

Miner arrest stirs unrest; sheriff urges calm

By **SCOTT JORGENSEN**
IVN Staff Writer

Every month, several groups of miners meet informally at Pottsville, near Merlin. But the meeting was different on the evening of Friday, Oct. 2, as Josephine County Sheriff Gil Gilbertson came to speak.

Gilbertson was present to

discuss issues that have arisen since the Sept. 9 arrest of Gold Hill resident Clifford Tracy.

Tracy, 37, was arrested during a traffic stop by U.S. Forest Service law enforcement officers. He had just left his claim on Sucker Creek in Illinois Valley, and was lodged at the Jackson County Jail in Medford for two weeks.

Ron Gibson, Southwest Oregon Mining Association vice president, told the 75 audience members that Tracy was pressured into signing a document stating that he would not return to the site.

The mining community disputes the “chain of events that has happened,” Gibson said. He insists that the fed-

eral agencies have no regulatory authority over locatable minerals.

Gibson said that he has been contacted by miners throughout the western United States, and received more than 150 calls regarding the Tracy incident.

Gilbertson met with Gibson and a few other miners on Friday, Sept. 25 at the sheriff’s office in Grants Pass to listen to their concerns. During that meeting, Gilbertson promised to come and speak to the larger group to clarify his department’s position on enforcement of mining activities.

Josephine County Commissioner Sandi Cassanelli also attended, along with commission candidate Jack Brown.

Prior to Tracy’s arrest, Gilbertson said that he knew “zip” about mining laws, but has since spent much time researching various federal statutes. Gilbertson stated that he issued a memorandum to his deputies asking them to

not enforce mining laws until he has fully examined the issues involved.

However, he cautioned the miners against taking the law into their own hands to protect their rights.

“I won’t tolerate violence,” he warned.

Gilbertson said that he plans to discuss the issues with the deputy he has under contract to the federal Bureau of Land Management. That deputy was on vacation as of Oct. 2, Gilbertson said.

Gibson told Gilbertson that mineral estates issues mostly involve “exclusive possession” rights, which should be protected.

“We’re not talking about government lands here. We’re not talking about federal land here,” Gibson said. “It’s a private property issue that is paramount here.”

Many area miners have been cited for issues for which they never should have been cited, Gibson said. He added “We either have a granted right, or we don’t.”



Gilbertson addressed miners’ concerns.
(Photo by Scott Jorgensen, *I.V. News*)

Police agencies briefed on state data system

By **SCOTT JORGENSEN**
IVN Staff Writer

A new more powerful and useful crime reporting initiative is being used by Oregon law enforcement agencies.

It was described by Greg Prins, executive director of the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission, during the Sept. 24 meeting of the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) at Grants Pass City Hall.

The Oregon National Incident Based Reporting System (O-NIBRS) already is being used by police departments in Ashland, Central Point, Jacksonville, Medford, Phoenix, Rogue River, Talent, Eagle Point and the sheriff’s offices in Douglas and Jackson counties.

Prins said that the O-NIBRS system provides more

“rich” data than that collected through traditional police reporting methods. O-NIBRS is part of a national movement, Prins said, adding that Oregon State Police would be the “funnel” for such a system on the state level.

“I think it will be useful to us,” Prins said.

According to documents Prins furnished to LPSCC members, the benefits of O-NIBRS include the ability to report crimes by Oregon Revised Statute, share information and control records that an agency does not wish to share with others and form a virtual task force with other agencies.

The information obtained through O-NIBRS can enable agencies to engage in crime mapping, as well as gather personal information on parties involved in incidents. That could include gang affilia-

tions, the documents state.

Terry O’Connell, director of OSP’s law enforcement data system, said that more than 50 law enforcement agencies in Oregon are on O-NIBRS. The system has just been upgraded for the first time, O’Connell said, and has new software programs and Website access capacity for agencies to better obtain information.

Federal grant funds paid for those upgrades, he said.

O-NIBRS collects more data than the Oregon uniform crime reporting system, O’Connell said, which aids in interagency investigations. Much of that data is sent to the FBI, and often is used to help justify federal grants to state and local agencies, he added.

“It provides a richer database to derive our statistics

Hunters reminded to keep fire safety in mind

By **Keep Oregon Green**

Oregon hunters overall are a safety-conscious group.

Considering the thousands of hours they spend afield each year, there are relatively few gun-related mishaps.

The same goes for wildfires. During 2008, only 14 fires were linked to hunting activities in the woods, and so far this year only one.

Before going afield, check the current fire restrictions where you plan to hunt:

- *Are campfires allowed?
- *Is off-road use of mo-

torized vehicles permitted?

- *What about smoking?

Some areas of the state are still in fire season. Check with the nearest Oregon Dept. of Forestry office for fire safety regulations on state and private land. For federal forestland, check with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS).

Regarding campfires, follow these simple steps to ensure your campfire doesn’t become a wildfire:

- *Always keep your campfire small.
- *Have a shovel and plenty of water, or a fire extinguisher, ready at hand.
- *Never leave the fire unattended.
- *When extinguishing a campfire, drown it, stir the ashes and then repeat twice.

Motorized vehicles ? The exhaust system of off high-

way vehicles and ATVs is a potential source of ignition for dry grass and shrubs.

- *Inspect the exhaust system on an ATV or off highway vehicle to ensure that it is undamaged and free of grass and twigs. ATVs must have a U.S. Forest Service-approved spark arrester.
- *Avoid driving or riding where dry vegetation can

contact the exhaust system.

Smoking: Depending on current fire regulations, smoking may be restricted to inside a closed vehicle or building. Make sure your cigarette is dead out and dispose in an ashtray, not on the ground.

For more tips on fire safety in forests, visit www.keepporegongreen.org.

- IVHS School Menu -
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THURSDAY, OCT. 8

Conferences
NO CLASSES

FRIDAY, OCT. 9

In-Service Day
NO CLASSES

MONDAY, OCT. 12

Beef soft tacos, chicken strips, spicy chicken burger, hamburger; pepperoni, cheese, vegetarian or sausage pizza; ham & cheese or turkey & cheese sandwich, turkey wrap; chef, garden or Mandarin chicken salad

TUESDAY, OCT. 13

Chicken fajitas, BBQ sandwich, chicken burger, cheeseburger; pepperoni, cheese or Hawaiian pizza; Italian or turkey & cheese sandwich, spicy chicken wrap; chef, antipasto or garden salad

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 14

Taco salad, sweet & sour chicken rice bowl, spicy chicken burger, hamburger; pepperoni, sausage, cheese or Italian griller pizza; veggie or turkey & cheese sandwich, turkey wrap; chef, garden or Mandarin chicken salad

TOM + MOM

OCTOBER CAMPAIGN '09

Every fall all those kittens that were born in the spring are now having their own litters. Stop the cycle now, get your Tom cats and Mom cats fixed. Save lives by having your cat, your neighbor's cat, or a stray fixed during this exceptional time limited offer!

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Certificates can be purchased at the following locations during October:
Pet Country, Medford, White City, and Ashland Grange Co-ops, all Medford Mini Pet Marts, and Grants Pass Mini Pet Mart (on 6th). Certificates are valid at all participating veterinary offices.

The 2009 Tom and Mom campaign is a Spay/Neuter Your Pet program with funding support from Friends of the Animal Shelter.
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Learning to work with others
Finding spiritual empowerment and joy through service

Every Thursday beginning October 8.
Students will be picked up at Lorna Byrne Middle School at 3:10 p.m. and returned to LBMS parking lot at 5:30 p.m. for parent pickup.

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nelson.r.maler@smithbarney.com

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THE BOOKWORM

I. V. Branch Library News & Happenings
Library hours: Wednesdays & Fridays 11 to 3, Saturdays noon to 4

Thanks to the generous support of numerous donors and volunteers, the Cave Junction branch of Josephine Community Libraries Inc., opened on Sept. 5th. Come in and meet the branch manager and the staff of enthusiastic volunteers.

While here, check out the New Books section with a number of recent additions, revisit old favorites, and discover untried treasures. For the delight of pre-school children, a story and art program is being presented every Wednesday through Nov. 18th from 11 a.m. to noon (sign-ups are encouraged).

We look forward to seeing you — Welcome to all!

592-4778
Check-out our library online at www.josephinelibrary.org

illinois-valley-news.com