

# Illinois Valley News

Wednesday, June 6, 2007, 2 Sections, 20 Pages, Volume 70 No. 12 Cave Junction, Oregon 97523

illinois-valley-news.com

## Kerby water not a pipe dream

By SCOTT JORGENSEN  
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Kerby Water District (KWD) is two steps closer to delivering H<sub>2</sub>O, after approval of an engineering contract and an Inter-governmental Agreement (IGO) with Josephine County.

Approval for the deals was given 2-0 by Josephine County commissioners during their Wednesday, May 30 meeting in Grants Pass. Commissioner Jim Raffenburg is on vacation.

A \$1.7 million Community Development Block Grant has been issued for KWD's distribution system, said Rosemary Padgett, the county's chief financial officer.

Steve Rich, the county's legal counsel, recommended that the IGO be implemented, Padgett said.

The IGO already has been signed by KWD's board of directors, but the grant requires that the county co-own the distribution system project until it is completed. Padgett said that ownership of the system will be transferred to KWD once the total

project is finished, which should take approximately five years.

However, delivery of water could begin as early as spring 2008.



A remnant of the Kerby Ditch system

A \$314,000 engineering contract with Coos Bay-based HBH Consulting Engineers Inc. also was approved by county commissioners. The contract is for the drinking water distribution system portion of the project.

KWD was formed in 2003 by residents who for years have been concerned about the quality of their well water. The shallow wells were bolstered by water from Illinois River that ran into the Kerby Ditch. It ran across the east side of Redwood Hwy. until it was abandoned several years ago, although portions of its distribution system still

can be seen on either side of the highway.

Residents still are using wells.

During 2005, Kerby residents approved a \$450,000 bond measure to help pay for the water distribution system project costs. The block grant was awarded by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture that year.

Once the distribution system is complete, KWD members will be supplied by the city of Cave Junction, which gets its water from the Illinois River East Fork.

However, during the May 30 meeting, Hugo resident and land-use activist Holger Sommer expressed doubt that the city would be able to provide water to Kerby residents.

"Cave Junction already has problems supplying water capacity to its new developments," Sommer said.

KWD Board Chairman John Plute said the city is "well within the capacity of its master plan." He added that the district could be getting its water supply from the city as early as next spring.



**ACCIDENT AT I.V. AIRPORT** -- Lou Levison (right), of Cave Junction, suffered a right leg injury in connection with the crash of the two-seat trainer ultralight aircraft he was piloting Saturday, June 2. The mishap, reported at 9:33 a.m., brought

a response from Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD), American Medical Response, and Josephine County Sheriff's Office. Witnesses said that Levison was on a landing approach when the engine stalled, and the craft went down nose-first in brush off the

west side of the runway. Sharon Wescott, owner of the plane, said that it was new and a total loss. After first aid, Levison subsequently went to Three Rivers Community Hospital for further treatment. (Photos by 'Illinois Valley News' and IVFD Media Dept.)



## Fed extension boosts JoCo coffers

Last week, the Josephine County Board of Commissioners suspended the layoff of approximately 50 criminal justice system employees after President Bush signed a bill that included monies for O&C counties for one year.

Josephine County anticipates that it will receive approximately \$12 million in October for fiscal year 2007-08, the same amount received for fiscal year 2006-07.

The board has requested that the Budget Committee be reconvened Thursday, June 7 to discuss and approve a revised budget for the Public Safety Fund which includes the operations of sheriff, district attorney and Juvenile Justice. Staffing is proposed to be comparable to the current year including approximately 88 full-time equivalents in the sheriff's office.

The proposed budget

would include the one-time transfer of \$4.8 million from the General Fund and the one-year allocation of \$12 million from O&C funds.

Approximately \$6 million would be placed in contingency (reserves) for local law enforcement purposes for fiscal year 2008-09. General Fund would receive no O&C monies. Public Health will add back staff to cover the increased level of inmates (from 70 to 140) in the jail health clinic.

All other offices, divisions, and program budgets would remain at Service Level 1 with no expected increases, resulting in approximately 45 employees who were laid off Thursday, May 31.

Although Josephine County will receive one more year of O&C funding, the budget being proposed by the

county commissioners reflects their commitment to continued paring county expenditures.

By putting approximately half of the federal payment into public safety reserves, this budget will provide approximately \$9.3 million in overall reserves (including more than \$3.3 million in General Fund contingencies) at the end of the fiscal year.

"This assures us that we will be better prepared to meet the fiscal challenges that may face us next year," said the county board

The Budget Committee will review Public Safety and Public Health Budgets Thursday, June 7 between 6 and 8 p.m. at Anne Basker Auditorium, 604 N.W. Sixth St. in Downtown Grants Pass, adjacent to the county courthouse. The public can attend.

## County planning fees to rise July 1

By SCOTT JORGENSEN  
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Despite protests from some watchdog citizens, the Board of Josephine County Commissioners voted Wednesday, May 30 in Grants Pass to increase planning department fees, including those for appeals, as of July 1.

The increase was part of a larger effort to make many county departments self-sustaining and fee-based.

Commissioner Dwight Ellis moved to adopt the increases, which Vice Chairman Dave Toler seconded. The motion was approved 2-0, as Jim Raffenburg, board chairman, was on vacation.

Hugo resident Mike Walker spoke against the increases during the public hearing on the matter May 30. Walker stated that he was representing Hugo Neighborhood Association and Historical Society, Three Pines Neighborhood Association, and Rogue Advocates.

Walker claimed that the fees are "largely unstable" and that the county charter requires voter approval for the increases. The fees don't cover many state-mandated land-use planning requirements, and a fee-driven setting increases the potential for corruption and favoritism, it was indicated.

Hal Anthony, saying that he represented the same three groups as Walker, compared the fee-based system to a poll tax in Josephine County's distant past.

"It almost becomes like a poll tax," Anthony said. "If you can't pay, you can't play."

Resident Gene Mow called the proposed fee increase for appeals "excessive." She said that revenues generated from appeals are insignificant anyway, and she had other objections as well.

"Public participation will be discouraged by a large increase," Mow said. "I think it will leave more people out of the process."

Bob Hart, a land-use consultant who served for 17

years in the county's planning office, said that he disagreed with Mow's statement.

"There is plenty of opportunity for input from citizens of Josephine County," Hart said.

- Some county planning office fees will rise as of July 1, and some will stay the same. Here are some examples of increases with the current fee first and the new fee after.
- A complete fee schedule is available from the county planning office.
- \*Home occupation public hearing: \$2,100/\$2,750.
- \*Home occupation (no hearing): \$1,700/\$2,000.
- \*Pre-application for aggregate mining: \$950/\$1,200.
- \*Aggregate mining permit (conditional use, site plan review): \$3,125/\$3,700.
- \*Appeal after hearing: \$1,550/\$2,000.
- \*Authorized lot/dwelling determination: \$250/\$500.
- \*Subdivision pre-application review: \$500/\$600.
- \*Planned unit development, tentative approval: \$2,950/\$3,750.
- \*Road naming: \$1,250/\$1,500.
- \*Variance without hearing: \$1,500/\$2,000.

Hart noted that the cost of developing land has "gone up significantly," and that a traffic analysis for a recent, small development cost \$8,000.

"I think these fees are not out of line," stated Hart.

However, he added that there "should be some general fund support" for the planning department.

Toler said that the appeals fee was \$750 during 2005, and would be increased to \$2,000 under the new schedule.

Ellis stated that he was bothered by comments that a fee-based system could lead to corruption.

"I take personal offense to that," Ellis said.

He said that during his two and a half years on the board, many proposed developments have been denied by the county.

"We don't always come out in favor of the developer," Ellis said. He also rejected the poll tax analogy.

"I don't agree that this is a poll tax," he said.

Toler said that while having the planning department be completely fee-based is "hugely unstable," the county's entire financial

situation could be accurately described in the same terms.

"I truly looked at this as stabilizing planning," he said.

Toler rejected the argument that higher fees paid by developers would encourage

favoritism toward those interests. He pointed out that higher appeals fees won't make the county biased toward appellants in the matter of appeals.

He said that if the county weren't moving in the direction of a fee-based system, "I don't know what we'd be looking at."

Toler acknowledged that appeals fees are rising faster than the others, but that he was willing to look at "potential adjustments" later.

Land-use activist and Hugo resident Holger Sommer said that appeals heard by the state Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) cost \$325. Sommer said that such appeals would be more costly at the state level than locally.

Ellis said that the appeals process has become more complex, which has increased costs, but that "citizen involvement has remained level," despite prior increases.

There are fewer appeals at the county level now than when he first took office, Ellis said. He credited Anthony, Sommer and other activists for helping the county improve its process.

But Ellis stated that the appeals process is more expensive for the county than for LUBA.

Toler acknowledged that higher fees are a burden on applicants and citizens, and that the system works best when both groups are involved. But although he stated regret regarding the increases, he said that not doing so would lead to a weaker planning department.



**TWO MOTORCYCLES COLLIDE** -- A father and his son crashed onto the Hwy. 199 pavement in front of A+ Mini-Storage at the north end of Cave Junction Friday, June 1 at approximately 10:28 a.m. The cyclists were identified as Gordon W. Boswell, 61, and his son, Ryland, 19, both of Lompoc, Calif. It was reported that Ryland slowed to avoid hitting a vehicle making a right turn, and that his father, who was following, swerved and clipped the rear of his son's bike. No citations were issued. The elder Boswell was taken by American Medical Response to Three Rivers Community Hospital. (I.V. News' photo)