

Continuance scheduled on Barlow mining plans

Holland Loop proposal brings many protests

By **WALLY AIKEN**
For IVN

A three-hour hearing regarding a controversial gravel mining proposal was held by the Josephine County Planning Commission Monday night, Nov. 5.

Some observed that the meeting could be summarized by saying that Barlow Sand & Gravel LLC brought all its experts and a lawyer to use 2 1/2 hours to say that the criteria were met; and that those opposed were given the remaining 30 minutes.

The meeting was held in Anne Basker Auditorium in Grants Pass to discuss possibly amending the Josephine County Comprehensive Plan. It would add a property at 2612 Holland Loop to the Inventory Of Significant Aggregate Sites.

The request was brought by Illinois Valley Ranch LLC, and Barlow Sand & Gravel LLC. If approved, Barlow plans to apply for a conditional-use permit from the county to allow mining of up to 500,000 cubic yards of aggregate from the 55-acre site.

Several Illinois Valley residents attended the meeting to voice concerns.

Ken Stern, who lives near the property in question, voiced strong opposition to the proposal. He stated that the mining operation would be detrimental to his agricultural operation. Stern raises cattle, grows vegetables and recently planted an orchard with 100 trees. He also pointed out that Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 3 is to “preserve and maintain agricultural land.”

The mine, he said, would cause financial loss in agricultural production and in the value of his property itself. Stern also showed photographs of flooding on his property that he believes is a direct result of previous Barlow mining operations.

Wes Nicholson, also a Holland Loop resident, said that he had worked with

Barlow in the past and had allowed mining on his property, but of a different type. He said that it is not necessary to dig the pits as Barlow is doing now.

Nicholson contends that Barlow is opting for a cheaper, but more destructive form of mining.

Cate Bendock, of Windridge Vineyard on Holland Loop, expressed concerns about increased traffic, dust, and the noise inherent in a mining operation of the size proposed. She also referred to a mining operation that Barlow was forced to terminate last year after it was discovered the property to be mined had been incorrectly identified by Barlow in the application process.

“They have shown they cannot be trusted to be good neighbors,” Bendock said in her statement before the commission. In answer, Barlow’s Bill Peterson said that it is true that mistakes were made in the past, but that Barlow had done everything required to rectify its errors.

Barlow representatives at the meeting spoke to the necessity of a local source of aggregate to supply the increasing demand due to developments already approved in Cave Junction city limits. They also stated they felt that the legal criteria to approve the amendment had been met.

Because it became apparent that there were still questions concerning noise regulations and soil composition, and other issues involving the necessary criteria, the commissioners voted 6-0 to continue the discussion. That is to occur during a meeting Monday, Nov. 26 at 7 p.m. in Anne Basker Auditorium next to the county courthouse in Downtown Grants Pass.

There was a request by Holland Loop resident Joel Perkins to hold the meeting at the county building in Cave Junction. It was denied because the needed cable broadcasting equipment is all in Basker Auditorium.

Housing assistance listed

SOFCU Community Credit Union said that it wants to help anyone affected by the recent downswing in the housing market.

In an effort to help, SOFCU is offering several specialized programs. Except for the Counseling Program, these programs are not exclusive to SOFCU.

On the lending side is the new FHA Secure Initiative Program. It is designed to provide refinancing opportunities to home owners in a non-FHA adjustable rate loan whose payments have been reset.

SOFCU also has been approved for ODVA loans, with “attractive interest rates

and flexible guidelines for Oregon vets for purchase of a primary residence.” Among other programs to help new home buyers are First Time Home Buyer loans such as Rural Development, and Oregon Bond.

There also are “specialty loans” that can help those with less-than-perfect credit or with non-conforming properties.

Free, confidential counseling is available for those in default with their mortgage and need help in talking to their lender for a “workout solution.” Other services through housing counselors include help with repairing credit, budgeting and savings.

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The elusive Matsutake mushroom is sought by numerous hunters who annually flock to Illinois Valley during autumn to harvest them. High-quality ‘number ones’ were fetching \$20 per pound from buyers on the Junction Inn vacant lot. The U.S. Forest Service Wild Rivers Ranger District said Tuesday, Nov. 6 that it had issued at least 211 permits with a value of \$23,840. Figures still were being tabulated on the number of permits and value. (Photos by Michelle Binker, Illinois Valley News)



Suicide found in Selma ID’d

Oregon State Police detectives have released the name of a man who died of a “self-inflicted gunshot wound” in Selma Oct. 13.

OSP identified the victim as Kory William Wright, 19, of Grants Pass. He was licensed to carry a concealed weapon, said OSP.

Wright was found lying on the middle of Illinois River Road near Norman Road with head trauma. A pistol was lying at his side.

Illinois Valley Fire District and American Medical Response found him dead on arrival at approximately 6 a.m. OSP detectives performed the death investigation, which included interviewing the victim’s girlfriend and mother at the scene.

Flags lowered for Army sgt. killed in action

All flags at public institutions were flown at half-staff throughout Oregon Saturday, Nov. 3, in honor of U.S. Army Sgt. Joshua Charles Brennan who was killed in action in the Korengal Valley of Afghanistan.

Brennan, 22, of Ontario, was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team stationed in Vicenza, Italy.

“Sgt. Brennan was a brave Oregon soldier who will always be remembered for his sacrifice and commitment to service,” said Gov. Kulongoski, who ordered the lowered flags.

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