

Happy Thanksgiving

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LID off for north CJ's projects

By WALLY AIKEN
For IVN

A proposed Local Improvement District (LID) affecting the north end of the city of Cave Junction has been put on indefinite hold, according to official sources.

The LID has been a controversial issue for the city government since proceedings began. The LID is designed to spread the cost of necessary improvements to Redwood Hwy. to allow the developments that have been taking place to the north of town in the vicinity of Illinois Valley Golf Course.

LID petitioners -- Manor Communities Development LLC, Illinois Valley Development, and Siskiyou Community Health Center among others -- included other property and business owners in the LID who do not feel they would be beneficiaries of the highway improvements.

One of those property owners is the Versteeg Family Trust LLC, which owns a 24.88-acre parcel of land designated a tree lot. The trust hired the law firm of Homecker, Cowling, Hassen & Heysell LLP, of Medford, to challenge the legality of the LID on several points. (See last week's on-line article, which also is in this issue). It was this legal challenge that prompted the city council to turn the issue over to City Attorney Patrick Kelly, of Grants Pass.

During the city council meeting Tuesday night, Nov. 13, Larry Osborn, manager of Manor Communities Development, said that the petitioners were reviewing options. City officials confirmed that an amended petition is in the works. It was stated that a new (Continued on page 3)



Illinois Valley Cougars completed a successful 10-1 season Friday evening, Nov. 16. The Cougars, Skyline Conference

champions, lost a state playoff game to the Marist in Cave Junction. Story on page 5. (Photo by Jennifer Newsted, IVN)

Suspect in I.V. threat arrested

A 16-year-old Illinois Valley High School student charged in connection with one of several bomb threats at the school said he "did it as a joke."

Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) added that the suspect is city of Cave Junction resident James L. Guthrie. He was charged with first-degree disorderly conduct related to a written bomb threat found at IVHS at around 1:11 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 15.

The note was found written on an envelope at a table where school officials had been checking backpacks and noting cell phone numbers because of previous bomb threats. Guthrie is charged only in connection with the Nov. 15 incident.

He was cooperative in providing information, JCSO added.

The school was evacuated because of the threat. A search was conducted; no bomb was located.

There have been six bomb threats at IVHS since Oct. 11, most of them this month. One other evacuation also occurred because of a threat. But other warnings were received prior to the arrival of students, so staff members were able to search and secure the premises before students arrived.

Because of the threats, attendance has been running at approximately 65 percent. Parents have been given the option of keeping their children home because of the warnings, or allowing them to attend classes.

Additionally, each threat has caused security to be tightened at IVHS, causing extra work and stress, especially (Continued on page 14)

Two deputies fired four shots in fatal CJ confrontation

Final reports on situation involving man who pointed gun at officers anticipated before long

An autopsy at the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office in Central Point confirmed that a rural Cave Junction resident was struck twice with bullets fired by sheriff's deputies in an armed confrontation, said Oregon State Police.

It added that the bullets entered his body through the left arm area.

Dead after he pointed a handgun at one of four deputies is 66-year-old Paul Harris Chesser, of 28351 Redwood Hwy., 2 miles south of

Downtown Cave Junction.

The investigation into the fatal shooting Saturday, Nov. 10 involving Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) deputies is continuing, OSP said. Per agreed-upon protocols, OSP is leading the investigation with assistance of JCSO, Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety, and Josephine County District Attorney's Office.

OSP released the names of the four deputies at the scene. They responded to the home following a 2:03 a.m.

911 call from the residence reporting that a man known to the caller had a gun and fired shots, threatening others:

Patrol Cpl. Edythe Deubert, 38, who has been with JCSO more than eight years.

Patrol Cpl. Ray Webb, 45, also with JCSO for more than eight years.

Patrol Deputy John Auburn, 38, a JCSO officer nearly seven years.

Patrol Deputy Shawn Shaw, 36, a JCSO veteran of more than 10 years.

It's believed that Webb and Deubert fired a total of four shots, said Josephine County D.A. Stephen Campbell.

OSP said that when the JCSO officers arrived at the home, next to J's Feed & Tack, they were confronted by Chesser. He was ordered nu-

merous times to put down his weapon, but pointed it several times at deputies, said OSP.

Gunfire then was exchanged, although who fired first still is being investigated, said OSP. Chesser was pronounced dead at the scene.

Campbell said that most of the investigation is complete. It will take a few weeks, he indicated, for the reports to be written. Such investigations by district attorneys are standard in cases of officer-involved shootings. The intent is to ascertain if actions by officers using deadly force were under the standards of Oregon state law.

The incident, according to unofficial sources, followed a party at a Cave Junction bar that shifted to the residence.

Audit report shows IVFD handling finances well

"Good job!" was among many positive comments regarding the Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) audit report, received during the IVFD board meeting Thursday night, Nov. 15 at administrative HQ in Cave Junction.

The report was made by Richard W. Brewster, a Medford certified public accountant, engaged by IVFD for its audits. He noted that he was able to give a positive report because of good IVFD staff work including that of Robin Paulson, executive administrator.

Brewster noted that in several categories, IVFD spent less than budgeted for the 2006-07 fiscal year. There was an increase in PERS costs, but he indicated that the rise is common and not cause for concern.

Among plus factors for the past fiscal year: the reserve fund was under spent by \$26,000; capital item outlays totaled \$95,000 while \$197,000 was budgeted; and the material-and-services category was under spent by \$12,000.

"This is as good as you can get," said Brewster, referring to not spending all funding in categories.

He further noted that the district is making good progress toward paying off debts, as planned. The debt payment total is down to \$2.9 million from \$3.1 million, the ac-

countant said.

"We have a Class I fire district with a shoestring budget," said Chief Harry Rich.

Brewster was asked by board Vice President Sam Michel what financial accounting rating he'd give the district on a scale of 1 to 10.

"You're an 8," Brewster told Michel, who ran the meeting at the request of President Larrick Jones. "I just wanted to see his style," said Jones after the meeting.

Brewster provided a list of recommendations to further streamline IVFD accounting and meet new state standards. Among the recommendations: evaluate the controls being used, and segregate transactions so that they are not limited to one person handling them all.

"This is to protect the district and the employees," said the accountant.

In another matter, the board voted 5-0 in favor of annexing several properties. The property owners asked for annexation, and Division Chief/Fire Marshal Jerry Schaeffer recommended approvals.

Involved is a Waldo Road area parcel owned by Cave Junction resident Clifford Keith; a 5-acre parcel and a 15-acre parcel owned by Emroc Enterprises on Indian Creek Road in Selma; and parcels of 5.01 and 5.04 (Continued on page 4)



Home Valley Bank opened its new Illinois Valley branch in Downtown Cave Junction last week, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony

was conducted Wednesday, Nov. 14 by I.V. Chamber of Commerce with bank employees. (Photo by Jennifer Newsted, IVN)