

Caves open late on April 26

The 2014 cave tour season at Oregon Caves National Monument (OCNM) will start Saturday, April 26; one month later than in past years. Tours will be offered Saturday, April 26 through November 2, 2014. Surface areas of the Monument, including hiking trails are open year round.

March 22 through April 25, a ranger will be stationed at the Visitor Center at OCNM to provide orientation and information on the natural and cultural resources of the Monument; including access to the visitor center exhibits and theater.

Declining budgets and rising operating costs have led to the consolidation of tour and educational offerings to the busiest months of the year. Operational costs during spring and fall can be logistically complicated with frequent storms that bring winter-like weather.

The monument's education program will also be reduced. Standards-driven school group tours of the cave will still be offered on a reservation basis. However, ranger-led outreach programs to schools and guided educational activities at the monument outside of the cave will not be offered this year.

"The shorter season will also help to protect the cave's hibernating bat population," OCNM Superintendent Vicki J. Snitzler states. The deadly white-nose syndrome decimating bat populations further east has not yet been detected at OCNM; due

to new decontamination protocols and visitor cooperation.

Cave visitation has always benefited Cave Junction, Grants Pass and the surrounding region. A recent National Park Service (NPS) report shows that 78,164 visitors to OCNM in 2012 spent \$5,036.4 million in communities near the park. That spending supported 74 jobs in the local area.

"Oregon Caves is a wonderful place to learn about America's story," Snitzler continued. "We attract visitors from across the U.S. and around the world that come here to experience the park and then spend time and money enjoying the services provided by our neighboring communities and getting to know this amazing part of the country. The National Park Service is proud to have been entrusted with the care of America's most treasured places and delighted that the visitors we welcome generate significant contributions to the economy."

The peer-reviewed visitor spending analysis was conducted by U.S. Geological Survey economists Catherine Cullinane Thomas and Christopher Huber and Lynne Koontz for NPS. The report shows \$14.7 billion of direct spending by 283 million park visitors in communities within 60 miles of a national park.

This spending supported 243,000 jobs nationally, with 201,000 jobs found in gateway communities, and had a cumulative benefit to the U.S. economy of \$26.75 billion. According

to the report most visitor spending supports jobs in restaurants, grocery and convenience stores (39 percent), hotels, motels and B&Bs (27 percent), and other amusement and recreation (20 percent).

Visit <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/economics.cfm> to download the report, which includes information for visitor spending at individual parks and by state.

Visit <http://www.nps.gov/OREGON> to learn more about national parks in Oregon and how NPS works with communities to help preserve local history, conserve the environment, and provide outdoor recreation.

"National park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy – returning \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service - and it's a big factor in our local economy as well. We appreciate the partnership and support of our neighbors and are glad to be able to give back by helping to sustain local communities," Snitzler states. "We're looking forward to a great visitor season and hope that area residents will be joining us later this spring for cave and Chateau programs."

Visit <http://www.nps.gov/orca> for information about the monument, including tour hours and fees.

Kerbyville Museum set to reopen

By
Judy Hoyle
IVN Contributing Writer

Thanks to a unique decade-long partnership between two organizations now headed by a husband and wife team, the Kerbyville Museum is about to reopen for the season with new and redesigned displays.

Linda and Richard Butler are dedicated community volunteers. While they both volunteer at the Cave Junction sheriff's office substation, they have each taken on additional leadership roles. Richard is the current president of the Oregon Sourdough Chapter of Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA) and Linda has just accepted the presidency of the Kerbyville Museum and History Center board of directors.

They and many others were hard at work last week, preparing for the upcoming annual Heritage Day presentations for valley fourth-graders, an event which first brought the two organizations together.

The partnership between the Sourdough Chapter and the museum stretches back to 2004 when the local BCHA group committed to reorganizing contents of the museum's barn in preparation for Heritage Day. Once only used for storage, the structure has now been repurposed to become part of the facility's displays along

with the blacksmith shop. The BCHA group continues to manage those display areas.

Two other active BCHA board members are also enthusiastic volunteers for the museum. Susie Wood is the Sourdough Chapter vice president and also sits on the BCHA Oregon state board of directors. And Kris Baizley serves as Sourdough Chapter treasurer.

BCHA is a service and advocacy organization. The nine chapters in Oregon annually accomplish volunteer work in the state valued at half a million dollars. They actively work with state and federal government agencies to maintain equestrian access to public lands. They also provide "leave no trace" training to minimize equestrian impact on the backcountry.

The Sourdough Chapter is best known locally as the group which spearheaded the Forks State Park equestrian trail, now accessible from a trailhead on Westside Road. Sue Williams led the trail building effort and also volunteers at the sheriff's office substation.

Kerbyville Museum 2014 board members also include Lloydene Davis, vice-president; Chuck Rigby, treasurer; and Dennis Strayer, board secretary and museum curator. Strayer served as museum board president from 2006 through 2013.

The Butlers moved to the Il-

linois Valley in 1998 to raise cattle. Horseback riding is an integral part of that occupation, and BCHA membership followed. Linda realized how valuable the museum is to the community and became a museum board member two years ago.

"The museum is totally supported by our admissions and membership," she said. "It's vital to get every visitor we can."

Toward that end, volunteers are meeting every Monday this month to clean and reorganize displays.

Funds from the two ice cream socials held last year helped pay to have the old Grimmert schoolhouse shored up. The structure is now safe enough to put the school desk display back in the building.

"We were approaching the point where we were going to have to demolish it, but now we'll be able to raise funds for the exterior," Butler said.

The group is hoping to be able to win additional grants and grant writing is one of Strayer's strengths.

"Dennis is a tremendous asset to the museum," Butler said. "He knows history of the area inside and out, loves the museum and enjoys spending a lot of time there."

The popular ice cream social is again scheduled for Labor Day weekend and a new fund-raiser celebrating the World War II-era USO Canteen is also being planned.

The museum reflects the history of the Illinois Valley within the context of American history. Items in the newly designed Military Room range from a Civil War drum to Vietnam War memorabilia. A special display features the Army Air Corps. Another redesigned area illuminates Native American crafts and culture.

"I commend the volunteers who have really worked to get the inside of the museum picked up," Linda Butler said.

The museum board wishes to also acknowledge the volunteer contributions of Bill Dunham, Judy Knitter, Terri Sullivan and Donna Tellyer. In addition, I.V. Gardening Club volunteers Christine Perala Gardiner and Kimberlie Lehman are thanked for their work on the flower beds.

More volunteers are also welcome. Those interested are asked to phone 541-592-5252 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Mondays. The museum will be open beginning March 22, just in time for spring break.



(Photo by Judy Hoyle, Illinois Valley News)

Left to Right: Volunteers Kris Baizley, Linda Butler, Dennis Strayer and Susie Wood are preparing for the new season at Kerbyville Museum.

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