

Illinois Valley News

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Residents seek alternatives to spray

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

Some Valley residents hope to stall plans by Perpetua Forests Co. to spray herbicides over a 70-acre plot of recently harvested forestlands near McMullen Creek this month.

Community members met at the Cave Junction county building at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 23 to inform more residents and to brainstorm ways to halt the spraying and possibly convince the company to consider an alternative method.

Besides stopping the spray, residents also want a public notification system to make sure all Valley residents are informed of planned sprays in

advance. Currently, residents near the spray and those paying for Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) subscriptions are the only ones who usually receive notification from private landowners.

According to an ODF permit application from the privately-owned Perpetua Forests Co., the company plans to spray one or a combination of Atrazine, Hexazinone and Clopyrrolid. Perpetua president Jennifer Phillippi

said the company uses products that are also used on agriculture land, and are applied carefully enough that they could be safer than homeowners who use fertilizers without the same restrictions.

Current U.S. EPA regulations control which chemicals can be used for spraying, and the chemicals considered by Perpetua have been approved by the EPA with specific directions for use.

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A crowded house for the home playoff game against Chiloquin Friday Feb. 25.

(Photo by Darcy Wallace, *Illinois Valley News*)

Oregon Medical Marijuana program could face rollback

New bills introduced by Oregon representatives could have big impacts on the current Medical Marijuana Act that began in 1998.

One of these bills is HB 2982, which would deny those with prior felony convictions of a controlled substance to apply for a medical marijuana card.

On Wednesday, Feb. 23, a public hearing was held for HB 2982, which reportedly would also require background checks on existing cardholders. Medical marijuana supporters and Oregon Marijuana Policy Initiative (OMPI) lobbyists went to Salem Wednesday to voice disagreement with the proposed bills.

Other bills in question include HB 3093, which would reduce the amount of marijuana cardholders can carry to one ounce, and Senate Bill 646 to give employers expanded abilities to prevent medical marijuana in the workplace.

OMPI advocates fear these bills will push thousands of patients out of programs and make it more difficult for patients to get doctor-approved medical marijuana cards for conditions

such as cancer or AIDS.

OMPI supporters also believe these proposals will add further cost and bureaucracy to an already strained government. OMPI estimated HB 2982 would cost about \$7.5 million.

According to the news release, other bills in question would reduce the number of plants patients can grow and grant law enforcement more access to patients' homes.

Anthony Johnson, OMPI constituent and Oregon Green Free director, said in the news release that many of the proposals

would be impossible to implement and create expensive new bureaucracies at a time when Oregon government can least afford it.

The news release says OMPI is a relatively new coalition that aims to bring together various pro-medical marijuana groups to increase its political power.

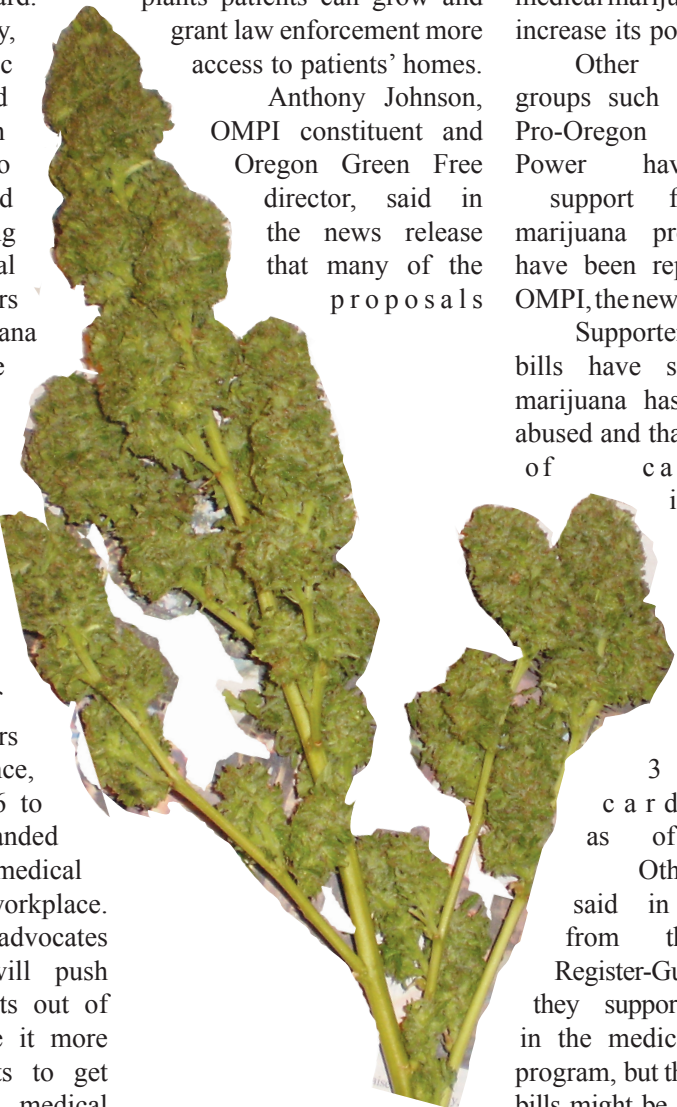
Other advocacy groups such as NORML, Pro-Oregon and Voter Power have shown support for medical marijuana programs and have been represented by OMPI, the news release said.

Supporters of the bills have said medical marijuana has often been abused and that the number of cardholders

increased significantly in the past few years. OMPI statistics reportedly showed

38,269 cardholders as of Jan. 1.

Other legislators said in an article from the Eugene Register-Guard that they supported changes in the medical marijuana program, but that the current bills might be going too far.



(Courtesy Photo for *IV News*)

Deer Creek structure fire listed as suspicious

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

Illinois Valley Fire District officials are saying a structure fire Sunday, Feb. 27, at a vacant Deer Creek home has suspicious origins.

According to recently retired fire marshal Jerry Schaeffer, 17 firefighters responded to the blaze that was first reported as a garage fire. Once there, firefighters discovered that the fire involved the whole house. Neighbors had already put out an earlier blaze in a workshop at the site with a garden hose, but called 911 when another fire started at the same house.

Schaeffer said there have been ongoing problems at the house. Just a few days before the blaze, the house had been vandalized.

"Nobody was living in the house at the time and it was under remodeling to be rented," Schaeffer said. "The windows were broken out [after the blaze] and there was a lot of damage inside."

Because of prior vandalism and two smaller fires at the same location, the fire is listed as suspicious, though no clear suspects have been identified.

Schaeffer said the fire originated under the stairwell and that after a day of investigation, the case has been turned over to Josephine County Sheriff's Office officials.

Fire officials have found possible suspects, but have not yet made contact with them. Schaeffer and fire prevention officer Kamron Ismaili said anyone with possible leads or further information on the fire should call the main office at IV Fire at 541-592-2225.



(Photo by Dale Sandberg, *IVFD Media Dept*)

Firefighters fight off a blaze in a vacant house in the 500 block of Deer Creek Road Sunday, Feb. 27.