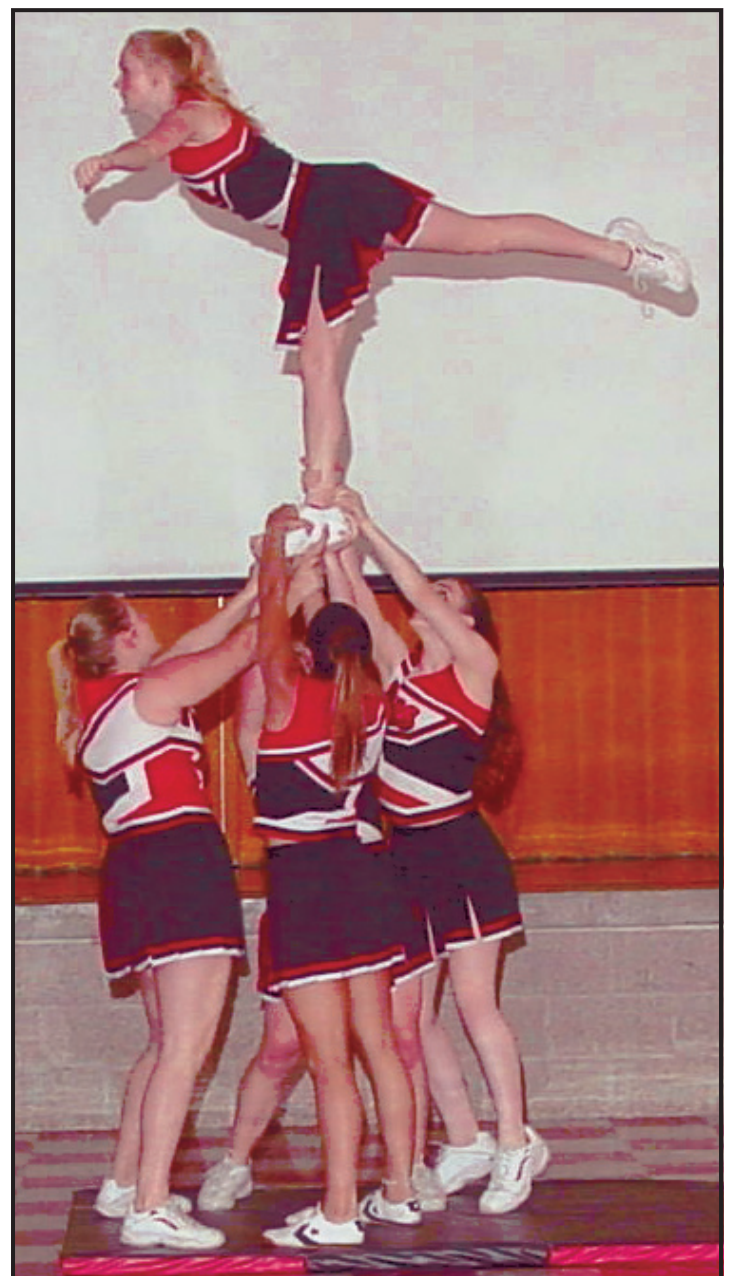
"The sheriff's office and D.A.'s office already had some budgeted positions not filled this fiscal year because of the hiring freeze," Toler said. "Those positions will likely be reduced. People

won't be reduced, but there will be unfilled positions."

County officials are planning to save a good portion of the anticipated federal funds, Toler said, in an attempt to bolster the county's immediate financial future.

"It will probably be in the neighborhood of close to \$5 million or it could be more that we will save, not spend, of this \$12 million and put away," Toler said. "We may find ourselves in a similar situation next year. But instead of having \$5 million in reserves, we'll have over \$8 million."

"We're preparing as much as we reasonably can to try and lessen the burden when we do have to do something next year."



ILLINOIS VALLEY High School cheerleaders performed Saturday, May 26 to help gain sponsors for their participation Saturday June 2 in Grants Pass during the 24-hour American Cancer Society Relay For Life benefit. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg for 'IVN')

A special color presentation featuring the Illinois Valley High School Class of 2007 that will graduate on Tuesday, June 5 is on page 11. The tribute is co-sponsored by Evergreen Federal Savings, Home Valley Bank, and SOFCU Community Credit Union.

Additionally, a number of businesses also are congratulating the graduates. Their messages, and a story about commencement exercises, are on page 5.