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A young dancer responds to *Dandelion Jo*, which played for Concerts in the Park on Thursday, July 24 in Jubilee Park. Another free concert, sponsored by Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce will feature *Taylor Rose* on Thursday, July 31 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Photo by Ali Madjdi for *I.V. News*)

Main branch main goal of library group

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) requesting the start of negotiations to reopen the main library in Grants Pass has been drafted by the Josephine County Board of County Commissioners for the nonprofit Josephine Community Libraries Inc. (JCLI).

Opening the main branch is seen by JCLI as the first step in reopening all the library branches as well.

"We're excited about this new development," said Doug Walker, JCLI board president. "We look forward to establishing a good relationship with the commissioners and are encouraged by the terms they're proposing."

In the draft, the commissioners indicated that they would lease the main library
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Jo County pays airfare for contested D.C. 'junket'

By MICHELLE BINKER
IVN Staff Writer

The Josephine County board of commissioners has declined to take further action to seek reimbursement for the cost of an airline ticket Commissioner Jim Raffenburg used to travel to Washington, D.C. for a National Association of Counties (NACO) conference earlier this year.

Board Chairman Dave Toler stated Friday, July 25, that he'd received a request from the finance department to bring the issue before the board. He contended that the question was whether or not Raffenburg would reimburse the county for the cost of his airline ticket.

During a regular administrative meeting in Grants Pass, Raffenburg countered by asking Rosemary Padgett, chief financial officer, if she brought the issue to the board of her own volition, or if she had been requested to do so. She stated that the chairman requested that she bring the matter to the board.

Commissioner Dwight Ellis then inserted that the



Josephine County Chairman Dave Toler gestures in exasperation during a meeting as he queries Commissioner Jim Raffenburg about

'the truth' on his promise to pay for a trip earlier this year. (Photo by Michelle Binker, *Illinois Valley News*)

county did not have a travel policy applicable at the time the ticket was purchased.

"I don't think the county legally has a leg to stand on," he said. "I would make a motion that the county pay this — I think we've already paid it — but not take it any further because I don't think we need to."

Raffenburg agreed and

seconded the motion.

"It was an expense that under the travel policy rules at the time I could make. (The rules) were changed after the fact," he said. The cost for the ticket was approximately \$630. Raffenburg used the nonrefundable ticket, and paid the remainder of his expenses to attend a NACO legislative convention.

"Whether I had gone or not gone, the county had spent the money," he said.

Toler disagreed.

"We do know that legal counsel does not concur with that opinion," he said. "You need to have board approval before spending \$3,000 on a trip representing the board."

Further, Toler cited instances where Raffenburg

had publicly declared that he would pay for the trip.

"I'm just trying to find out what is the truth; are you really paying for the trip," Toler asked, "or are we going to pay for a good chunk of this trip?"

Raffenburg suggested that Toler was stalling, and called for a vote.

The motion to approve the expenditure with no further action was approved 2-1 with Toler in opposition.

A handful of department managers, who earlier had gathered for a managers' update meeting, lingered in the conference room or just outside the door to listen to the matter, then departed after it was concluded. Raffenburg asked that it be noted that those county employees had no business remaining just to hear the exchange while they were on the clock.

"They obviously had no other business here at the time," he said. "County staff is on the public payroll, and for them to stay to watch something they have no interest in is wrong," he concluded.

Board opposes fed forestry legislation

By MICHELLE BINKER
IVN Staff Writer

Despite a dissenting vote, Josephine County commissioners have approved a resolution signifying the county's opposition to the proposed Forest Restoration and Old Growth Protection Act, and proposed Pacific Northwest Forest Legacy Act.

The OK is necessary "because such legislation is contrary to the interests of their constituents and Josephine County," according to the resolution.

The board voted on it Friday, July 25 during a regular administrative meeting in the commission conference room at the county courthouse in Grants Pass. Commission Chairman Dave Toler, of Illinois Valley, voted "No." Commissioners Dwight Ellis and Jim Raffenburg voted for approval.

The resolution was requested by Southern Oregon Resource Alliance (SORA) President Jim Frick in response to the Forest Restoration and Old Growth Protection Act, and proposed Pacific Northwest Forest Legacy Act. They comprise national legislation proposed by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), respectively.

The proposed legislation purports to provide for more jobs and economic opportunities from management of federal lands. But the resolution passed by the county

board is critical of the plans' permanent prohibitions against harvesting old-growth in excess of 120 years of age, and a ban against building new roads in forest lands.

Ellis said that it is time to "take a stand" on federal forestry issues. He noted that much of what was promised to counties under the Clinton administration's Northwest Forest Plan "went by the wayside."

Raffenburg stated that the proposed legislation amounts to "a complete capitulation to the end goals of the environmentalist community. I don't see how that is in the best interest of the economies of Western Oregon," he commented.

In voting "No," Toler declared that the resolution reflected "the same strategy the county has been following for 15 years."

"If I was one who didn't want any timber production out in the forest, as some do claim, I would be very tempted to vote with you," Toler said. "This is not a new strategy for this county. I think the results speak for themselves ... not much production on the federal forests."

"I am going to be voting against this because I do want more timber production in the federal forests," Toler insisted. "I think the bill could offer the best opportunity for timber production on federal lands that we've seen in a long time," he said.



An ice cream-eating contest with a surprise handicap was held by the Illinois Valley Section of Rogue Valley Boys & Girls Club on Friday, July 25. The messy-but-fun event was conducted at Evergreen Elementary School. Participants were unaware that they would have to wear nylon stockings over their faces until the contest was about to begin. The children, in three age groups, had their choice of vanilla or chocolate. (Photos by *Illinois Valley News*)



A summer woodshop program led by teacher Chuck Robertson is resulting in a 20-by-12-foot addition to a small storage shed behind Lorna Byrne Middle School. Student builders and painters are (left photo, from left) Erik Householder and Monty Gallegos; (right) Jamie Sowell and Brian Sowell. Not shown: Jamey Owens, Seth Hammersmith, Marilyn Scott and Cooper Chapman. Robertson said that the addition is to store lumber from the woodshop, as workspace is needed in the main building to accommodate precision wood-working equipment donated by the Southern Oregon Guild. (Photos by *I.V. News*)

