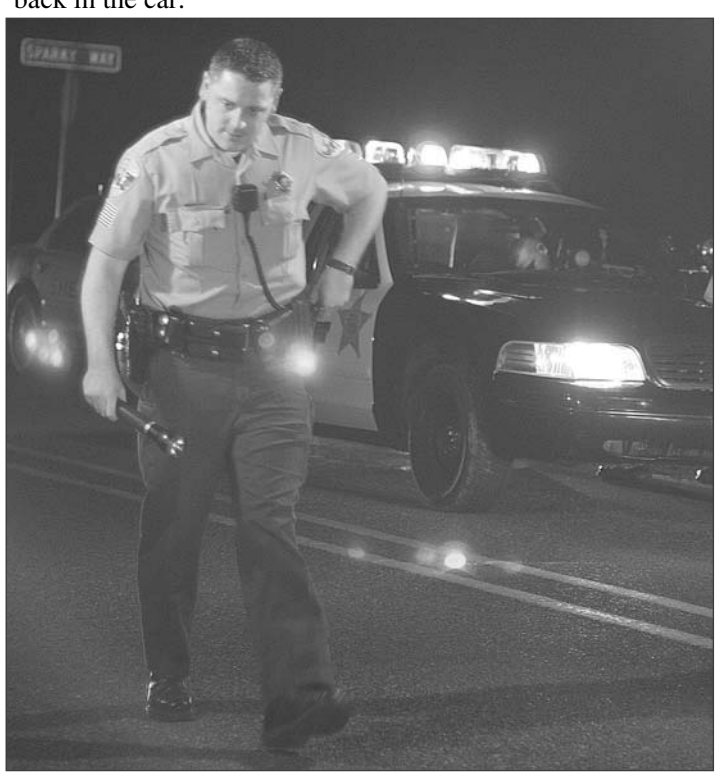
A day in the life of a community police officer

(Continued from page 1)

the suspect comes out of Shop Smart and lights a cigarette, at which point Gasperson calls him over. He springs out of his car and searches the man, explaining to him about the warrant.

Gasperson instructs the man to sit on the curb as he grabs his citation book and starts writing the ticket.

The suspect is given an April court date. Gasperson wishes him well and gets back in the car.



Always on the move, another busy day.

4:45 p.m.

Employees of the CJ Post Office had phoned the sheriff's office the previous day to complain about an incident involving three transients. Gasperson heads to the post office to follow up on the call.

Since the post office closed to the public around 15 minutes prior, Gasperson has to go to the back door to contact the employees.

Gasperson is granted entrance, and asks if the transients have post office boxes. If they don't, he said, they can be "trespassed" from the premises.

A postal worker responds that two of the three transients don't have post office boxes, and adds that she saw one of them defecate by the side of the building. The third transient has a post office box, she said, but if he behaves in such a manner again, she wouldn't mind having him trespassed, either.

The woman thanks Gasperson as he leaves. He walks back to the car to update Dispatch, and learns that one of the transients had been arrested the previous evening for assaulting one of the others.

A few seconds later, Gasperson spots the third transient walking down the street with his dog and approaches him. Before Gasperson can even say anything, the man begins apologizing for the incident at the post office.

Gasperson tells him about the trespass and warns him that he'll lose his post office box if there is any further misbehavior at the facility. He pets the man's dog and takes off.

"He's not a bad guy," Gasperson said about the man. "He never gives me any issues."

5:39 p.m.

On his way back to the substation in the basement of Cave Junction City Hall, Gasperson sees the male teen-age runaway in front of the I.V. Senior Thrift Shop with a girl. He parks the car and informs Dispatch of what's going on. He is advised that the young man is listed as a missing person.

Gasperson tries to call the teen's mother, but can't reach her. He cuffs the runaway a few minutes later and puts him in the back of the car. The girl starts walking down the street.

After pulling in to the substation, Gasperson lets the teen-ager out of the car and takes him inside.

6 p.m.

Gasperson still hasn't heard from the boy's mother, so he prepares to take him to the county's Juvenile Justice Center in Grants Pass.

The two head outside, and Gasperson puts his prisoner in the back of the police cruiser. All of a sudden, his cell phone goes off. Gasperson answers, and it's the teen's mother.

"You're in luck," Gasperson tells the juvenile. "You don't get to go to Grants Pass today."

6:15 p.m.

The teen's mother arrives at the substation to pick him up. Gasperson lets the youth out of the police car and uncuffs him.

"I'm sorry that you have to put up with him," the mother tells Gasperson. "Thank you for putting up with him."

7 p.m.

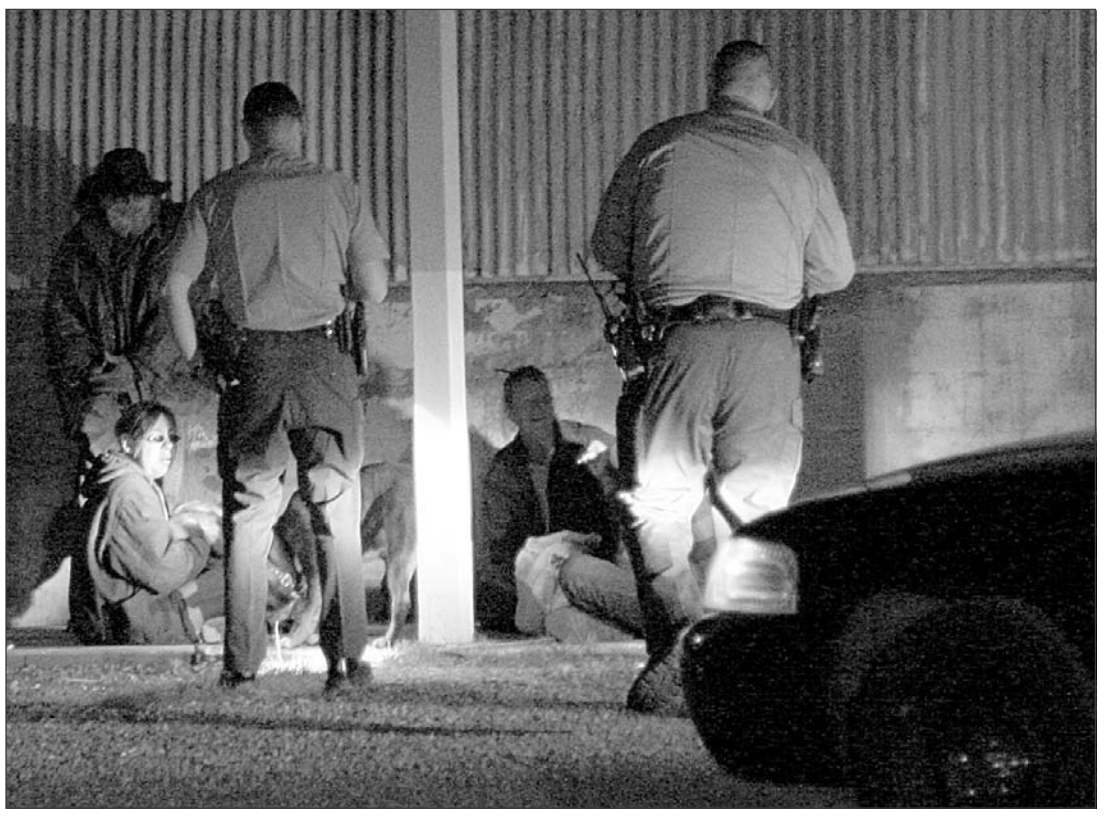
Back on duty following a dinner break, Gasperson heads to Caves Hwy. to "run some radar." He picks a spot that enables radar detection in both directions and a clear view of multiple Stop signs. Gasperson said that people tend to run the signs once it starts getting dark.

A Lincoln SUV comes up Caves Hwy. doing 50 mph. The speed limit on that stretch of road is 35.

Gasperson flicks on his overhead lights and pulls the vehicle over.

"He didn't even know the speed limit of the road," Gasperson said. "That's never a good sign."

Gasperson gets his ticket book and cites the driver.



Gasperson and Deputy Jeff Iles roust a group of vagrants found in Downtown CJ.

8:28 p.m.

While at the substation with Deputy Jeff Iles, Gasperson receives a report from Dispatch of a traffic accident on Caves Hwy. with injuries.

On the scene of a traffic accident on Caves Hwy.
(All photos by Michelle Binker, *Illinois Valley News*)

Gasperson and Iles rush to their cars, turn on flashing lights and sirens and speed to the scene. When they get there, they find a car sideways on the road with smoke pouring out of it. Firefighters from Illinois Valley Fire District are on site, and personnel from American Medical Response arrive shortly thereafter.

Two crash victims have been flung from the vehicle. One wails in agony as firefighters roll him onto his side.

9 p.m.

The scene starts to clear out and the firefighters begin to leave. But the deputies must await a tow truck.

9:45 p.m.

The tow truck and a traffic control unit from the Oregon Dept. of Transportation pull up to the accident scene. Gasperson and Iles chat with the tow truck driver for a few minutes to brief him on the situation.

10:18 pm.

A second, larger tow truck arrives to assist. The car has already been flipped back to an upright position, with all of its wheels touching the pavement. Scattered wreckage, long since photographed and documented, is picked up and removed.

10:30 p.m.

The wrecked car is loaded onto the tow truck, as the last pieces of broken glass and other debris are swept off of the road. This means Gasperson, Iles and a responding OSP trooper can finally leave.

Gasperson gets in his car and starts heading back towards Cave Junction. And even though his shift is nearly over, he knows he still has plenty more to do.

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FRIDAY, MARCH 20
Nacho supreme, wiener wrap, corn dog, spicy chicken burger, hamburger; cheese, pepperoni, supreme or taco pizza; ham & cheese sandwich, turkey & cheese sandwich, turkey wrap; chef, garden, fruit & veggie, or Mandarin chicken salad.

MONDAY, MARCH 23
Spring Break - No Classes

TUESDAY, MARCH 24
Spring Break - No Classes

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25
Spring Break - No Classes

Suit filed in 2007 O'Brien motorcycle vs. car incident

(Continued from page 1)

awaited officer response.

"We waited over an hour," Strange said. "They never showed up there."

Meanwhile, Hill and the other students headed south, and they eventually were stopped by a California Highway Patrol sergeant. It was at that point, according to the account by Strange, that "the kids lied and fabricated a story."

Strange, Pombo and Seybold had since gone to Strange's house on Rockydale Road. They were relaxing and drinking a beer when an Oregon State Police trooper arrived to question them about the incident.

Some two months later, Strange said that he received notice from the Josephine County District Attorney's Office that he was being charged with fourth-degree assault and reckless endangerment. Pombo and Seybold were charged solely with reckless endangerment, but all three men were sufficiently outraged to make a big deal about the situation.

During the following months there were numerous protests in front of the Josephine County Courthouse in Grants Pass. The bikers and their friends carried signs calling for D.A. Stephen Campbell to resign.

In May 2008, the case came to trial before Judge Lindi Baker in Circuit Court. On May 8, a six-person jury found the bikers not guilty on all charges after 13 minutes of deliberation.

On Aug. 25, 2008, a civil suit was filed in Multnomah County court against Hill, Golden and Pettigrew. Strange, Pombo and Seybold are the plaintiffs, and are being represented by Dylan Lawrence from Sam Hochberg & Associates, a Portland-based law firm specializing in motorcycle injury cases.

Strange said that subpoenas have been submitted and that the discovery process is under way.

"I'm trying to recover my attorney's fees and the loss of my time from 18 trips to court and three days of trial by jury," Strange said.

Whether or not the case will go to trial remains to be seen. But Strange said that he simply wants to see justice served.

"We're just waiting to see what the insurance companies are going to say," he said. "It's at the point now where the insurance company can either make us an offer or we go to court."

R&R Lumber Co. seeks co-gen cost recovery

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

A half-million dollar dispute may result in PacificCorp and Illinois Valley's Rough & Ready Lumber Co. facing off in court.

Rough & Ready President Link Phillippi said that the company's lawyer, Malinda Davison of Portland, filed the $515,000 lawsuit in Josephine County Circuit Court on March 2. PacificCorp, of which Pacific Power is one of three subsidiaries, has until April 1 to respond, Phillippi said.

The lawsuit stems from cost overruns associated with the company's co-generation plant, which opened in November 2007.

Phillippi said that the company began talking to PacificCorp engineers in September 2005 about the plant project. But the utility was sold to Mid-America Energy the following year, which Phillippi said complicated the process.

"Basically, we had a different company at the start of the job," he said. "The people we initially started talking to were no longer the people we ended up talking to."

The interconnection process began on Aug. 4, 2006, Phillippi said. Rough & Ready had to finish constructing the plant by the end of 2007 to take advantage of federal energy tax credits. But, said Phillippi, PacificCorp was unable to accommodate them in time.

"We couldn't get hooked up to generating until the end of February 2008," he said. "We met our deadline. It was completed on Nov. 1 and waiting for the hook-up. PacificCorp delayed us."

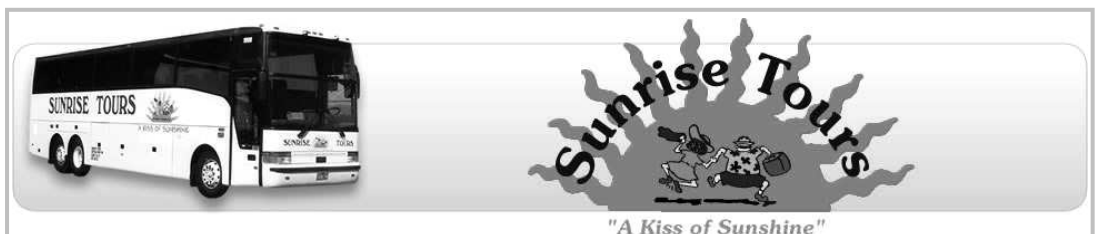
The lawsuit claims three different sets of damages, Phillippi said. The largest is $234,000 of interconnection overcharges. There is another $203,000 in lost power revenue and $78,000 in lost Business Energy Tax Credit revenues.

"We couldn't connect, and it ended up costing us a bundle of money," Phillippi said. "We're disappointed to be in this position, where we have to go to court. We have no other way to recoup these overcharges and lost revenues. We tried to negotiate with PacificCorp, but they haven't been very favorable in dealing with us."

Phillippi said that with the current condition of the timber industry and overall economy, the cost overruns were simply too much for Rough & Ready to swallow.

"It was a difficult project to build, finance and get paid back off," he said. "It was a half a million dollar cost that was unanticipated, and that really hurts," he said. "It's too much to let go. We had to pursue litigation. I'm disappointed that we have to be here, but we can't just let it go."

A nickel ain't worth a dime anymore.
~ Yogi Berra ~



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