

Illinois Valley News

Wednesday, October 30, 2013, 1 Section, 12 Pages, Volume 76 No. 34 Published Weekly Cave Junction, Oregon 97523

illinois-valley-news.com

Oregon DOJ says there's not enough evidence to prosecute Hare

By Dan Mancuso
IVN Staff

Oregon Department of Justice Senior Assistant Attorney General Kristen E. Hoffmeyer sent an Oct. 24 letter to Josephine County District Attorney Stephen Campbell stating her office completed the review of a case that investigated allegations that Simon Hare falsely reported his 2007 Jeep stolen and drove while under the influence in Grants Pass on May 10, 2013.

The letter states that Hare was uncooperative with the Medford Police Department, but the Oregon DOJ believes that there is insufficient evidence to charge Hare with a crime.

"At this time the Criminal Justice Dept. will take no further action in this matter," Hoffmeyer's letter stated.

Calls to the Medford Police Department were directed to Grants Pass Department of Public Safety (GPDPS). According to GPDPS Lieutenant Dennis Ward, his department is still waiting for the full report from Medford and the entire case will be available for review shortly.

According to District Attorney Campbell, "This was sent to the state to be decided in an objective manner. They found that there was insufficient evidence that there was a crime committed"

"At this time there will be no further action taken," Campbell added.



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Officers investigate a vehicle parked at Caves Chevron, Thursday Oct. 24. Oregon State Police held a "Saturation Patrol" in the Valley Thursday and Friday Oct. 24 and 25. A full break down will appear in the November 6 edition of the *Illinois Valley News*.

Burn Regulations Protect Everyone

By
Judy Hoyle
IVN Contributing Writer

Fire Season ended September 24 and the burning season began. In the weeks following, many Cave Junction residents have complained to Mayor Carl Jacobson about inappropriate materials getting thrown into burn piles including mattresses and couches.

This practice is not only inconsiderate, it is illegal. Any burning of rubber products, tires, plastic, garbage, wire insulation, car parts, petroleum and petroleum-treated materials, asphalt, asbestos or industrial waste, clothing, bedding, mattresses, couches, stuffed chairs, animal remains, or any material that creates dense smoke, or noxious odors is prohibited by Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) and can result in fines of up to \$10,000 per day. Complaints may be reported to ODEQ at 1-888-997-7888, and to the I.V. Fire District at 541-592-2225 or 911 during non-business hours.

Cave Junction residents may deliver their yard waste to the Waste Water Treatment Plant at 1300 N. Sawyer Avenue on Mondays and Fridays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Call City Hall at 541-592-2156 to schedule an appointment for this free service because otherwise, the security gate is locked. Southern Oregon Sanitation accepts couches and mattresses to be delivered to the Kerby Transfer Station for only \$10 each. Call 541-479-5335 for further information on what is accepted, including building materials.

Throughout the valley, only untreated paper, cardboard, lumber, yard debris or woody vegetation burning is permitted and burning is allowed only during daylight hours. To burn safely and efficiently, it's best to start with a small pile of dry material and allow it to start burning well, then add to it to minimize generating smoke.

Fires must be completely burned down to coals or extinguished prior to dark. The fire must also be extinguished if neighbors complain about the smoke or if it becomes too windy, raising the possibility of

having the fire spread.

Any burning without a permit, including using a burn barrel, or violations of the requirements can result in a minimum \$250 fine. Permits may be obtained by going on-line to www.ivfire.com or by going to the I.V. Fire District (IVFD) office at 681 Cave Highway between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The free permits are valid through May 31, 2014 and must be available at the burn site to be presented on request. The purpose of the permit requirement is to assure everyone knows and abides by the rules.

According to IVFD Operations / Prevention Division Chief Kamron Ismaili, before the permit was required, people were burning inappropriate materials because they thought using a burn barrel or keeping the fire small meant they were burning legally.

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Legal challenges threaten plans to accommodate bigger semis on 199

By
Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Contributing Writer

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) wants to get rolling this winter on a \$19 million project along Highways 199 and 197, in Del Norte County, to accommodate bigger and longer semi-trucks primarily traveling to the northern California coast from the east.

"The 197/199 corridor is an economic lifeline important to Del Norte and neighboring counties," said Scott Burger, a Caltrans Public Information Officer. "This project will improve safety and provide a roadway that is easier to maneuver for all users."

Whether the project actually improves or degrades public safety is under debate and may be blocked by litigation from three organizations who have myriad concerns about public safety, proper information disclosure and environmental impacts.

"Oregon residents who live near or regularly travel on 199 have not been consulted at all about how this project would impact them," said Gary Graham Hughes, Executive Director for the Environmental Protection Information Center, based in Arcata, California.

"This is the first I heard about this project," said Josephine County Commissioner Keith Heck.

"Caltrans calls this a 'safety project,' but it'll increase traffic and vehicle speeds in locations that have a history of accidents. There's dangerous spots along the highway that wouldn't be widened in this project," said Hughes, who has family and friends in Southern Oregon and travels the route frequently.

According to Caltrans, the project aims to accommodate the bigger rigs passing each other in opposite directions and would facilitate the reclassification of the 199 corridor by removing existing restrictions to larger Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) trucks, now con-

sidered by many as the industry standard.

Hughes says Caltrans has not been forthcoming about their main objective, which is to create an alternative to I-5, allowing "unfettered access" to the larger rigs along Highways 199 and 101.

"Another goal of the project is to provide truckers with another option when the I-5 Siskiyou Summit is closed due to snow, and this could bring these big semi's barreling through the Illinois Valley when road conditions in the region are poor," Hughes said.

At Patrick Creek Narrows, Caltrans plans to replace the Middle Fork Smith River bridge on 199 and widen and realign the road in that spot. Additionally, in seven locations along the route, work would be done to modify tight corners and narrow shoulders that also present problems for the larger rigs. Construction activity would occur in stages and be completed by 2017.

"Due to mountains posing geo-physical constraints, Caltrans could not build the project up to big-truck specifications anyhow," Hughes said. "And in locations where Caltrans plans to carve into the cliffs, those slopes would be forever destabilized, increasing landslide risk."

The lawsuit brought against the project was initiated by the Friends of Del Norte County, The Center for Biological Diversity and the Environmental Protection Information Center.

"The litigation will not slow down the project, unless an injunction is issued by a court," Burger said. "No injunction has been issued."

Hughes' group has prevailed in court against Caltrans before, halting the Richards Grove State Park project on Highway 101.

"We feel pretty confident about the case," Hughes said.

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Citizens taking GMO issue to the voters

By
Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Contributing Writer

GMO Free Josephine County, a Grants Pass based non-profit organization with an active Illinois Valley chapter, has filed an initiative with the county to phase out and prohibit planting of new crops developed with genetically modified organisms.

The campaign in Josephine County echoes similar efforts in numerous Oregon counties responding to a groundswell of public opposition to GMO agriculture.

Meanwhile, at the behest of the national biotechnology industry, lobbyists in Salem successfully pushed a state bill to preempt grassroots efforts to ban GMO crops. The pro-GMO bill elicited strong citizen opposition, more than any other bill in the legislative session, but Governor John Kitzhaber ultimately signed the legislation.

"Kitzhaber basically sold non-GMO farmers and food safety proponents down the river to get his budgetary measures passed," said Carol Valentine, a Selma resident and organizer with GMO Free Josephine County. "But we have reason to believe this new law will be challenged in court."

Even if the state bill prevails, Valentine says her group will still move forward with collecting the 3,000 signatures needed to place the initiative

to ban GMO agriculture on the county's ballot in May of 2014. A similar initiative is planned for the May ballot in Jackson County as well.

"Regardless of political roadblocks on the state level, bringing peoples' attention to the loss of citizen input and raising awareness about the dangers of GMO agriculture are still important values," Valentine said. "People should be able to decide for themselves if they want genetically modified organisms impacting agriculture in their back yards."

"As I talk to people I find this issue crosses all of the boundaries that have divided our community in the past," Valentine said. "This is not an issue of left and right, it's an issue of protecting the health and food security of our children and grandchildren."

Valentine believes the Illinois Valley is uniquely poised to be a stronghold of organic agriculture because it has not yet been contaminated by GMO's. She hopes county voters recognize the value, both economically and ecologically, of "what we have and protect it in time." She adds that it is increasingly rare to find locations free of GMO contamination.

"If we end up with GMO crops in our valley, it's not a matter of if contamination to other crops will occur, but when," Valentine warns. "Once the GMO genie is out of the bottle you cannot put it back."

Countless organic farmers could be jeopardized as bees, birds, and mostly the wind, moves genetically modified pollen around the Valley.

One serious problem, according to Valentine, is that federal agencies tasked with protecting food safety are headed by appointees friendly to the chemical and biotechnology industries.

Former Monsanto Vice President Michael Taylor is the current head of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration; and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, also in charge of the USDA, was voted "Biotech Governor of the Year" by the industry when he was governor of Iowa.

"We have a blatant case of the fox guarding the chicken coop," Valentine said.

The Alliance for BioIntegrity filed a landmark lawsuit in 1998 against the FDA in an effort to obtain mandatory safety testing and labeling of all genetically engineered food. The alliance uncovered 44,000 pages of internal reports where FDA scientists cautioned that GMO foods are different from traditionally grown foods and thus pose different risks. These reports were consistently disregarded by bureaucrats operating under a directive to foster the US bio-tech industry, according to Valentine.

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