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JI loss \$5,500

A burglar or burglars got away with approximately \$5,500 cash from the Junction Inn on Wednesday morning, Jan. 14, said Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO).

It initially was reported, based on information from JI manager Edgar San Pascual, that a minimum \$7,000 had been taken. JCSO deputies, including George Gasperson, city of Cave Junction contract officer, are seeking culprits.

Maurer hits health care, gas tax plan

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

A proposed increase in the gasoline tax, and major changes in health-care delivery with added taxes were among topics covered during a town hall meeting conducted by District 3 Rep. Ron Maurer (R-Grants Pass).

He provided a lesson in legislation to approximately a baker's dozen citizens during a Monday, Jan. 19 gathering at Anne G. Basker Auditorium in Grants Pass.

He said that he plans to vote against the gasoline tax and vehicle registration fee increases that have been suggested by Gov. Kulongoski to fund transportation infrastructure improvements.

"There is an awful lot of opposition to that proposal," Maurer said.

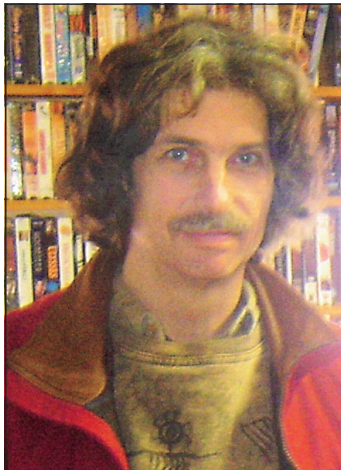
He also touched on Ku-
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Sustainable economy forums pitched to county board

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

A proposal to begin a countywide educational process and forums centered around building a sustainable economy was submitted by Kerby resident Guenter Ambron during the Josephine County Board of Commissioner's Wednesday, Jan. 21 weekly business session.

Ambron, associated with the Illinois Valley-based Community Media & Education Center, said in Anne G. Basker Auditorium in Grants Pass that he wants to establish a collaborative effort with residents and businesses to



Guenter Ambron

discuss how to bring Josephine County into the 21st century.

"We're looking to de-

velop and engage in a dialogue with the community," Ambron said.

To accomplish this vision, he said that he plans to set up three workshops with economic development professionals. One would be held in Cave Junction and the other two in Grants Pass. Ambron said that he wants them held in Grants Pass because it's the county's population base and meetings could possibly be televised and put online for anyone interested in participating.

"The starting point is first we'll get a collective of local entities and the board of

county commissioners to sign on as a facilitating entity," Ambron said. "We all work together and present a slate of panelists and a dialogue process for the community."

Ambron said that he was prompted into action by the board's December passage of a resolution by the Southern Oregon Resource Alliance regarding the Bureau of Land Management's Western Oregon Plan Revision, which would boost logging levels throughout the region. He said that he wanted the board to hear from people in the community who don't represent the timber or real estate

industries.

"We're looking at what didn't work and what can work today," Ambron said. "We're looking past the boom-and-bust industry that isn't going to carry us anymore."

He stated that he wants to work with the Obama administration in the hope that federal stimulus dollars will become available for communities to modernize their economies. Also, he hopes that the county could benefit from having a plan already in place.

"We would like to have a representative from the transi-
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East Fork, an Illinois Valley-based Bluegrass and Rock band, played Sunday, Jan. 25 at the Illinois Valley Grange Hall on Holland Loop. The concert, a fund-raiser for the Open Door and Life Lines food banks, was attended by approximately 60

persons. Benefit co-organizer Denny Hare said that the event raised some \$121 each for Life Lines, Open Door and CJ Cares, plus some \$250 worth of food.
(Photo by Michelle Binker, *Illinois Valley News*)

'Big Look' calls for changes to Oregon land-use laws

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Last week, the standing group tasked with examining Oregon's land-use laws made a series of recommendations to the Legislature regarding policy revisions on local control by counties.

But groups on both sides of the land-use debate seem to be in agreement concerning their disagreement with suggestions made by the Big Look Task Force.

The task force includes Cameron Krauss, who serves as the general legal counsel for the Glendale-based Swan-

son Group timber company. However, Krauss was out of town and could not be reached for comment.

Grants Pass resident Jack Swift, who serves as the coordinator for the Josephine County Chapter of the national organization, Americans for Prosperity, said that he opposes the new recommendations for any number of reasons.

Swift said that the biggest problem is still the fact that Oregon has comprehensive statewide land-use policies. He said that those regulations starve counties of

property tax revenue, and that expanding the budget of the Oregon Dept. of Land Conservation & Development will result only in more and stricter limitations.

Rural Oregon is being "short-changed" in terms of investment in infrastructure, Swift said. He added that the continued creation of compacted, dense urban living centers will not attract capital investment to the state.

Swift said that the limitations on development artificially enhance the property values of existing home owners while depriving the mar-

ket of low-cost housing. The biggest problem with the land-use system, he feels, is "free-wheel standing" for anybody to oppose or appeal any attempt at development.

Eric Stachon, the communications director for land-use advocacy group 1000 Friends of Oregon, said that the task force "missed a big opportunity."

"Certainly," he said, "the land-use planning system needs to be strengthened in order to meet the challenges Oregon will face over the next 30 to 50 years. I think everybody is in agreement on

that," Stachon said.

"The problem is, the biggest piece of the task force proposal weakens the system rather than strengthening it," he stated. "It does that by basically allowing some counties to start a process in order to basically weaken the standards that protect farm and forestland."

Stachon added that a research team consortium of Oregon universities conducted an assessment of the state's land-use system, and that its work should have been considered by the task force.

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Emergency personnel were kept busy Monday, Jan. 26 with several traffic accidents, including two roll-over mishaps. Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD), American Medical Response (AMR) and Oregon State Police responded to a 9:05 a.m. crash (Above, left) on Hwy. 199 on the bridge over Rough & Ready Creek near milepost 33. Driver Andrea D. Steelman, 32, lost control due to

ice, said OSP, and her southbound Bronco spun out, crossed the lane for northbound traffic and rode up the guardrail, taking out some 20 posts, OSP reported. (Photo by IVFD Media Dept.) Steelman was taken to Three Rivers Community Hospital (TRSD) in Grants Pass by AMR. Also Monday, an accident at 520 Laurel Road was reported at 1:27 p.m. (above, right). AMR and IVFD



responded with Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO). Cave Junction resident Samantha Wiscarson, 24, said that her car hit gravel, causing her to lose control, and the vehicle rolled. She complained of chest pain and was taken to TRSD by AMR, stated JCSO. (Photo by *Illinois Valley News*). Another ice-related mishap occurred Monday morning. Photo on page 7.