

Labrador ... Continued from A-1

Josephine County commissioners declared a state of emergency on Monday morning to facilitate “state of conflagration” status with Gov. Kitzhaber and the State Fire Marshall. This action means the county can receive additional funding and resources to help deal with the fires and help minimize impacts to residents. The Labrador Fire, with no containment at this time, has spread into the Kalmiopsis Wilderness, moving west toward the coast, and is also backing down to the Illinois River on its north and east flanks.

As of Tuesday, the eastern flank of the Labrador Fire was located about a mile west of the Oak Flat community, where a level 2 evacuation “advisory” has been issued. Fifty fire fighters are camped at Oak Flat to help protect residences. Because the fire’s potential is “extreme,” the Illinois River Road is now closed to the public.

The fire is active in the some of the same spots scorched by the Biscuit Fire that burned in 2002 and where hillsides are peppered with dead trees, alongside newly-grown 10 to 15 foot-high brush, fuel loads are high.

“It’s an area where the fire will burn quicker in, but it won’t burn as hot,” said Howard Hunter, fire information officer. “But it’s a mosaic, there are other areas that still have trees, areas that are grassy.”

While some are making comparisons to the Biscuit Fire, experts say there are many different factors this time around, and that overall, impacts may be less severe. Experience and previous fire-lines, now being re-vamped, are

working in firefighters’ favor. Crews are also scouting for additional spots where opportunities to contain the fire may exist. With smoke conditions permitting, aircraft will then hit the fire with retardant.

The current strategy to confine the fire by utilizing existing fire-lines and roads will probably result in a long-term fire, according to Tom Lavagnino, Public Information Officer with the Interagency Management Team that has taken charge of the Labrador Fire.

“Experts say this is the only way we can safely cope with the complications of steep topography, potential rolling logs and snags that can ignite and throw embers up to a half mile ahead of the fire,” Lavagnino said. “It’s a big fire. We’ll be fighting it a long time and people will deal with smoke for a long time.”

Officials want residents to stay calm and do their best to help dispel rumors. While the situation is serious, and “there’s no guarantees,” it is thought to be unlikely that the Labrador Fire will force Valley-wide evacuations.

With resources already stretched thin through-out the region and extremely dry conditions, most residents face a far greater fire threat from new brush fires popping up within the Valley, according to both Lavagnino and IV Fire District Division Chief Kamron Ismaili.

“It’s critical that residents do their utmost to prevent new fires,” Ismaili said. “Don’t let your guard down and be prepared. Keep your eyes open and watch each others’ backs. Neighbors should help each other stay safe.”

“Out of the several hundred wildfires in

Oregon this year, about 80 percent of them are human caused,” Ismaili added. “Fire danger is what we make it.”

Medical professionals warn that the smoke may be harmful to peoples’ health, and say children, the elderly and those with Asthma, COPD or heart conditions should stay indoors as much as possible — especially when they can see or smell smoke. It is also advised to wear respirators when venturing outdoors in smoky conditions.

County officials also advise the general public, especially those living closest to the wild-fires, to prepare now, to minimize stress in the event evacuations do become necessary. This includes packing non-replaceable items of sentimental value, medications and clothing in your car. Any evacuations would be coordinated by local sheriff deputies working with the fire management teams.

For more information, contact the Fire Information Line at (541) 471-6620 or go to www.swofire.com or www.inciweb.org. For health advisory information go to oregonsmoke.blogspot.com or www.deq.state.or.us.



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, *Illinois Valley News*)
The sun trying to break through the smoke July 27.

Blackberry ... Continued from A-1

Vendors are still needed as there are a few spaces still available. If interested in having a booth during the festival or for more information please contact Shelly Davis at 541-415-1718 or Jenna Larkin at 541-592-9899. Vendors are welcome to fill out an application and set-up on Saturday morning until 9 a.m. as long as Davis or Larkin have been contacted prior to that morning.

Phillips ... Continued from A-1

On Saturday, August 10, an all-day community benefit will take place at the church, 5181 Holland Loop Road, beginning at 8 a.m. with a carwash, bake sale and silent auction. A benefit concert will take place in the afternoon with headliners John Nolan, J. Barley and others.

Pastor Sonny Moore has set up a PayPal account for Tammie. Earmark donations “Phillips.”

Other donations of clothing or goods can be arranged by calling Lisa Moore at 541-592-3923 to leave a name and number. Address cards to Tammie Phillips at P.O. Box 429, Cave Junction, OR 97523.



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, *Illinois Valley News*)
Bathtub Gin Serenaders play through the smoke during the 10th Annual Siskiyou Folk and Bluegrass Festival held Saturday, July 27 at the Lake Selmac Trout Pavilion.

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