



Entries for the Rotary-sponsored 2008 Rogue Duck Derby can be purchased at one of many 'adoption centers' scheduled throughout the summer. The booth, staffed by (above) Kathy Carlisle and other volunteers from Home Valley

Bank, and Rotary Club of Illinois Valley members, will be set up in Downtown Cave Junction during Art Walk and the Blackberry Festival, and at Jubilee Park during the I.V. Lions Labor Day Festival (Photo by M. Binker, I.V. News)

Food preservation help offered online

Rising food prices prompted many people to plant home gardens this year.

To reap the benefits throughout the year, you'll need to preserve your harvest.

The toll-free Oregon State University Extension Food Safety/Preservation Hotline is operating this year through Sept. 30. Phone (800) 354-7319 Mondays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (except holidays). Trained volunteers and Extension staff will answer questions.

The many ways to "put

food by" include canning, freezing, and drying. Freezing and drying are good choices for beginners. Some preparation is needed to maintain quality during storage; for example, blanching vegetables to reduce texture and flavor loss, and coating light-colored fruit to prevent darkening.

Small electric dehydrators will dry fruits and vegetables efficiently. Appropriate moisture-vapor-resistant packaging is needed for freezing. Keep the freezer at 0°F or below for best quality.

Home-canning is a science that must be done correctly. If it isn't, a life-threatening food-borne illness called botulism could result. Foods that have lower acidity (such as meat, fish and seafood, nonpickled vegetables, and poultry) must be processed in a large pressure canner to kill the harmful bacteria. Pressure canners must be in good working order, and the gauges should be tested for accuracy.

The length of time and pounds of pressure needed to process low-acid foods will be influenced by the type of food, the way it's prepared, the size of the jar and your altitude. It's important to use up-to-date instructions that have been developed by food scientists. If you use a favorite recipe instead, you'll need to freeze the food.

This is especially important for homemade salsa, which has caused botulism in the Pacific Northwest when canned improperly.

Foods higher in acid (fruits, pickled vegetables, tomatoes) may be canned safely in a boiling-water canner. Processing times must be adjusted at higher altitudes. It's again important to follow laboratory-tested methods to ensure the safety and quality of home-canned food.

Safe canning instructions, based on USDA research, are available from the OSU Extension Service Website at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog>. (Click on nutrition and foods, then on food preservation and storage.) A printed catalog of these and other OSU Extension publications is available by phoning (800) 561-6719.

Instructions for canning, freezing and drying fruits and vegetables are also available online at the Lane County office of the OSU Extension Service: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/lane/food-preservation/publications>.

State to overhaul 'weak' audit process

House Republicans last week announced their proposal "to reduce waste and fraud in state government by restructuring Oregon's auditing process."

A new Oregon Accountability Office would help legislators monitor the spending and performance of state agencies.

"The Legislature currently lacks the tools to audit state agencies and measure government performance," said Rep. Kim Thatcher (R-

Keizer, Newberg, St. Paul), the proposal's chief sponsor.

"From the RiverBend OYA Scandal to the State Data Center, the executive branch continues to show that it can't hold itself accountable. That's why the Legislature needs more oversight of the bureaucracy.

"Taxpayers deserve to know that their dollars are being spent wisely."

The proposal doesn't require more funding or create a new program, because it redirects half of the Secretary of State's auditing functions to the legislative branch. It also moves the Waste Watcher Hotline to the Legislature, enabling legislators to independently investigate complaints from citizens.

House Republican Leader Bruce Hanna (R-Roseburg) said that the Oregon Accountability Office is needed because state agencies are unable to track their own costs. A recent letter from the director of the Dept. of Administrative Services revealed that "comprehensive records" of agencies' past internal transfer costs "simply don't exist," and that agencies lack a uniform way of recording

and managing those costs.

The Pew Center on the States recently awarded Oregon a C+ for government performance, and considered the state's performance auditing a "weakness" because the current audits contain few performance measures.

Thatcher added, "Oregon is one of the only states without its own legislative auditing function." During 2006, the Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature made a similar recommendation for the Legislature to hold agencies accountable.

"We will give the legislative auditor the authority to conduct performance and management audits of state agencies and programs," said Hanna. "The Legislature is the branch of government responsible for setting budget and tax policies; yet they are given no ability to actually monitor or audit state spending and efficiency. By giving the Legislature its own auditor, we will be able to deliver a better and more effective state government."

The proposal is part of the House Republicans' 2009 agenda, *Building a Better Oregon*.

DEQ in GP relocated

The Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) office in Grants Pass has been relocated.

The new office is open at 302 S.E. H St. in Grants Pass. Hours of business are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, and 8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. and 1 to 5p.m. on Fridays. The phone number remains 471-2850.

The DEQ Grants Pass office administers the Onsite Sewage Division (regulating septic systems) for Josephine County. The office has been at the current location for approximately 25 years. DEQ has been sharing space in a building on Fourth Street with Josephine County Planning Dept. and the county Building and Safety Dept. But all offices currently in that building need to move to make way for other county departments.

The new DEQ office will no longer share a location with the county offices. Those needing building permits need to be aware that they will need to go to two separate locations.

Advertising here pays!
592-2541

Sunday, August 10, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

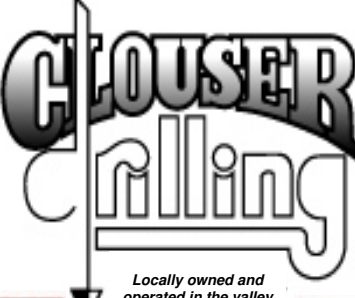
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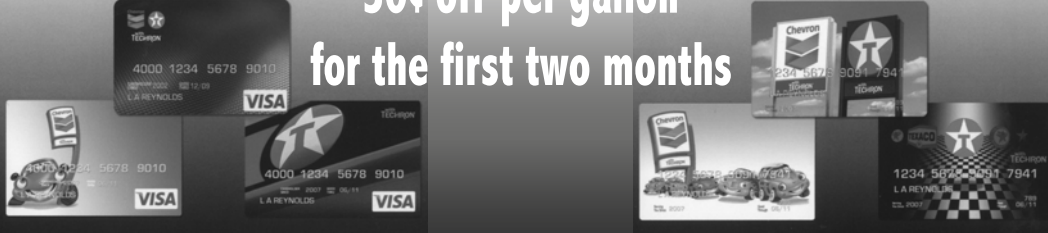
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