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Open House for Hwy. 199

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

The Oregon Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) and Cave Junction City Hall have scheduled Thursday, June 2, for an open house to discuss plans to turn two-lane traffic in downtown CJ into one lane each way with a left-hand turning lane.

From 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. on June 2, residents will have the chance to

bring up their questions, comments and concerns to ODOT officials and City Hall members.

Some have worried about potential impacts on businesses with construction during summer months, a peak time for tourists. But Cave Junction City Recorder Ryan Nolan hopes the construction will improve safety by slowing overall traffic speed, as ODOT officials say.

“One of the top requests people have is to slow traffic down,” Nolan said. “To do that we have to make

changes. We’re trying to find a way to do that.”

Nolan said that other highway improvement programs have been discussed in years past, but prior councils have decided to leave things alone.

Recently ODOT approved a Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon (RRFB) for the mid-walk crosswalk between Taylor’s Sausage and Dairy Queen. The newest development, which ODOT official Dick Leever called a “road diet,” would reduce the four total

lanes in downtown CJ to one lane each way as it is for most of the drive along Hwy. 199 through the Illinois Valley.

“One problem right now is that people use the four-lane section [in CJ] as a passing lane so a lot of through traffic gets in the left lane, goes faster and just tries to pass everyone,” said Gary Leaming of ODOT Public Affairs.

“We’re trying to take away conflicts between through traffic and local [residents] trying to make a left turn off the highway,” Leaming added.

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Start of the season



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

The Sons of God Motorcycle Club makes a dusty exit from the “Blessing of the Bikes,” May 14 in rural CJ.

‘Come Join the Fun’ will be fair theme

By Dan Mancuso
IVN Staff Writer

Amidst the hustle and bustle of the preparation of last weekend’s Home and Garden show, the Josephine County Fair Board met Thursday, May 12, in the fairground arts building.

Interim Fair Manager Wes Brown announced the theme for the 2011 Josephine County Fair will be “Come Join the Fun.”

With only two weeks in the interim post, Brown also wasted no time getting down to the issue of revenue. Brown told the sparse crowd, which included County Commissioner Simon Hare, who serves as the fair board liaison, that the books show a \$146,000 short fall in the budget.

“We have a revenue problem more than an expense problem,” Brown said.

To counteract that problem, Brown requested the board approve an increase in the price for admission to the Grants Pass Downs meet.

See “Fair board meets” on A-7

New acts, returning favorites highlight May ArtWalk

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

Friday, May 13 turned out to be a lucky day for visitors of the Second Friday ArtWalk, hosted by the Illinois River Valley Arts Council (IRVAC) featuring local businesses and artists.

From 5 to 8 p.m., visitors walked the streets of downtown Cave Junction and Caves Highway for an evening of music, paintings, dancing and handmade crafts from many talented residents.

The Village Fountain at 116 N. Redwood Hwy celebrated its grand opening with “The Art of Healing Waters,” and featuring the Zumba Dance Troupe busting a move inside and outside on the lawn.

One of the most popular new events included a demonstration of Brazilian Capoeira, combining martial arts, dance and rhythm in a communication between two or more performers, at the Yoga Studio.

According to IRVAC president Judy Hoyle, Camila Ziana and her husband Jason Burke are fairly new Valley residents who put on the Capoeira performance; Ziana teaches yoga and Burke teaches the art of Capoeira.

“I’m very glad they opened [the Yoga Studio],” Hoyle said. “It’s very attractive and they’ve put a lot of work into it with a new floor. It’s a great addition to the community.”

Dos Gringos, formerly known as Nacho Mama’s, also joined the ArtWalk lineup last-minute with several activities for children, who sold their very own lemonade.

John Luerding again displayed his professional photography of weddings, portraits, scenery and animals at the Eye Care Group at 355 Caves Hwy.

The Cave Junction county building bustled with activity, residents dancing to the I.V. String Band with Jack Dwyer, Kent Fisher, Mark Kelz and George Shook. The Valley girls also displayed their intricately-designed 2011 Opportunity Quilt. Ruby of Crinkle Doodle Studios brought many handmade vintage woven baskets.

See ‘ArtWalk’ on page A-7

Cuts dominate school board meeting

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

In a monthly Three Rivers School District board meeting Monday, May 16, several issues came before the board, but concern about potential staff cuts dominated the conversation.

Many public attendees were from Hidden Valley High School, including several students making comments in support of Language Arts and Drama teacher Sherry Zottola.

Zottola also spoke before the board with complaints about how she was treated in recent months, saying she received verbal notice she would be laid off, but had not received written notice in more than three weeks. She also expressed disappointment and dissatisfaction with certain board members, but was later stopped by board chair Dave Strahan, who said personal attacks against board members would not be tolerated.

Other students questioned what about Zottola’s comments were personal attacks, but Strahan, Leslie Meier and others indicated they should more carefully read the protocol for public comment, and did not respond further.

Board member Jim Weaver presented a Three Rivers climate survey

of employees primarily from Hidden Valley, Illinois Valley and North Valley high schools.

According to Weaver, morale is much lower than in years past, possibly attributed to falling enrollment and several years of budget cuts. Several comments expressed concern that administrative members of the school district were not fully aware of the problems they deal with in their schools.

Weaver said despite some of the feedback, there were still positive results to be taken from the survey, with many comments acknowledging the difficult choices board members had to make.

Strahan and Meier both stressed to the public that students and others should

voice their concerns about budget cuts to members of the legislature, who don’t often hear many comments from citizens.

“I have made pleas...to pay attention to what goes on in this legislature,” Strahan said. “After ten years trying to get more funding it still hasn’t happened. It seems it’s

only when we get to this point that [people speak up].”

In other agenda items, the board declared May 2 through 6 as Teacher Appreciation Week and Chris Pendleton and Dale Fisher presented results and successes of Hidden Valley’s Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) program.

In new business, the board passed a resolution to transfer funds for building improvement and a contract for fuel renewal. Reluctantly, they agreed on raising school meal prices for the following school year, but many said they felt they had no choice. They also approved the 2011-2012 Aramark contract, where Aramark reportedly agreed to donate some new equipment.



(Photo by Darcy Wallace, Illinois Valley News)

Three Rivers School Board member Dave Strahan