

Illinois Valley News

Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014, 1 Section, 10 Pages, Volume 76 No. 45 Published Weekly Cave Junction, Oregon 97523

illinois-valley-news.com

Library seeks levy

By
Judy Hoyle
IVN Contributing Writer

The Josephine Community Libraries, Inc. (JCLI) Board of Directors is proposing the creation of a library district in Josephine County. A library district would have its own taxing authority and a voter-elected library district governing board, separate from county government. Funds raised by the tax could only be used for the library district, and not be increased or diverted to other county departments without voter approval.

According to fundraising coordinator Rebecca Stoltz, JCLI's goal is to put the creation of a library district before voters on November 4, 2014. If successful, the library system would have a stable funding base, 39 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value, or \$39 per year for a property valued at \$100,000. This works out to less than 10 cents a day.

An economic feasibility statement was commissioned by the JCLI Board of Directors and volunteers. The original draft was prepared by Ruth Metz Associates and funded with a grant from the federal Library Services and Technology Act, through the federal Institute for Museums and Library Services, and the Oregon State Library. Many others contributed input to the study.

See Library on A-5



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, *Illinois Valley News*)

Ishta Maanamatt shows support for Jarred Houston during a petition rally in Cave Junction Monday Jan. 13

Plugging away at public safety funding solutions

By
Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Contributing Writer

Securing Our Safety (SOS), the non-profit citizen's group that formed in 2012 in response to a shrinking public safety system is now promoting a "multi-pronged" approach to deal with the funding crises in Josephine County. With eleven committees exploring solutions that range from adopting sales taxes and keeping more lottery dollars in counties where tickets were purchased, to biomass proposals

and timber and mineral exploration as well as another (limited) public safety levy to help pay for essential services, SOS remains committed to its mission of "providing for a secure, stable, and sustainable future" for the county.

"Our initial focus was about finding ways to restore criminal justice services," said SOS President Jay Meredith. "But more broadly, SOS is now exploring a wide range of potential solutions to make Josephine County a safer, more prosperous and more sustainable community."

Some of SOS's initiatives have gained so much

momentum that political action committees have taken over to move proposals forward. One example of this success is the Lottery Local Control Act, now a state-wide citizen's initiative for 2014. Kevin Manix and the Oregon Anti-Crime Alliance Foundation have researched a re-allocation of state lottery profits, to facilitate a more equitable distribution of lottery funds. Efforts are moving forward to bring the proposal to a statewide vote.

See Levy on A-8

Valley rainfall is at a record low

By
Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Contributing Writer

Recent rainfall brought some relief to the persistent dry spell plaguing the region, though not enough to make up for the deficiency that, so far, makes this "water year" the driest ever recorded. The Valley has received just 9.8 inches of precipitation since last September 1, and normally, by the end of January, that number averages around 30 inches.

"What happens between now and July 1 will be critical in respect to how we're looking for both water resources and potential for large fires next summer," said National Weather Service Incident Meteorologist Brett Lutz. "According to the U.S. Drought Monitor the region is considered to be in a moderate drought. Lake levels are real low. The situation is worry."

While last week's cold front brought high winds, thunder, snow in the mountains and heavy rain to some locations, that system was followed by another strong high-pressure ridge resulting in more air stagnation, fog and dry conditions that are predicted to persist throughout the week - though there's a chance for more rain over the weekend.

"We have a huge deficit to come back from, but given the history depicted in climate records, both locally and regionally, it is not out of the realm of possibility that precipitation totals between now and summertime could make a significant dent in the drought," Lutz said. "Though it would take back-to-back weather systems to fully recover from the current situation. Time will tell, but I'm moderately confident that we'll have normal to above-normal precipitation throughout the spring months, assuming the atmosphere behaves as it has in the past. Hopefully this pans out."

The recent dry spell is caused by persistent high pressure over the Gulf of Alaska that blocks oceanic storms from reaching land. The weather systems that typically move west-to-east seem to be weakening as winds this winter are blowing more north-to-south or south-to-north, according to Lutz.

Why this change has become so persistent

is somewhat of a "mystery" currently debated by weather experts, though many say it's due to melting Arctic ice and loss of snow cover in the far north. Referred to as "arctic amplification," this effect is based on several components and key among them is that the northern hemisphere is mostly land, which warms and cools very fast; where the southern hemisphere, which is mostly water, warms and cools slowly. One fact experts agree upon is that the Pacific Ocean, the world's largest, is indeed warmer and that this warming impacts weather.

While any individual weather event, or even a single season, cannot say much about global warming; meteorologists say trends monitored over time are providing the basis for a growing understanding of climate change.

Locally, proximity to the ocean and terrain also influences weather impacts; thus within the 22-mile-long Illinois Valley, rainfall totals vary, with higher amounts recorded in O'Brien, but lessening toward Selma. Storms generally flow into the coast range off the ocean, with air rising up the west side of the mountains - but on the east slopes, opposite the wind flow, descending air starts drying things out, according to Lutz. "O'Brien, and even Cave Junction, to some degree, are on the windy side," he said.

Meteorologists measure the region's precipitation by water-year, which runs from Sept. 1 through Aug. 31 of the following year. The Valley's 2013 water-year yielded 47.72 inches, with much of that precipitation arriving in the fall. 2014's water-year is off to a slow start due to the lack of rain in late 2013.

Weather records for the Illinois Valley, kept since 1962, indicate that December is typically the wettest month, with an average 12 inches of rain. January usually comes in second with around 10.5 inches; and the third rainiest month is November. On average, the Valley receives 62.87 inches of precipitation per water-year.

This current water-year is the driest ever, so far, coming in under the record of 29.42 inches in 1976. The wettest water-year on record was 104 inches in 1976.

See Rain on A-8

Community businesses support IV Fire

By
Judy Hoyle
IVN Contributing Writer

At a meeting on January 7, the Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) awarded advanced rank to three individuals. Chief Dennis Hoke presented Firefighters Sandy Humpfres and Robert Sitton with new badges and collar insignia indicating they had both been promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the Operations Division. Chris Ismaili was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the Support Services Division.

Also at the meeting, Chief Hoke announced that Newburg-based Oregon Mattress Company (OMC) has donated over \$8,000 worth of mattresses to the fire district

to be installed in Stations One and Two, located on Caves Highway and in Selma, respectively.

Hoke's sister-in-law, Debby Johnson, is an executive at OMC. The company donated 10 mattress and box spring sets, four of which are extra long to accommodate the taller firefighters.

In addition, A Plus Mini-Storage and the U-Haul corporation gave the district a discounted rate of \$100 to rent a truck, rather than the standard \$700. Hoke used the van to pick up the mattresses in Newburg.

In an interview conducted January 13, Hoke described the importance of the new mattresses. "We have a rotating duty crew and volunteers are required to pull

two 12 hour shifts per month. Monday through Thursday, the office is staffed, so the duty crew is not required during the day, but our firefighters stay at the station Friday through Sunday night so we always have a crew available 24 hours per day." Hoke explained.

"Having crews on site really improves response time and getting crews there as soon as possible really makes a difference. Last month we had a cardiac arrest incident in downtown Cave Junction. We were able to get there quickly to defibrillate him and he's alive today as a result of our quick action," Hoke detailed. "AMR Ambulance is also based at Station One."

See Fire on A-5



(Photo by Judy Hoyle, *Illinois Valley News*)

Illinois Valley Fire District Chief Dennis Hoke, at right, congratulates Sandy Humpfres and Robert Sitton after they were each promoted to lieutenant.