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Inside:



Commissioners Corner
Page A-3

NEW FEATURE! Slices of Life
by Jill Perter
Page A-4

Back Street Body Piercing Opens
Page A-6

IVHS Welder takes 2nd at SkillsUSA
Page B-3

IVHS Sports Results
Page B-1

Evergreen Elementary news
Page B-6

Evergreen Students of the Month
Page B-6

IVHS Principal's Students of the Month
Page A-6

Obituaries A-2
Sudoku B-3
Crossword B-3
Classified B-3/4
Blotter A-5

Mass mess at joint meeting

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

Only one of the three commissioners remained at the end of the quarterly Josephine County Commissioners meeting in Cave Junction Monday, April 25.

At first, commissioners Sandi Cassanelli and Simon Hare attended, with Dwight Ellis absent after announcing his upcoming retirement earlier that afternoon. But towards the end, inflammatory objections from

a resident about a proposed mass gathering ordinance led Hare to leave the meeting.

Cassanelli said Ellis announced in an email to colleagues that he planned to retire, with his last day August 31, 2011. In the email, Ellis reportedly said that with his upcoming 65th birthday next month, he believed it was the right time to let someone with new ideas and more energy take the helm. He expressed support for the people of Josephine County and said he had no personal problems, but felt he was

ready to step aside.

County charter states that the remaining commissioners must find a replacement within 30 days of Ellis leaving his position.

After Ellis' retirement announcement, Bob and Gloria Ziller gave a presentation on the problems with internet and phone service from Frontier, which serves nearly all the residents in the Valley.

The Ziller presentation included research on speed tests showing a download speed averaging three

megabytes per second, compared to U.S. averages of 12.51 megabytes per second. They also stressed the recent phone outages in summer and winter months where 911 services failed for more than 24 hours.

The Zillers and other residents expressed a need to work together to demand more bandwidth for rural areas, not just at the county level, but by voicing concerns with state representatives and senators.

"This is going to take all of us," Bob Ziller said.



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

2 yr old Olivia Wittman of Cave Junction admires her find during the Easter Egg hunt Sunday April 24 at Jubilee Park in Cave Junction.

Residents, businesses spruce up Selma

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

On Saturday, April 16, some 40 people helped pick up garbage, trim hedges and mow lawns along Hwy 199 in Selma to clean up the landscape near local businesses.

It was the first of what could be several clean-up days that Katherine and John Bryan, owners of Deer Creek Vineyards, hope will increase the town's "curb appeal" for those who drive by.

According to Katherine Bryan, seeing multiple stores closing recently gave several area residents a sense of urgency to get something done to improve the local economy.

Selma business owners soon formed a business alliance to discuss their needs and ideas to improve the surroundings to draw in more traffic from the community.

"Many of the business owners are vested here," Bryan said. "If the local community and businesses are not doing well, it affects property values, there's a loss of community pride...you can see it just by

how some folks take care of their properties, businesses or otherwise."

Volunteers walked up and down Hwy 199, from the entrance into Selma near the post office all the way down Lakeshore Drive.

"[The] folks who came out to help on our clean-up day were pleasantly surprised," Bryan said. "People rolled down their windows [from their cars] and asked what we were doing. They smiled and waved and even had suggestions for us. To have 40 people show up, that's impressive."

Bryan said Crystal Kaleidoscope, Country Folks Restaurant, Matrix Bio, Island Girl Coffee, Ray's Food Place, Whispering Canyon Ranch and Lake Selmac Resort were just some of the many businesses participating in the business alliance and helping with the April 16 clean-up.

"With a business alliance...you can have a lot more flexibility with the private sector to develop a beneficial partnership with the public sector to foster real change or economic renewal."

On Saturday, some mowed lawns near the churches and Ray's, while others cleaned up and refreshed landscape areas. Other volunteers picked up trash, which wasn't in short supply: Bryan said someone found a 20-year-old Pepsi can.

"Unfortunately Selma is perceived as a drive-through town with nothing to offer," Bryan said. "We're trying to change those perceptions."

Bryan said she has dealt with some of those perceptions in the Illinois Valley community. She joined the I.V. Chamber of Commerce in hopes of joint efforts with local businesses to stimulate the local economy. But she said the business alliance hasn't seen or heard of efforts underway, and that if there were, it hadn't been effective.

There are many nonprofit organizations all over the Valley, but with so many nonprofits can come competing interests.

Continued on A-7

CJ clean-up set for Saturday

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

Several residents have been planning clean-up efforts around the Illinois Valley now that spring has finally arrived.

One local resident, Ann Padgett, has helped organize a community clean-up to pick up garbage and pull weeds along the Redwood Hwy in downtown Cave Junction from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 30.

"For a couple years now, [I noticed] people would get together and everyone talked about how we need to start doing a clean-up around here," Padgett said. "I decided, well, we could sit around for the rest of our lives and talk about it or just do it."

Padgett plans to keep things simple, with a canopy set up outside the County Building with maps for volunteers. Clean-up will start on Hwy 199, continuing onto nearby streets as

time allows.

Padgett said part of the idea came from clean-up efforts in Grants Pass organized by a downtown merchants association, where volunteers would set aside a day each year to spruce up the area. After talking with a friend familiar with the Grants Pass clean-up, Padgett said she wanted to do something similar in Cave Junction.

So far, she said she's heard from at least 25 people who said they plan to help out Saturday, making her optimistic that the clean-up will be successful.

In the future, Padgett hopes clean-up efforts could continue, including helping businesses paint their buildings if they request it.

"I'd like to see this go on from here, cleaning up the downtown and making it more appealing to the people who drive along Hwy 199," Padgett said.

RCC to offer computer course series

The I.V. Business Entrepreneurial Center (IVBEC) of Rogue Community College plans to offer a five-part Microsoft Excel series at the Kerby Belt Building this month.

The first course, "Getting Started," which begins with the basics of creating spreadsheets for managing information, is set for Monday, May 9. The second course, "Formulas,"

which teaches different uses for various built-in functions, will run Wednesday, May 11.

On Monday, May 16, "Charts" will cover pros and cons of embedded charts and formatting for easier interpretation. On Wednesday, May 18, "Databases" covers topics such as managing and manipulating database lists and sorting, filters, subtotals and importing and exporting data.

The final course in the series, "Object Linking and Embedding," discusses sharing information between other Windows applications and will be held Monday, May 23.

RCC requests registration in advance by 12 p.m. two working days before the start of each class. Those seeking more information can call 541-956-7400 or visit www.roguecc.edu/sbdc/ivbec.