

# Illinois Valley News

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## Merger joins Sterling with Umpqua banks

By

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On April 18, Sterling Bank will become Umpqua Bank. The merger of the two financial corporations creates the West Coast's largest "community bank" with over \$22 billion in assets and nearly 400 locations, from Seattle to San Diego and from the Oregon coast inland to Idaho and Nevada. The combined companies will operate as Umpqua Holdings Corporation, with banking operations conducted under the Umpqua Bank brand.

Sterling Bank management wants its customers to know that while the sign on the door will change, that "what you love about your bank will not." Customers will not experience any interruptions to their ability to make withdrawals, deposits or to check their account balances.

The merger promises to offer customers the products and services of a large institution, yet still delivered with the personal service and engagement of a community bank. Along with more locations and ATMs, customers will find more financial service options "and two times the determination to make banking better for you and your community."

Umpqua is fully insured by the FDIC, thus if you had any deposits with Sterling before the merger, they will continue to be fully insured up to the legal limit.

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(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Workers began erecting walls April 14, at the site of the post office. Site officials declined to give a completion date at this time.

## Train takes life of Valley Girl

By Kevin S. MacMillan  
Managing Editor  
The Sierra Sun

TRUCKEE, Calif. — In what officials are calling a tragic accident, a local woman died Wednesday after a train struck her while she jogged on the tracks near the Truckee River.

The Truckee Police Department received a report at 1:40 p.m. of a person hit by a train on the Union Pacific Railroad underneath and east of the Highway 267 overpass, according to a statement.

First responders soon found the body of Janaki Rose Hayes, 27, of Truckee, on the side of the

tracks.

An investigation determined Hayes had come from the Olympic Heights neighborhood on foot, crossing Glenshire Drive and down to the rails on the north side of the Truckee River.

Hayes was walking or running westbound on the tracks with the intent of crossing the river to access the Truckee Legacy Trail.

"The victim was wearing headphones that fully covered her ears while listening to loud music," police said Thursday. "The train operators saw the victim in their path, sounded the horn extensively, slowed the train, and did what they could to avoid striking the victim."

"It appears the train operators did not contribute to this accident and did all they could to avoid it."

No one else was hurt in the incident.

The train — a Union Pacific cargo double-decker — was stopped and remained on scene during the investigation, Police Chief Adam McGill told the Sierra Sun Wednesday.

Hayes was living in Truckee after recently relocating from Cave Junction, Ore., according to police.

Alcohol and/or drugs do not appear to be a factor in the case.

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## GMO Free Jo Co is campaigning hard

By

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Driving by the Cron Farm, located on Highway 199 between Cave Junction and Kerby, there's a political sign signaling opposition to Ballot Measure 17-58 that seeks to phase out GMO's in the county. Yet the farm also features a "no GMO's sign," and some are wondering which message reflects the farm's views or operations.

Political views and practices in the field can diverge, and this is the case at the Cron Farm.

"The GMO issue is a political football, so we stay away from it," said Cron Farmer Manager, Rhett Nelson. "I'm selling produce to clients who don't want GMO's, so the one sign is to let people know we don't grow GMO crops. But the other sign is there because I don't support the GMO ban. I believe it takes away our property rights. Plus, I think we can work together as neighbors instead of making new rules. We already have too many rules and regulations."

Nelson says he's concerned that with the way the GMO rule is written, he might have to pay "a lot of money" to prove that he's not growing with GMO's.

"Any farmer who is not growing any GMO's is already in compliance and won't have to do anything," said Mary Middleton, campaign coordinator for GMO Free Jo Co. "This is not going to be any kind of Gestapo-like search and destroy process."

The way the measure is written, farmers growing GMO crops will be given a 12-month transition period to eliminate GMO crops. Measure organizers say their group is committed to helping those farmers come into compliance, if that support is wanted.

A GMO (genetically modified organism) is the result of a laboratory process where genes

from one species is extracted and artificially forced into the genes of another plant or animal, resulting in combinations that wouldn't occur in nature. This is very different from conventional plant breeding or hybridization processes. Through the action of wind, bees and other pollinators, GMO crops contaminate non-GMO and organic crops, farms and private gardens.

The American Academy of Environmental Medicine urges physicians to advise patients to avoid all GMO food due to serious health risks including infertility, immune system problems, faulty insulin regulation, and changes in major organs and gastrointestinal systems. They say that children, with their developing systems, are particularly vulnerable to the ill-effects of GMO foods.

"Recent polling indicates that a large majority in Josephine County will vote for the measure," Middleton said. "When it passes, along with Jackson County, we'll have two contiguous counties free of GMO's and this will have a huge positive economic impact on the whole region. Consumer demand for clean non-GMO foods continues to rise. Ensuring that farmers are safe to grow crops free of contamination and trespass from multi-national Biotech corporations will help grow our farming economy."

About 100 cities in the New England region have already adopted GMO free measures, and Middleton cites Marin County, California, which banned GMO crops in 1994, as an example of West Coast success: "Their agricultural values have increased by 700 percent."

"While I don't grow GMO crops, I do believe in them," Nelson said. "Sure there's risk, there's advantages and disadvantages, but one important aspect is that if GMO crops can use less water, isn't that a good thing in this time of water shortages? The people developing GMO's are working on that. The price of food is going through the roof, so we need to find options and alternatives so that people can afford to eat."

See GMO on A-10

## City punts on pot

By

Judy Hoyle

IVN Contributing Writer

The Cave Junction City Council met Monday for a regularly scheduled meeting. The primary issue for discussion was whether or not the city would chose to follow federal or state law in determining whether it would issue business licenses for medical marijuana dispensaries within city limits.

The council members went into a closed door executive session to discuss legal merits, risks and ramifications of potential litigation related

to marijuana dispensaries. The crowd in attendance at the meeting dwindled from over 30 to less than half that by the end of this session, which stretched to nearly an hour.

Both Cave Junction City Attorney Pat Kelly and J. Ryan Kirchoff, whose areas of expertise include municipal, government and regulatory affairs, discussed at least five options available to the city with the councilors. During the session, which was attended by members of the media, the two lawyers presented various legal theories regarding possible courses of action.

In recognition of the con-

flict between federal and state law, the Oregon legislature has also approved legislation to allow cities to enact a moratorium, effectively delaying the decision to allow these facilities until May 1, 2015. Cities may also chose to take no action (ignore the new state law), alter the current business code that requires compliance with all federal laws, or approve the dispensaries.

Upon returning to the public meeting room, the councilors each presented their reasons for the way they were about to vote, with Councilor John Gardiner recusing himself

See City on A-8

## Stream Team gets new face

By

Judy Hoyle

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Cheryl Nelson has joined the Illinois Valley Soil and Water Conservation District (IVSWCD) "Stream Team." The part-time position of Water Quality Program Specialist was recently vacated by Kevin Kocarek, who has accepted a full-time job with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Nelson, a Southern California native, first moved to the Illinois Valley when she was a sophomore at College of the Redwoods. While employed as a Forestry Technician for the I.V. Ranger District (now called the Wild Rivers Ranger District), she worked to help restore a degraded channel section of Greyback Creek.

"Two decades later, it is so gratifying to go back and visit these sites that now provide good habitat for salmon," Nelson states.

In time, she met and married Jim Nelson and they started a family. Jim worked at Rough and Ready mill but later found a job in advertis-

ing and they moved to North Medford in 1993, where their son and daughter graduated from high school.

"I graduated from Southern Oregon University in 1996, receiving a Bachelor's Degree in English with a minor in biology. My desire has always been to work in natural resource management," she smiles.

In addition to working for the U.S. Forest Service, Nelson also worked in the BLM's Ashland Resource Area doing work in silviculture, before transitioning to an administrative position.

Nelson also gained experience in grant writing in Jackson County, where she collaborated with county officials, local municipalities and area non-profits. "The grants I sought were for educational, environmental or economic development projects. That's what makes me the happiest about joining the IV Soil and Water Conservation District, because this job touches on all three areas of my interest and experience."