

Illinois Valley News

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Classes offered

Citizen Fire Academy
Oregon State University Extension Service is offering a Citizen Fire Academy to help residents in Southern Oregon better prepare for the summer fire season.

The academy is designed to be an education and service program to help local residents safely prevent and prepare for wildfire, according to Rhianna Simes, coordinator of the program.

The academy will include information about fire science, home protection strategies, fuels reduction, evaluating risks and emergency preparedness.

The academy will be held 1 to 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays from April 15 to June 3, at the OSU Extension Office, in Central Point. For information or to register, contact Simes at 541-776-7371

Disaster Response Class

A three-day Community Emergency Response Team training for resident of Josephine County will be offered March 21-23.

Sessions are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. The class is provided through a partnership between Illinois Valley Fire District, Ashland CERT and Josephine County.

The program educates people about disaster preparedness. Participants are trained in basic response skills, including fire safety, search and rescue, team organization and medical operations.

Certified CERT members have the training and experience to be able to assist in their neighborhood and workplace during and after an event when professional responders are not immediately available.

Space is limited. Registration must be completed by March 19. To register, call Josephine County Emergency Services at 541-474-5300,

Happy Birthday ST. Patrick of the Forrest



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Archbishop Sample greets parishioners after Mass March 17, which celebrated the parish's 150 Anniversary. Audrey Miller (center) the congregation's longest attending member, along with daughter Patty Miller, look on as Archbishop Sample shakes hands with Aaron Miller, son of Marty & Cari Miller.

Fire district called to crimes in progress

By
Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Contributing Writer

Calling the police for help could translate into a long wait, so some Valley residents are filing false reports of fires or medical emergencies with the Illinois Valley Fire District to get help fast.

Last week, emergency responders found themselves in "extreme danger" after being dispatched to a seizure call in Selma that turned out to be an assault in progress. The suspect had already destroyed a car, caused serious damage to a house, beat up a woman and then threatened the emergency responders.

"We attempted to extract the victim but she was scared and wouldn't leave the house," said IV Fire

District Chief Dennis Hoke. "While trying to retreat, the suspect came at us, threatening to kill us. We were boxed in. My life and the lives of the ambulance crew were endangered. We were finally able to retreat, and later, a Josephine County deputy apprehended the suspect near Hayes Hill."

This sort of incident is becoming more frequent. A few weeks ago, the fire district was paged to a structure fire which turned out to be a burglary in progress. And before that, the district was requested to help Cave Junction's contract deputy when he was losing a fight with a suspect, as back-up was 30 minutes away.

"We're not cops," Hoke said. "We have a very small career staff, and a crew of volunteers who love serving the community, but we cannot be putting our

people in harm's way by acting as law enforcement. We don't have the training or the tools."

This increased misuse of fire district manpower and resources prompted Chief Hoke to send off strongly-worded letters to county officials who are mandated to keep the public safe.

"I have also contacted the media as this is the only way I know to get visibility to the serious deficiency in public safety and the eminent danger the county officials have put our responders in," Hoke said. "It is these politicians' obligation to keep citizens safe. The situation is becoming untenable in the Illinois Valley and the entire county."

See Fire on A-9

City council holds marijuana workshop

By
Judy Hoyle
IVN Contributing Writer

On August 14, 2013 Governor Kitzhaber signed House Bill 3460 into law. This bill created new provisions allowing medical marijuana dispensaries in Oregon.

Last week, the meaning and effects of the new law were discussed at the Cave Junction City Council meeting on Monday and at a special symposium on Thursday at the Ann Basker Auditorium in Grants Pass. City Councilors attended the symposium to learn more about the social, fiscal and legal ramifications of medical marijuana dispensaries.

Cave Junction City Council President Daniel Dalegowski was one of the nine invited panelists at the symposium, which also included State Rep. Wally Hicks, R-Grants Pass, Grants Pass Mayor Darin Fowler, legal experts and potential stakeholders. County Commissioner Simon Hare organized and moderated the event.

Also last week, the state began accepting applications from potential dispensary operators and another law was passed in the final days of the legislative session which gives local governments the ability to enact a moratorium on dispensaries until May 1, 2015.

For the March 10 City Council meeting, Dalegowski submitted a six-page analysis of the current situation which included a list of other Oregon city's decisions on allowing dispensaries within city limits. Many have postponed the decision by self-imposing moratoriums of varying lengths from three months to a year; others have restricted the businesses through

licensing and zoning laws, while some, including Ashland, Bend and Scio have amended their codes to allow dispensaries.

The central problem facing Cave Junction and other Oregon cities is whether to follow the new state laws and allow a dispensary, or follow federal law, which bans the use of marijuana. Among several potential options, the city could enact a temporary moratorium on dispensaries until the conflicting laws are sorted out; choose to deny business licenses for any business which violates federal law or alter the business license code to remove requirements to comply with federal law. They could also remove license code requirements to comply with state law, or, like Ashland, allow a dispensary.

Currently, City Recorder Ryan Nolan would be required to deny business license applications because the city business license ordinance disallows businesses in violation of federal law. Current federal law classifies marijuana as a Schedule One controlled substance. Other Schedule One drugs include heroin, LSD and Ecstasy.

The city council met again Monday, March 17, for a workshop to discuss what they'd learned at the symposium. Although the meeting was public, the councilors chose to not accept comments from the audience, which sat quietly during the hour-long meeting.

Councilor Charles "Jim" Polk had asked Nolan to research recent marijuana initiatives to get a sense of how locals had voted compared to the state.

See Workshop on A-9

Skate park finally becoming a reality

By
Jenna Larkin
IVN Contributing Writer

It has been a long time coming for co-chairs Maureen Connelly and Staci Williams of SK8CJ.

On Monday, March 24, a special city council meeting will be held to decide which contractor will build the skate park located in Jubilee Park.

SK8CJ is an extension

of Youth Empowerment and Services (YES). According to the YES website, their mission is: "Through integrating valued personal experience in mental health, child welfare and probation services, Youth Empowerment Support (YES) provides opportunities and trainings for community and system transformation as well as direct support, groups and leadership opportunities for young people at risk of,

in or emancipating out of system services."

In February of this year, the second phase of seeing the skate park become a reality occurred when SK8CJ published invitations for bids to design and build the skate park. By the March 4 deadline, three proposals had been delivered.

See Skate on A-10

Town Hall hosts Sheriff

By
Judy Hoyle
IVN Contributing Writer

A town hall meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 1, at the Josephine County Building. Sheriff Gill Gilbertson will discuss crime investigations, citizen evidence collecting and volunteer sheriff training from 5 to 6 p.m. followed by a potluck from 6 to 6:30 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m. a half-hour presentation will offer insights on wildfire ecology and watersheds with information specific to the Illinois Valley. The evening will conclude with a question-and-answer session with three county commissioner candidates.

The public is invited to attend all three presentations or any portion of the evening. In addition, the Ken Rose Neighborhood Watch (KNW) group's regularly scheduled first Monday meeting will again take place at the County Building at 4 p.m.

This month's KNW discussion topic will be a fire and emergency preparedness planning session. The ongoing drought conditions in the Illinois Valley demand thoughtful planning to reduce risk and expedite evacuation in case of emergency. Ken Rose district residents can choose to participate in the wildfire preparedness group, the neighborhood watch group, both groups or neither. The public is also welcome to attend this afternoon session.

See Town Hall on A-9