

Oregon Dept of Forestry fire update

No new fires 10 acres or larger were reported on ODF-protected lands in the past 24 hours.

Sixty-eight ODF personnel are currently fighting fires in other states. These include:

- 62 in Alaska (includes ODF's Incident Management Team 1)
- 5 in Colorado
- 1 in Arizona (returning today)

The Oregon Department of Forestry and its sister agencies in the other western states routinely share firefighting resources as needed. The arrangement is reciprocal: If ODF needs outside help on fires in Oregon, its partner agencies will provide personnel and equipment when possible.

FIRES ON OTHER LANDS

Several new fires were reported July 1:

- The 10,000-acre Owyhee Fire burning four miles west of Adrian on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands is uncontained. Cause: lightning.
- The 4,500-acre Curry Canyon Fire burning five miles northwest of Juntura on BLM lands is uncontained. Cause: lightning.
- The 2,500-acre Crooked Creek Fire burning nine miles southwest of Rome on BLM lands is uncontained. Cause: lightning.
- The 2,500-acre Pascal Fire burning five miles west of Arock on BLM lands is uncontained. Cause: lightning.

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(Photo by Dale Sandberg, IVFD Media Dept)

Carol Davis court, US Forrest Service employee and Illinois Valley Fire District volunteer work to contain a fire on Sun Crest Dr. in O'Brien Saturday, June 29. IVFD believes the grass fire was started by a motorcycle.

Ordinances will go to a referendum vote

By
Annette McGee Rasch
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It's official, Josephine County's four new solid waste ordinances, adopted last April in a 2-1 vote by county commissioners, are now stayed, and will move to a referendum vote in November's election. County Clerk Art Harvey said his office has verified the recently submitted referendum petitions.

"It's a pretty rare occurrence, to see ordinances on the ballot," Harvey said. "This is the first referendum in quite a few years."

Many county residents were thrilled with the new ordinances that would have taken effect this month.

People trying to sell real estate in the county have had sales held up for years because of an unsightly mess on a neighbor's property. Others are concerned about health risks or say they experience mental distress from having to look at piles of garbage, old appliances and junk cars every day.

The ordinances were designed to speed the complaint process up and potentially resolve issues in months instead of years.

The package of ordinances numbered 2013-002 though 2013-005 provides for the elimination of solid waste, hazardous and nuisance conditions; gives enforcement authorities power to investigate violations, issue citations, serve notices, subpoenas and orders and take action to prosecute vio-

lators; establishes and provides rules for a county hearings officer; and provides for enforcement of environmental health laws.

Jack Swift, a lawyer with the Southern Oregon Resource Alliance who represents opponents of the new ordinances, says the county's existing solid waste ordinance and current state laws are adequate.

"I agree with what Commissioner Keith Heck said last Friday, 'It's all a matter of reading the ordinances and making up your own mind,' " Swift said. "It's either that the ordinances do the very little that the commissioners say, or they do too much, like we're saying."

Of the four ordinances under fire, Swift says there's only one that is a

nuisance ordinance, and that the other three relate to all county ordinances and thus are not complaint driven.

"They call for incorporation of state ordinances and rules for prosecution in the compliance court," he said.

"The idea put forward by the ordinances' opponents is that you'll end up with a hovering health department seeking out opportunities to violate people," Heck said. "The way they've stretched it so far out of shape, well, I wouldn't vote for it either. What these opponents are saying the ordinances imply is a long distance from what the ordinances actually say."

See Ordinances on A-9

Algae blooms in Lake Selmac are a chronic problem

By
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With the summer's heat coming on strong, swimmers should watch out for blue-green algae blooms in Lake Selmac, Josephine County's largest inland lake.

Water quality is monitored in the lake and when algae proliferates, the county takes samples and posts precautions. When needed, warnings that advise the public to stay out of the water until the bloom clears up are also posted.

"We haven't had to close the lake to swimming for the past few years," said Brad Carlson, an environmental health specialist with the county's Public Health department. "Most of the worst algae blooms occur in the north end of the lake."

The public swimming areas are on the other shores.

"Water quality has been good so far this year," said Doreen Ferguson, County Parks Director. "It's all about the weather. When it's hot and lake waters are still, it can get bad. But often, when winds kick up in the afternoons, that can help mix the water and dissipate the blooms."

Any standing body of water can sprout algae blooms in warm weather, but Lake Selmac, a man-made lake, is notorious for the problem, in part, because it lacks the checks and balances that natural lake systems possess. This region naturally features high-elevation cirque lakes, according to geologist and longtime Valley resident John Roth.

"Lower elevation lakes created by artificial dams don't allow water to flow out," Roth said. "Natural lakes in this region are generally rock-dammed and overflow with water. The water is incoming and outgoing. But Lake Selmac is comparatively stagnant and that contributes to the algae blooms."

Blue-green algae is an ancient form of bacteria, that to the naked eye, often resembles normal algae. When weather, sunlight and nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) become optimal, algae multiplies and blooms, according to the Oregon Heath Authority. While many blooms are blue-green in color, some may be foamy, scummy, thick like paint, pea-green, blue-green or even brownish red.

"People need to use common sense," Carlson said. "If you see an algae bloom, don't touch it and move away from it." Carlson noted that these algae blooms can also occur in the river, especially in the wider, slower stretches.

Some blue-green algae strains can produce toxins that can irritate the skin or get people sick, though toxins are not always produced, or produced at high enough levels to cause rashes or illness. Still, health experts recommend that people avoid contact with all algae blooms — and to keep pets clear as well.

"Occasional exposure to most varieties of blue-green algae are probably not a problem," Carlson said. "But long-term exposure could cause trouble."

See Selmac on A.9

Newcomers lend a hand to the chamber

By
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Robert and Cheryl Jones may be newcomers to the Illinois Valley, but they're already pitching in to help beautify the community.

Every other day throughout the summer, Robert will be watering the hanging flower baskets installed by the Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce along Redwood Highway in Cave Junction. The water tank is installed in the back of his pickup and operates off his cigarette lighter. The PVC pipe water wand was designed by Bridgeview Vineyard owner Bob Kerrivan.

The Joneses moved to Kerby last year and opened "Outdoor Sport & Fun," an animal feed and sporting goods store across from the Kerby Belt Building, but the business quickly outdrew the space. Two months ago, they opened three businesses at the former feed store across from Shop Smart.

"We're classified by the city as a mini-mall," states

Robert.

Outdoor Sport & Fun was renamed Outdoor Sport and Feed, to better reflect the product lines. Petals 'N Thyme offers fresh cut flowers, potted plants, silk flowers, gifts and antiques and occupies the other half of the front of the store. Their third enterprise is "Eye Catchers," a sign and banner business which Robert brought here from Fresno; offering everything from decals to banners, magnetic signs and yard signs.

Robert chuckles when he recalls how he got into the sign business 20 years ago. "I needed a job, so I decided to open the phone book for ideas. The second place I called had just fired someone. When the owner asked if I knew anything about signs, I told the

truth and said, 'No,' but he hired me anyway!"

After living in Fresno most of their lives, the couple decided to try Oregon; and following a couple of 1,200 mile round trips searching for the right home, they found what they wanted in Kerby.

See Baskets on A-9



Robert Jones of Outdoor Sport and Fun waters flower baskets Monday, July 1.