

School-based clinics explored

By LINDA COREY-WOODWARD
For IVN

Four Oregon state representatives, led by District 9 Rep. Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay), toured Southwestern Oregon last week, talking with school officials and school-based medical clinic staff.

They wanted to see how rural towns, schools and such clinics try to meet the medical needs of families. Roblan is chairman of the newly established House Rural Policy Committee. On Thursday, Oct. 2 he, with District 3 Rep. Ron Maurer (R-Grants Pass), District 55 Rep. George Gilman (R-Medford) and District 10 Rep. Jean Cowan (D-Newport) visited Lorna Byrne Middle School in Cave Junction to discuss health-care issues.

They met with Principal Damian Crowson, Robert Duehmig of the Oregon Office of Rural Health, and Carolyn Litak, a nurse practitioner with Siskiyou Health Center. She serves as coordi-

nator of the school-based clinics in Cave Junction at LBMS, Illinois Valley High School, and the newest site at Evergreen Elementary School. Kurt Higuera, Siskiyou Community Health Cen-



Nurse practitioner Carolyn Litak

ter CEO, also participated in the conversation.

They group agreed that for most students in Illinois Valley, their only health care is provided through their school. They noted that many families do not have health insurance.

Said Roblan, "If it's not at your school, they don't get it," adding that is the case throughout rural Oregon.

Noted Cowan, "Many parents live far out and transportation to a clinic for health care is a problem."

Schools in S.W. Oregon face daunting challenges trying to care for students with serious health issues -- chronic conditions such as allergies, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder). They provide students with education about nutrition, smoking, alcohol, safety, contagious infections, cleanliness, tattoos and body piercing, and other health-related subjects. They also care for students with colds, minor injuries, nausea and illnesses.

Adequate health care in rural areas was a hot topic during the discussion. Difficulties with funding and communicating between school district and community health clinics were problems expressed by Litak and others present.

All four state representatives said that they are impressed with the SCHC school health centers and with the Cave Junction schools. Roblan commented



Attentive visitors at LBMS.

(Photos by Linda Corey-Woodward)

that they have accomplished much with little financial support. He said that he realized they are faced with the need to do more and do it better.

Everyone present was concerned about rural health care and asked questions of Litak, with interest in how these issues are handled in Cave Junction. The representatives understood the rural health problems and promised to work harder on them in the Legislature.

Mauer has a medically related background, and Cowan also is knowledgeable about medical care and school clinic needs. The meeting ended on a positive note, with mutual promises to work harder for rural health care in Illinois Valley.

GP task force nabs 11 juveniles in 34 fires

A review of the investigation of numerous arson cases and arrests that have occurred during September in the city of Grants Pass was presented Thursday, Oct. 2 by Deputy Chief Laura Zeliff of the city Dept. of Public Safety.

"A review of all fires within the community during a period of approximately 18 months (March 2007 through August 2008) revealed a significant number of fires, approximately 50, that had occurred," she said. "The fires ranged from vehicle fires, trash can fires, dumpster fires, outdoor furniture that had been set on fire, grass fires, structure fires and park land and parks equipment.

"During the latter part of August," said Zeliff, "the number and frequency of fires began to increase. As a result, the Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety Patrol, Detectives and Prevention, the Josephine County Juvenile Dept., Josephine County Parole and Probation, and city of Grants Pass Parks Dept. formed a task force to share information and to work together to investigate these fires.

"Prior to establishing the task force, we had spent considerable hours and effort to canvas neighborhoods, collect evidence, and to question many people that may have been involved or have knowledge about the fires.

"Citizens also came forward and offered reward money for the arrest and conviction of the persons responsible for setting the Morrison Centennial Park fire. The reward rose to \$2,000."

Zeliff continued, "As a result of the forming of the task force, the county Juvenile Dept. shared information that was instrumental in as-

sisting in identifying a possible suspect. Development of that information led to the execution of a search warrant at Justin Lee Acuff's Bridge Street residence.

"Information obtained led detectives to Roseburg, where detectives arrested Justin Lee Acuff and Tristan Canepa. Roseburg Police Dept. assisted this agency in locating the suspects."

Acuff was arrested on charges of first-degree arson, manufacture and possession of a destructive device; and Canepa was arrested for manufacture and possession of a destructive device.

"As a result of these arrests, detectives executed a search warrant at 101 Smokey Lane, the residence of Jonathan Davis," said Zeliff. "He was subsequently arrested on charges of first-degree conspiracy to commit arson, and manufacture and possession of a destructive device."

The investigation continued with a total of 10 arrests and 33 fires being solved during a period of approximately one month. Those arrests involve the following:

Justin Lee Acuff, Tristan Loren Canepa, Christian Joshua Pederson-Illagan, Anthony R. Viscetto, Sean Kenneth Kemper, and Benjamin Jesse Havens, all 15; Jonathan Robert Davis, 18; Eric James Cox and Alexander D. Pederson-Illagan, both 14; and Johnny Walter Amaral, 13.

Acuff, Amaral, and Davis were the only subjects still in custody as of Oct. 1.

"One fire that remained outstanding late into September was the Morrison Centennial Park fire that occurred on July 31, 2008," said Zeliff. "This fire created a significant and costly amount of damage to the playground

equipment, estimated at approximately \$40,000.

"On Sept. 30, detectives were able to solve this case with the arrest of Jonathan Davis, Justin Acuff, and Johnny Amaral. Acuff and Amaral were already lodged at the Josephine County Juvenile Detention Center on other arson-related crimes.

"Davis," said the deputy chief, "had previously been arrested and charged on other arson-related crimes and had been released from county jail. Detectives went to his residence, arrested him and lodged him in county jail.

"To our knowledge, no one was injured when setting the fires, which were deliberate. Numerous accelerants and types of manufactured/homemade devices were used, and many of the accelerants were common household items, easily obtained chemicals, or accessible fuels.

"Many of these fires occurred during night time hours -- after curfew (11 p.m. in the city of Grants Pass).

"Damage, though in some cases limited, still had potential to cause significant damage or harm to other persons or property. The reward money was not used for any information obtained that led to the arrests.

"In addition to the damage initially caused by the fires, estimated at almost \$80,000 in the solved fires," Zeliff noted, "there was a significant financial impact for the Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety. It is difficult to put an exact time and dollar amount on the cost that this agency bore as a result of this investigation.

"However, we know that in excess of 300 hours of investigative and support time was exhausted while inter-

viewing more than 100 individuals, responding to the many fires sites, collecting evidence, canvassing neighborhoods, and conducting follow-up investigations.

"This investigation does continue. Several other fires are still under investigation, and the potential for additional arrests still exists," Zeliff stated.

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