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**Results from the
Tuesday, Nov. 6
vote-by-mail election
will be posted online at
illinois-valley-news.com.**

Business boost due

**RCC plans Kerby site
to aid entrepreneurs**

A \$330,000 to \$370,000 contract for a business entrepreneurial center in Kerby likely will be awarded by Rogue Community College to Ausland Builders, of Grants Pass.

The RCC board voted in favor of an "intent-to-award" resolution naming Ausland as manager and general contractor for the project. The vote came during a telephone poll Oct. 25.

The pact could be awarded officially this week.

In partnership with Josephine County, RCC plans to develop a facility with 3,000 to 4,000 square feet of space. It is to be built adjacent to RCC's current Illinois Valley Learning Center in the Kerby Belt Bldg.

The facility is to be designed to provide space and support services for Illinois Valley residents seeking to start or expand their business ventures. It also will be used to accommodate community development projects that affect the area's economic growth.

The majority of capital construction funding will come from a \$300,000 USDA grant. RCC will become a co-applicant with Josephine County, the original recipient of the grant. Other partners are the Illinois Valley Community Development Organization (IVCDO), and Southern Oregon Regional Development Inc. (SOREDI).

IVCDO and SOREDI will provide starter businesses with access to their revolving loan programs.

Union litigation could cost Josephine County \$1 mil

Past board of commissioners charged with illegally dismissing more than 100 workers in 2006

By **WALLY AIKEN**
For **IVN**

Financial bad news in the form of a ruling by the Oregon Board Of Employment Relations (ERB) was received last week by the Josephine County Board Of County Commissioners.

It's a decision that could cost the county in the vicinity of \$1 million. Litigation was filed by the American Federation Of State, County And Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the union representing county employees.

In a decision dated Oct.

30, ERB found that the board of county commissioners acted illegally when it decided in June 2006 to privatize the mental health functions of county government. These services include mental and emotional counseling and addiction treatment.

On the county board at time were Jim Riddle, Dwight Ellis and Jim Raffenburg.

The county board Monday, Nov. 5 moved to request a stay from ERB and file a notice of appeal, said

Dave Toler, commission vice chairman.

If the ruling stands, the county would be required to reinstate more than 100 former employees. The county also would be responsible for all back pay and any lost insurance or retirement benefits as well as a 9 percent interest charge on all money owed.

And the county would be responsible for reimbursing AFSCME for any lost union dues resulting from job terminations.

ERB also hit the county

with a \$1,000 fine, the highest allowed by current law. There is a 30-day window in the decision to allow the county to try and negotiate a settlement with AFSCME. The county has 14 days to appeal the decision.

Steve Rich, county counsel, said that ERB "really took the wood to us." He stated that he is "almost certain" an appeal would be filed by Josephine County.

Rich added that the county faces an uphill battle in appeal because of the nature of the evidence

against it -- specifically citing the "failure-to-recall" statement by the board.

AFSCME contends that the privatization of county mental health services was of a retaliatory nature punishing the county mental health workers who strongly supported the 2006 county employees strike. Figures cited in the decision show that 80 percent of the county mental health workers supported the strike while only 40 percent of the public works employees agreed

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Preparatory efforts to open a temporary holding facility at the former Cave Junction City Jail are progressing. A special work day was held Wednesday, Nov. 7. Workers have included (clockwise from top left) Mary Orton

and Roger Brandt; Jerry Work from The Dovetail Joint, who provided a custom-made Oregon broad-leaf maple counter; Orton and Brandt; and JCSO Deputy Keith Hubbard. (Photos by *Illinois Valley News*)

CJ 'jail' site opening due

It's looking like a "clean sweep" to open a temporary detention facility and relocate sheriff's substation operations to the basement of Cave Junction City Hall.

And besides sweeping, there's been plenty of cleaning, painting and refurbishing at the former city jail in the city hall basement.

Josephine County Sheriff's Office has a substation in the county building in CJ, but officers including Sheriff Gil Gilbertson are excited about the coming relocation. The intent is to use volunteers at the new site, allowing officers to have more

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Illinois Valley High School beat North Valley to achieve a perfect 10-0 season record. The Cougars are the champions of the Skyline Conference and a top seed for the state playoff games. In the contest Friday, Nov. 2, senior Jacob Ellis (#14, above) gains some ground; while (right) senior Larry Ragsdale skirts a Knight tackler. Story on Page 4 (Photos by Jennifer Newsted, *Illinois Valley News*)

