

# Illinois Valley News

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## I.V. Airport lease looks up in the air

By WALLY AIKEN  
For IVN

Illinois Valley Airport was once again a topic for discussion by the Josephine County Board of Commissioners, this time during a meeting Tuesday, Feb. 5 in the county courthouse.

All three commissioners were present for the meeting.

The agenda item that spurred the discussion was a request for clarification of airport lease agreement procedures. Prior to the departure of Chief Operating Officer Marie Hill, she had the responsibility for reviewing the agreements.

However, upon her leaving, that responsibility was shifted to county Property Manager Phil Killian and county Airports Manager Alex Grossi. Commissioner Jim Raffenburg is the "liaison commissioner" for the process.

Initially the discussion was tabled, as Raffenburg had not had the opportunity to speak to Grossi to obtain his input.

On Thursday, after Killian and Grossi exited the meeting, Illinois Valley resident Roger Brandt requested that the commissioners reopen the discussion, and they allowed Brandt to voice his concerns.

Brandt's complaint centers on a proposed lease agreement the county is con-

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## Man charged in shooting

Troy Charles MacBeth, 45, is charged with murder in the shooting death of a rural Grants Pass man in connection with a mutual relationship with a woman.

Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) added that the shooting occurred Friday, Feb. 8 at approximately 8:13 p.m. The victim was identified as Dennis Harold Roper, 52, of 405 Fir Canyon Road.

MacBeth apparently went to Roper's residence, a travel trailer, and demanded to be let in. When the victim refused, the suspect discharged a firearm, striking Roper's torso, said JCSO.

The suspect was located on foot in the neighborhood at approximately 9:48 p.m. After being charged with murder, he was placed in county jail in Grants Pass.

## Rockydale gravel work must cease, says JoCo

By WALLY AIKEN  
For IVN

Barlow Rock & Gravel is to be notified that it must cease operations at a controversial site on Rockydale Road until a conditional-use permit is obtained.

A request for clarification on mining vs. agricultural land use by the Josephine County Board of Commissioners brought several Illinois Valley residents to the courthouse in Grants Pass Thursday morning, Feb. 7 to hear county planner Mike Snider respond.

Commissioner Jim Raffenburg was on vacation.

Clarification was requested by the commissioners in response to the Little Elm Ranch operation on Rockydale Road in rural Cave Junction where Barlow Rock & Gravel has been removing aggregate material. Its stated purpose is to create an agricultural pond to irrigate an adjoining grass field.

Nearby residents and others in the neighborhood claim that despite Barlow's claims to the contrary, the site is primarily a mine. They contend that the agricultural benefits of the pond are minimal compared to the negative effect a mining operation is having on the Rockydale neighborhood.

Snider produced a 17-page document discussing county regulations and its jurisdiction in such matters. But many felt that his work did little to clarify or resolve the problem which is, in the case of Little Elm Ranch, the actual definition of a mining operation and an agricultural operation.

The state uses a 5,000 cubic yards of material removed and 1-acre size as its benchmark for mine definition. Josephine County regulations use the same 1-acre figure, but considers 1,000 cubic yards of removed material to define a mine. However, exemptions are considered if the primary purpose of

the excavation is to further agricultural goals.

These distinctions are critical because if an operation is decided to be mining in purpose, a conditional-use permit is required and this means an involved process that includes public meetings. Barlow is currently seeking just such a permit for a proposed mining operation in the Holland Loop area.

The state's opinion was offered by Frank Schnitzer, a representative of Oregon Dept. of Geology & Mineral Institute (DOGAMI). He said

that the Little Elm site is an example of a situation where there is no reason to believe agricultural goals are even being considered.

"A report is filed by the county," he said, "which in part concludes that removal of sand and gravel is occurring in the process of farming and the project should therefore be exempt from DOGAMI regulations."

The DOGAMI statement adds, "There is no farming on this tax lot, there are no immediate plans to irrigate, there is no water right to allow irrigation. The farm currently utilizes a water right from the river." The report also makes it clear that there are no farming benefits to be gained from the pond and that the material being removed could easily be used on-site for the pond embankment.

County Commissioner Dwight Ellis commented that "Growing rocks is not a farm use." He and commission Chairman Dave Toler agreed that a letter be sent to Barlow stating that all operations at the Little Elm site must cease until a conditional-use permit is obtained.

Toler said that the clarification of regulations is still needed and will be addressed in the case of Little Elm Ranch. But because Barlow noted on state documents that the purpose of the project is to mine aggregate, it could therefore be dealt with immediately.

## Zonta promises funding for libraries from raffle

Josephine Community Libraries Inc. (JCLI) has been advised that Zonta Club of Grants Pass will donate approximately \$10,000 as its sole beneficiary of Zonta's Xtreme Dream Raffle, the proceeds of which will be used to purchase 10 public-access terminals.

Raffle tickets will be available from May through July for major prizes.

"Zonta's mission is to improve the status of women through service and advocacy," notes Illinois Valley resident Carol Dickson, club president. "By supporting the four libraries," she said, "we will be able to help a large number of women and children (and men, too) throughout the entire county."

"The 10 computers will provide access to the library collection and will be for general public use. This will benefit all library patrons, especially those who do not otherwise have access to computer technology and the Internet, which help with school work, job skills development, and job searches."

Incorporated as a nonprofit organization in September 2007, JCLI's mission is to provide a public library system lasting for generations of Josephine County residents. To accomplish this, JCLI forecasts that it will need between \$600,000 to \$1 million worth of in-kind donations and monetary support.

To raise the money, JCLI proposes to solicit memberships along a public radio/public television model. Its goal is to reopen Josephine County libraries by the end of 2008. For more information, visit josephinelibrary.org.

Donations can be made payable to "RCC Foundation/Josephine Community Libraries" and sent to P.O. Box 1684, Grants Pass OR 97526.

**Presidents Day, a federal holiday, will be observed Monday, Feb. 18. Banks, schools, post offices and other public agencies will be closed. I.V. News deadlines will remain the same.**



Illinois Valley wrestling coach Jay Miller (rear left, above) was chosen Coach of The Year in the Skyline Conference; the Cougar team captured its fourth consecutive district championship; and Sam Winter (left) was voted Most Outstanding Wrestler in the 103 to 140-pound weight classes. Illinois Valley is sending 13 wrestlers to the 2008 state championship, which will be held Feb. 14-16 in Portland's Memorial Coliseum. Bracket information is available online at osaa.org. (Photos by Ward Winter)

## Cougars chew up Skyline competition

IVHS wrestlers earn yet another district championship; Miller Coach of Year

Illinois Valley High School wrestling team emerged from the mats at Skyline District end-of-season competition with its fourth consecutive district championship.

The district meet was held Friday and Saturday, Feb. 8 and 9, at the Rogue River High School gym.

Besides the team championship, coach Jay Miller was honored as Skyline Coach of the Year. And Cougar wrestler

Sam Winter was voted Most Outstanding Wrestler in the 103 to 140-pound weight class.

The Cougar victory also means that 13 I.V. wrestlers will go to state competition. At the district meet, I.V. matmen achieved the following:

First places were won by Chris Culver (103) Rhino Prince (112), Sam Winter (135), Jacob Miller (145), Jesse Swift (160), Lance Tausaga (189), and Tim Pope (215).

Second-place victories went to Zach Anderson (112), Larry Ragsdale (119), Quayde Fisher (130), and Jerrad Miller (152).

Third-place wins were achieved by Jacob Ellis (152), and Eric McConico (189).

The Cougars amassed 344.5 points. Phoenix was second with 288.5, and Henley was third with 250.5.

Other scores: North Valley 198, Hidden Valley 106, and Rogue River 23.

## Busy bevy backs county commission with its behind-the-scenes expertise

By WALLY AIKEN  
For IVN

Linda Langford, Angel Osipovich, and Linda McElmurry are among the busiest employees at the Josephine County Courthouse, although they're not exactly household names in our community.

But they are the behind-the-scenes public face for the Josephine County Board of Commissioners.

They are the team tasked with making a politically charged office run smoothly. Yet many people are unaware of the vital roles they play in county government.

McElmurry, the self-described "point man," is the lead board assistant and has a



Angel Osipovich

long association with county government. Her father was a school superintendent from Glide.

She says that she was exposed to small town politics at an early age. She spent 12 years working for Douglas County, the last seven as office manager for the health department. She has been



Linda Langford with Commissioner Dwight Ellis

with the Josephine commissioners' office since 2005.

Osipovich came to the county commissioners after owning and operating her own business, a clothing boutique that also offered tanning booths. As a married mother of two, she was seeking a more stable job situation. She will start her third year with the commissioners in April.

Langford is the newest member of the team, but has worked 15 years for the county. Her last county position was administrative supervisor for Marie Hill, the former chief operating officer. Having started in the commissioners' office in August, Langford said that she is still learning how the workplace functions.

All three have clearly defined roles within the office, but also are required to operate as a team. Osipovich is Commissioner Jim Raffenburg's assistant, and generally considered to be the person charged to deal with the public, a particularly thankless position given the ire some

visitors to the office feel.

She also is required to deal with the logistics of county public presentations such as town hall meetings.

Langford is assistant to Commissioner Dwight Ellis, and also assists county Property Manager Phil Killian. She staffs two advisory committees -- fire protection and mental health -- and serves as accounts payable clerk.

McElmurry is commission Chairman Dave Toler's assistant. As lead board assistant she is the coordinator for



Linda McElmurry (right) with Rosemary Padgett, chief financial officer.

office operations.

Besides individual responsibilities, the three are required to keep minutes of various meetings, track mail, and prepare resolutions and orders. They have to keep commissioners advised on coming meetings, and deal with the myriad details arising during the day-to-day functioning of county business.

They are consistent in one belief: They all feel that the job is the most challenging (Continued on page 3)