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Meet about funding held

But media exclusion stirs DOJ complaint

By MICHELLE BINKER
IVN Staff Writer

Seeking solutions to funding crises in Oregon counties brought on by the departure of federal O&C funds, more than a dozen public officials from the state, several counties and two federal agencies met at Paradise Ranch near Merlin July 28.

But the meeting, from which news media and the public were excluded, has sparked a complaint to the Oregon Dept. of Justice on the grounds that it violated public meeting law.

Commissioner Dave Toler, chairman of the Josephine County Board of Commissioners, reported on the meeting during the commission's administration meeting Tuesday morning, July 29, in Grants Pass.

He stated that attendees included District 2 state Sen. Jason Atkinson (R-Central Point); District 3 state Rep. Ron Maurer (R-Grants Pass), District 4 state Rep. Dennis Richardson (R-Central Point); Jeff Griffin from Gov. Kulonowski's office; representatives from Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service; Douglas County Commissioner John Lorenz; Jackson County commissioners C.W. Smith and Dave Gilmore; Multnomah County board Chairman Ted Wheeler; and Mike McArthur, executive director of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC).

Toler, Treasurer John Harrelson, and Connie Roach from the assessor's office, represented Josephine County.

Among topics discussed were increasing the O&C county shares of federal timber receipts from 50 percent to 75 percent, as was increasing timber receipts overall, Toler said, "in spite of all the rumors circulating around the meeting. There were those who advocated for the (Western Oregon Plan Revision) Alternative Two, others talked about something more moderate."

Other possible solutions discussed, Toler said, were Richardson's "Tax for a Tax" proposal, which would replace property tax with sales tax; and state and possible federal tax credits for biofuels in the forests.

Wheeler even talked about the need to remove the Measure 50 property tax cap, Toler reported, noting that there was "a lot of sympathy around the table" for that idea.

"I think it was a good
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Ground broken for RCC business site in Kerby

Seen as a boon for businesses in Illinois Valley, which has a bright future "with strong, progressive growth," construction will begin soon on the Illinois Valley Business Entrepreneurial Center (BEC).

Ground-breaking for the center was held at the Rogue Community College Kerby Belt Bldg., which houses the RCC Learning Center, on Thursday, July 31. A crowd of approximately 50 attended.

The project will include remodeling approximately 1,300 square feet of space of the current building, and adding 1,200 square feet of new space for business events and services. Ausland Builders of Grants Pass is in charge of

construction.

The BEC is funded primarily through a \$300,000 USDA grant with supporting grants from the Four Way Foundation, the Ben B. Cheney Foundation, the RCC Foundation, and Josephine County. Project partners are RCC through its Small Business Development Center, Josephine County, Illinois Valley Community Development Organization (IVCDO), and Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development Inc. (SORED).

The project is part of "a vision to have even more space for business development and community usage," said Peter Angstadt, RCC president.



Artist's rendering shows planned RCC facility in Kerby. (Illustration provided) Photo, page 4.

He told the crowd of the hopes for helping to spark not only new business development for Illinois Valley, but to aid existing businesses to expand.

"Imagine in 10 years what strong, progressive growth will do for this valley and its wonderful people,"

said Angstadt.

Maj. Gen. David Trump (USAF retired), chairman of the RCC directors, called the plan "an exciting project that will result in a stronger RCC presence to a vibrant Illinois Valley." He said the efforts of many leading to the project should be applauded.

Speakers also included Josephine County Commissioner Dwight Ellis, and Robert Schumacher, IVCDO executive director.

Ellis noted that the project initially began in 2004 as a plan for a business incubator at Illinois Valley Airport. He observed that the RCC site in Kerby likely "is the best place for an enterprise center" and cited the partnerships that are working to make the BEC a reality.

Remarked Schumacher, "This has been a long time coming," a comment that drew laughter from the audience because of the ups and downs that have accompanied the project.

He added that IVCDO (formerly I.V. Community Response Team) has worked for years on business mentoring, and that the BEC will be a welcome addition. Helping businesses succeed in their

endeavors is important, said Schumacher.

Angstadt said that those who want to help the BEC financially, to help complete all construction details, can contact Jerry & Sharon Work at their Dovetail Joint business in Kerby. They also serve on an RCC advisory group.

Representatives of many organizations attended the ground-breaking. In fact, after the "official" ground-breaking, a number of attendees grabbed shovels and turned some dirt as a sign of their involvement.

And one observer pleased with the coming BEC was Bill Moore, who formerly worked on business development for IVCDO.

Besides Chairman Dave Toler of the county board of commissioners, and District 3 state Rep. Ron Maurer (R-Grants Pass) there was representation from groups including Kerby Belt Masonic Lodge, I.V. Family Coalition, Kerbyville Museum, Friends of the Chateau & Oregon Caves, Siskiyou Field Institute, I.V. Safe House Alliance, I.V. Section of the Boys & Girls Club, Southern Oregon Guild, RCC Board of Directors, SOREDI, and others.



'Heavy extrication' that took an hour to complete was used by Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) personnel to remove the driver and lone occupant of a vehicle that crashed in the 3300 block of Rockydale Road shortly prior to 2 a.m. Thursday, July 31. American Medical Response transported the victim. Subsequently, Gloria Jean

Silvey, 53, of Cave Junction, was cited on a charge of driving under the influence of an intoxicant, said Josephine County Sheriff's Office. For the rescue, IVFD for the first time used its new Res-Q-Jack equipment, which stabilizes vehicles during extrications. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg, IVFD Media Dept.)

Fire danger level climbs to 'extreme'

The public-use fire danger level on land protected by the Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) Southwest Oregon District rose to "extreme" (red) at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 5.

Fire precaution levels assigned by the district, located in Medford, affect state, private, county and Bureau of Land Management forestland in Jackson and Josephine counties.

Public-use restriction changes include:

*Chain saw use is disallowed between 10 a.m. and 8

p.m. During other hours, users must have an ax, shovel and fire extinguisher on-site, and provide a one-hour fire watch after using the saw.

*Mowing dry grass is disallowed 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. (except for agricultural purposes, such as cutting hay).

*Cutting, grinding or welding metal are disallowed between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. During other hours, a water supply must be present at the work site and work may proceed only in a cleared area.

The following public use restrictions remain in effect:

*All open burning of debris is prohibited. This includes burn barrels.

*Fireworks are prohibited, except in cleared areas.

*Camp fires are allowed only in designated campgrounds. This restriction includes charcoal-fired barbecues. But liquefied or bottled fuel stoves are allowed.

*Vehicles, including motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles, are not allowed on unimproved roads.

*Smoking is allowed only in a vehicle and only while on an improved road.



Tree Climbing Northwest, an international tree-climbing school based in Cave Junction, provided instruction for members of Boy Scout Troop 24 from Jerome Prairie Bible Church. The lessons were conducted on a large walnut tree on W. River Street on Sunday, Aug. 3. Among climbers (right) was Wesley Fuller. (Photos by Ali Madjdi for *Illinois Valley News*)



New board elected to lead Kerby Ditch Association

By LINDA
COREY-WOODWARD
For IVN

The Kerby Ditch Association Board of Directors called a meeting for July 30 to disband the association, but members disagreed with the plan, deciding to retain the association, and elected a new board during the meeting held in the RCC Kerby Belt Bldg.

After 12 years of trying to convert the Kerby Ditch from an open irrigation ditch to a pipeline, the board had decided that little progress had been made. Board members expressed frustration with the obstacles they

The 55 association members hope that the new board will bring fresh energy to the beleaguered project, according to Davis.

Outgoing board members are Dave Paulsen, president; Esther Loncosky, treasurer; and Chatghatzbanian, secretary. The new board consists of President Bob Kerivan, Vice President Rebecca Kelly-Imbeahl, Treasurer Ted Davis and Secretary Joy Shinerock. All past and present directors are Kerby land owners and some operate businesses in Kerby.

Chatghatzbanian commented that the July 30 meet-

After 12 years of trying to convert the Kerby Ditch from an open irrigation ditch to a pipeline, the board decided that little progress had been made

encountered, according to members Lloyd Davis and Delores Chatghatzbanian. Davis commented that a stumbling block has been getting Illinois Valley Soil & Water Conservation District (IVSWCD) to help complete the project as promised. Other challenges have been trying to raise the money to build the pipeline, and obtaining easements for the pipeline to cross private property.

The old Kerby Ditch was decommissioned by the state and local government agencies 12 years ago.

The board serving during the past 12 years struggled with obtaining easements from land owners, new rules and limited help from government agencies, and lack of funding to build the new pipeline to pull irrigation water from the East Fork of the Illinois River.

ing went well. Association members now hope to "get 'er done" in the foreseeable future, so that irrigation water again will be provided to properties and farms in the Kerby Ditch area, which includes part of Cave Junction.

A 1994 Bureau of Land Management report detailed an exhaustive assessment of the Kerby watershed. It described the geology, water, climate, history, biology and human activities of the area.

It stated that the Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife "screened all-known pump and ditch diversions on the mainstem of the Illinois River to prevent loss of juvenile salmonids." The report stated that the Kerby Ditch began as a 1887 water right, which was supplemented in 1962. It diverted water from the East Fork near its confluence with the Illinois River.

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