

Illinois Valley News

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Tour Season Opens and free community day at Oregon Caves

The National Park Staff at Oregon Caves National Monument is gearing up for another season of cave tours, school programs, children's activities, and adventure! Cave tours resumed Saturday, April 26th and will continue through November 2nd. If you plan to visit the caves this spring, tours will be offered from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. through May 24th when summer hours go into effect.

Also, be sure to mark your calendar for Saturday, May 10th to attend the Monument's 13th annual Community Open House. Free cave tours will be offered from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We request only that you bring a non-perishable food item to donate. Take advantage of this opportunity to explore and enjoy the caves, bend and squeeze through narrow marble passageways, and experience what early cavers discovered – free of charge! Rangers will share stories about what modern scientific exploration is revealing about this dark and mysterious place. The Historic Chateau at Oregon Caves will open on Thursday, May 8th so there will be lodging and dining available. The Chateau will also have live music for Mother's Day weekend, so don't miss all of the festivities!

Oregon Caves is located about 20 miles from Cave Junction. The last eight miles of the highway are steep and winding – a leisurely drive to the Monument from Cave Junction will take about 45 minutes.

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(Photo by Dale Sandberg, IVFD Media Dept)

A single vehicle incident sent one person to a Medford hospital via Mercy Flight, Monday April 28 near the I.V. Airport.

Highway 199 improvements in the works for 2015 in Cave Junction

By

Annette McGee Rasch

IVN Senior Contributing Writer

Cave Junction is updating its Transportation System Plan and big changes are coming in 2015. Officials are currently determining what road improvements are needed, where sidewalks should be located and more.

"Cave Junction is updating this plan at a great time," said Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) spokesman Gary Leaming. "ODOT has also

green-lighted a paving project on Highway 199, from Slate Creek (near the Applegate River bridge) all the way through to Rockydale, just south of Cave Junction, so these projects will dove-tail together nicely."

"The biggest issues we're addressing pertain to traffic and pedestrian safety," said Cave Junction City Recorder Ryan Nolan. "Too many people drive way too fast on Highway 199 through town."

The current four lanes of traffic moving through Cave Junction will be eliminated, leaving only one northbound lane and one southbound lane, with a refuge lane in the middle for left turns.

"We've had complaints of people passing on the right at over 50 miles an hour," said ODOT District Traffic Operations Engineer Dan Dorrell. "Drivers don't need to be passing inside city limits and this project will slow the traffic where a lot of the bikes and pedestrians are. There's plenty of opportunities to pass just north and south of town."

"These improvements will also be better for businesses, by allowing traffic to make left turns to gain easier access," Dorrell said. "And, the project adds more parking spots and six-foot bicycle lanes on both sides of 199."

See 199 on A-11

County's at-risk youth are being underserved

By

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Deep budget cuts have devastated the Juvenile Justice Department, causing numerous negative impacts on Josephine County youth, at a time when they often need support the most. Children removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect no longer have a local shelter designed to help them get through their difficulties.

"Kids in trouble aren't entering the system like they used to," said Juvenile Justice Department Director Jim Goodwin. "So they're still in the community, potentially stuck in awful situations, and those that do enter the system could be placed anywhere in the state and sometimes end up in very sterile, confining and rigid situations. It's like they're being punished and this could potentially criminalize them. Also, some of these kids are getting mixed in with older youths who've gotten into legal trouble, and that's not good for them either."

Josephine County's two closed juvenile facilities, the Juvenile Shelter and the Secure Detention Program had shared staff, which provided continuity. When a police officer brought a juvenile into the system, the continuum of care between the two programs meant some of these kids could be transitioned back into their communities more smoothly.

"This is the first time in over 30 years that these critical services have not been available to the children and families of Josephine County," said retired Juvenile Justice Department Director Terry Soeteber, who was the original architect of the county's state-of-the-art juvenile program and facilities that several other counties in Oregon modeled their own programs after.

"Right now, we rent three beds from Jackson County's juvenile detention center, but that's not enough," Goodwin said. "We had 12 beds in the shelter and 14 in the detention center. If the levy passes both facilities will be re-opened."

The five year Public Safety Levy to fund

Juvenile Justice programs and the Adult Jail on May's ballot would raise taxes at a rate of \$1.19 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This translates to about \$14 a month for a home valued at \$140,000.

"A key component of the proposed public safety levy that's often overshadowed by the debate over the sheriff's office and the jail, is to restore staff and funding to both juvenile shelter care and detention care services," said County Commissioner candidate Mark Gatlin. "With the levy, all the budget money freed up by funding juvenile programs and the jail will go directly to the sheriff's office and will not be split between the sheriff and the DA's office. There's been some misinformation about this, and we'd like to clear that up."

Another underserved segment of the youth population is runaways since law enforcement officers have no place to bring them where they'll receive the support and counseling they need to resolve their domestic situations. Instead, the police are dealing with a perpetual cycle where these runaways invariably lose out, Goodwin said.

"Our facilities were the point-of-contact for the non-criminal kids coming into the system," Goodwin explained. "Previously, kids brought in were assessed, and if they needed to stay, they could, or sometimes they'd be sent onto a different parent or another family member. Now, they're shipped out of the area or don't make it into the system at all. The situation is not as user friendly for these kids."

At-risk kids are also losing out on contact with dedicated staff members as well as many volunteer mentors and counselors that came in and worked with youth housed at the shelter and detention center.

Gatlin, who volunteered for five years at these facilities, said he's gratified to see how well some of the kids he has previously worked with are doing when he runs into them in the community, but that he worries about those currently not receiving the help they need.

See Juvenile on A-11

Court is in session

By

Judy Hoyle

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Many Valley residents would be surprised to learn that the City of Cave Junction holds Municipal Court sessions once a month in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Mayor Jacobson, City Recorder Ryan Nolan, City Councilors Daniel Dalegowski, John Gardiner and "Jim" Polk, and contract law enforcement officer, Deputy Joel Heller, met there for an hour on April 16 to discuss whether this court should continue to exist. Municipal Court Judge J.E. Davis and Court Clerk Rebecca Patton were also there following a routinely scheduled court session where "...no showed up," according to Davis.

Municipal Court handles non-criminal offenses which violate city or traffic ordinances. Due to a variety of circumstances, the level of court activity has dropped over the past year, leading to Davis questioning whether it was still worthwhile.

To assist in evaluating the situation, Nolan provided charts and graphs comparing activity over the past five years, indicating the dollar amount of tickets in 2010 was \$40,500 and impounds generated \$6,400 in fines. By fiscal year 2013 those figures had dropped to \$18,300 and \$1,000 respectively. Now, with three quarters of the year past, only \$4,354 in tickets have been written and only \$100 in impound fees have been collected.

See Court on A-9

City stands firm on sticky cannabis issue

By

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Despite additional discussion in an extra session last week, the Cave Junction City Council voted on Monday to stay the course regarding how to proceed with the thorny issue of allowing medical marijuana dispensaries within city limits.

In a vote identical to that cast at the April 14 meeting, council members Margaret Miller, Jim Polk and Mayor Carl Jacobson voted to continue with their plan to request injunctive relief through a Declaratory Judgment, while council members Daniel Dalegowski and John Gardiner voted against that course of action.

The city will now ask the U.S. Court, 9th Circuit to decide whether the federal "Controlled Substances Act" or the new Oregon law allowing dispensaries is the correct law to follow.

In August 2013, Governor Kitzhaber signed House Bill 3460 into law. This bill created new provisions allowing for medical marijuana dispensaries in Oregon. This bill then became state law ORS 475.300.

The city councilors met in a special April 23 workshop to receive additional information and opinions about allowing dispensaries. State Representative Peter Buckley (D-Ashland), the author of HB 3460, and State Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-South Lane and Douglas County) gave their comments via telephone at the

April 23 workshop.

Asked by Gardiner what the city's liability would be if they went ahead with allowing dispensaries, Buckley replied, "There's no liability for the city or county. There are eight states with active marijuana dispensary systems and no elected official has ever received action against them."

Dalegowski asked what liability city employees might face if the city allowed dispensaries and Buckley explained that they would also be protected "under color of law."

"When you look at precedence, the federal government has not gone after any state, county or city," Buckley said.

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