

Illinois Valley News

Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2014, 1 Section, 10 Pages, Volume 76 No. 47 Published Weekly Cave Junction, Oregon 97523

illinois-valley-news.com

Rep. Hicks to Hold Constituent Office Hours for February

Grants Pass, OR-In order to keep constituents informed of events surrounding the upcoming February legislative session, Rep. Wally Hicks (R-Grants Pass) has scheduled a series of office hours throughout the month.

Rep. Hicks has held similar public office hours for the past four consecutive legislative sessions.

"These office hours enable me to hear directly from citizens throughout Josephine County regarding issues that are important to them," Rep. Hicks said.

The office hours will be held from 10 to 11 a.m. on the following Saturdays at the locations listed below:

Feb. 1, March 1-Taylor's in Cave Junction, 202 Redwood Hwy.

Feb. 8, 15, 22-Elmer's in Grants Pass, 175 NE Agness Ave.

For more information, call Rep. Wally Hicks at 541-474-1162.

Future paper men



Joshua Dangerfield (left), Ezra Murphy and Cole Conner, watch Eziquio Dangerfield manipulate a photo using Photoshop at the *Illinois Valley News* Tuesday, Jan. 21. The Boy Scouts Troop members were there to learn about newspapers.

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

Distemper, not rabies, is affecting wildlife

By
Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Contributing Writer

A sick fox recently killed on Pinecone Drive by Cave Junction's contract deputy Joel Heller, thought to be rabid, turned out to have distemper.

"Tissue samples from the fox confirmed the distemper diagnoses," Heller said. "And we've had a number of similar reports."

Some Valley residents are understandably nervous about sick foxes after a local rabies outbreak in 2010. Untreated rabies, in its end stages, is fatal to both humans and animals. The rabies virus, found

in mammals, usually shows up in foxes, raccoons, skunks or bats, according to Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Veterinarian Colin Gillin.

"Starting in 2010 there were more than a dozen cases in the Cave Junction area," Gillin said. "That outbreak lasted a year and a half after rabies was first diagnosed in a goat, and then in the foxes. We're not seeing any rabies in the area right now."

While there are seven known strains of rabies virus located in specific geographical areas around the country, only one is found nationwide: the bat strain. None of the other strains are found in Oregon, according to Gillin. In this region, the disease cycle typically gets its start after a curious animal is bit while investigating a sick bat flopping around on the

ground. The rabies virus is transmitted when saliva from the bat enters the animal's bloodstream.

Some symptoms for both rabies and distemper are similar, especially in the end stages of the diseases, as they both affect the neurological system. Animals might stagger around "drunk-like," exhibiting erratic behavior and confusion; or might tilt their heads or wander aimlessly in circles, a result of brain damage. There might be crusting discharge around the nose and eyes. In rabies, some animals drool or foam at the mouth, but some do not; also, some lash out violently at any stimulus, but again, some don't.

See Distemper on A-8



State Rep. Wally Hicks

Jenna's Law takes Max's Law to the next level

By
Jenna Larkin
IVN Contributing Writer

The football game started out like any other, 17-year-old Max Conratt was the starting quarterback for his high-school team in Waldport. However, Conratt sustained a concussion and was unable to finish the game.

Conratt started the next game without medical clearance concerning his concussion from the previous game. At halftime, he suddenly collapsed due to massive bleeding in his brain. That's despite the fact that he did not endure any hard hits during the second game.

With three serious brain surgeries, Conratt's life was spared but he was in a coma for another three months. When he finally woke from his coma and became physically stable enough, Conratt began the long road of rehabilitation in several institutions. Even with the lifesaving surgeries and countless hours of rehabilitation, Conratt now lives in a group home for individuals with brain injuries in Salem, Ore.

How did Max Conratt end up with such serious injuries with only one concussion? Concussions are known as traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and are not bruises to the brain, as previously believed. A concussion can actually affect the way the brain works.

A TBI is caused by a bump, blow, jolt to the head or hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. That's why, for example, when an MRI is performed it will turn out normal when determining if an individual has a concussion or not. When Conratt sustained his concussion in 2001, concussion awareness was just coming into play for high-school sports. Coaches were made aware of concussions along with signs and symptoms,

but the extent of the damage a concussion, even a minor one, could have were not yet well known.

In the past if an athlete got his or her "bell rung" they were told to shake it off and continue practice or finish out the game. Athletes eventually took hold of this so called sports code and would just tough it out regardless of how they were feeling, good or bad.

As the years progressed, however, the damage caused by a concussion became more well known and the signs and symptoms were taken more seriously. In 2009, Max's Law was passed, in honor of Max Conratt, to insure that fewer athletes sustained concussions and possible permanent injuries from lack of knowledge and proper medical care. Max's Law requires Oregon school districts to train coaches, mainly at the high-school level, on concussions and for any athlete that may be showing signs or symptoms of having a concussion to be seen and released by a medical professional before returning to active play.

Along with concussion training, school coaches are required to go through a fairly new program called Heads Up, which was created by the NFL and USA Football. This program not only teaches coaches to recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion but instills proper ways for athletes to tackle properly with their heads up, not down, while using the crown of the helmet. The Heads Up program also instructs coaches on how to properly fit an athlete with gear. The program likewise eases the worries of parents who might have doubts about all of the physical contact.

Even with the Head's Up program and Max's Law in effect, many athletes outside of school sports were still in danger of suffering from a concussion due to lack of knowledge.

See Jenna on A-8

Warming center needs volunteers, donations

By
Judy Hoyle
IVN Contributing Writer

Karen Chase, a Regional Advisor for Oregon Housing and Community Services, is part of one of several governmental agencies which have teamed with local individuals and area churches to address homelessness in the Illinois Valley.

"We're all affected by homelessness," said Chase. "We care about our community, and about helping those less fortunate to achieve greater economic stability."

For Pastor Charles Chase, who is not related to Karen, the needs are simple and immediate. The temporary I.V. Warming Center (IVWC) housed at Immanuel United Methodist Church is in need of more volunteers, cash donations and a better way to provide showers for the dozens of individuals who cycle in and out of the facility. Over 145 different individuals have been registered at the IVWC since it opened in November, with the maximum overnight capacity set at 27 people.

"It costs us \$80 every time we send our guests to the Brown Barn and we can't

afford that," Pastor Chase said. The Task Force is looking into using the showers at the long-shuttered I.V. Swimming Pool but repairs would have to be made for that to become a viable option.

In addition to housing people, the center serves over 350 meals every week, and this is where the most help is needed. One of the center's original organizers and chief cooks, Stacy Skinner, recently injured her arm, so she's been unable to do any cooking at all. Other volunteers are urgently needed to take her place.

Cooks are needed to help with breakfast in the morning as well as process bulk fresh food donations which usually arrive unannounced, like the several dozen eggplants that were delivered last week. Organizers are hoping a list can also be developed of those who are willing to pick up food, turn it into meals and return it or freeze it for later use. Volunteers are also needed to arrive by 7 p.m. to assist with intake or meals for the night's guests who arrive at 8 p.m. The doors are locked at 9 p.m.

The warming center is available every night the temperature dips below 40 degrees, but for many days

over the past few weeks, the mercury has struggled to rise to even that level. This means indigent men, women and even children must find other places to shelter during daylight hours. The task force is exploring other building spaces around Cave Junction where they might be able to stay during the day.

County Commissioners Cheryl Walker and Keith Heck have both attended meetings of the ad hoc I.V. Task Force, as have Mike Bollweg, IVWC organizer, Cave Junction Mayor Carl Jacobson, City Councilor Dr. John Gardiner, Dr. Christine Perala Gardiner and builder Paul Hansen.

In addition to the IVWC organizers, represented agencies include the Josephine County Public Housing Homelessness Task Force, the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, the United Community Action Network, Siskiyou Community Medical Center, the I.V. Medical Center, Healthy U, the I.V. Family Coalition, the I.V. Safe House Alliance and the I.V. Business Entrepreneurial Center.

See Warming on A-5