

Court ... Continued from A-1

The largest single difference which has taken place has been the severe reduction of the county sheriff's office patrols a year ago. This followed a drop in public safety funds from over \$20 million in 2011-12 to \$8,468,000 in 2012-13, when an extra O & C Secure Rural Schools Act payment was made to the county. This year's budget is down even further, to \$5 million.

As a result, Sheriff Gil Gilbertson was forced to reduce his staff last year from 98 to 34 people – a 65 percent drop. For the past few months, only Sgt. Ray Webb was available to patrol the entire county. Last week, Deputy Travis Snyder was added to the patrol roster. The Patrol Division is currently budgeted for one Deputy and one Sergeant, who patrol rural Josephine County eight hours a day, five days a week.

Previous Cave Junction contract officer Deputy George Gasperson, and later, Deputy Travis Snyder, had more fellow officers available as back-up when more deputies were on patrol. Patrolling has now fallen to Oregon State Police who answered over 800 calls in Josephine County, while only answering around 285 in the more populous Jackson County.

Now, when the Sheriff or his deputies aren't available, Heller must also handle emergency calls outside of Cave Junction, along with his regular duties. At the city council workshop, Heller stated his assigned priorities are People, Crime and Traffic – in that order.

An additional factor is the new reporting system that went into effect last year requiring Heller to write reports on every type of call, from citations to welfare checks – further reducing his time available to patrol. Currently,

he must spend around 25 percent of his time writing reports.

Nolan stated, "The point of Municipal Court is not to make money but to encourage good behavior." He also explained that the goal of impounding vehicles is to get those in non-compliance off the road.

Although city council decisions cannot be made during workshops, several solutions were posited, including severely reducing the types of crimes for which Heller must write reports. Another possibility is to arrange to have Oregon State Police write citations to be adjudicated at the Cave Junction Municipal Court. Another idea was to reduce Municipal Court frequency to every other month.

Polk also suggested Gilbertson and Heller meet with Jacobson and Nolan to work out which types of written reports to abbreviate or

eliminate.

Citizens are encouraged to self-report for non-emergency crimes through the Sheriff's Office website at www.jocosherriff.us/. Also, a new communications service allows the Sheriff's Office to send information directly to residents via cell phone text messages and/or e-mail. People can register through the website for these updates.

Volunteers staff the Sheriff's substation located below City Hall only three days a week from 1 to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Fridays. More volunteers are needed and those interested are encouraged to drop in during posted hours or visit the sheriff's website for further information.

Caves ... Continued from A-1

Cave tours are 90 minutes long and rated moderately strenuous. The cave tour route includes over 500 stair steps that are uneven and wet with low passageways that require bending and twisting while walking. Children must be 42 inches tall and able to walk independently to go on a cave tour. Visitors in wheelchairs can access the first room of the cave. The temperature inside the cave is approximately 44°F (7°C) year round, providing a cool refuge on warm summer days. Warm clothing and good hiking shoes are always recommended. Cameras with flash are allowed in the cave, but not tripods, flashlights, or backpacks.

Tours are on a first-come, first-served basis. The basic cave tour fee is \$8.50 for adults and \$6.00 for youth ages 16 and under. The Monument accepts the Interagency Senior Pass, the Interagency Access Pass, The National Park's Golden Age Passports, and Golden Access Passports which provide the card holder half price for a basic cave tour in accordance to the provisions of the individual pass. Tour fees help to fund projects that improve Monument facilities and visitor services, such as restoration of the historic Chateau and new interpretive displays.

Bat populations at the caves are threatened by the spread of "white-nose syndrome," a fungal disease that is devastating bat populations east of the Rocky Mountains. The Monument is trying to protect its bat population and needs your help. If you have any items that have been worn or used in a cave or mine east of the Rocky Mountains in the US or Canada or a cave or mine in Europe, please leave those items at home.

Entrance to the surface areas of the Monument is always free and there are an assortment of beautiful forest trails always open and inviting. Look for other exciting tours and programs to begin when summer arrives. Listen to a free evening Ranger Program, take a Candlelight tour on special evenings, learn about Oregon's past on a free guided tour of the historic hotel, and watch for additional family and science tours this year! For the more adventurous, off-trail tours for \$30.00 each person are offered by reservation during the summer months.

For more information on cave tours call 541-592-2100 or visit www.nps.gov/orca. For lodging or reservations at the Chateau, call 541-592-3400.

199 ... Continued from A-1

That rather awkward northbound right merging lane, just after the Lister signal, will go away, and safety at the crosswalk in front of Taylor's Sausage and other locations will be improved, as pedestrians will only have to cross two lanes of traffic.

"Crash rates will go down," Leaming said. "By eliminating the potential for people to make poor passing decisions in town and making traffic wait to make safe left turns, without the potential of getting rear-ended, overall safety will be greatly improved."

"There were rumors in town that there will be a lot of concrete median strips, which is false," Leaming added. "No concrete medians are planned, it'll all be paint on the ground. Primarily, this is a safety project for the community that will also benefit businesses."

Highway 199 is classified as both a freight route and a state highway. According to ODOT analysis, about 10,000 vehicles drive through downtown Cave Junction daily. Recent ODOT studies assessed system deficiencies and explored improvements for vehicular and non-vehicular traffic. Planning goals include discerning the best linkages between the community's neighborhoods, schools and businesses to move both people and goods safely throughout the Highway 199

corridor, both now and in the future.

The city is reviewing locations of planned facilities, services and street connectivity issues, taking into account residential growth. Goals include maintaining and maximizing current assets; optimizing performance through technology; and integrating transportation, land use, economic development and environmental considerations.

"ODOT, the schools and the IV Family coalition are all involved," Nolan said. "We're working together to discern the spots where folks need better pedestrian, wheelchair, stroller and bicycle access."

During a five-year analysis period, between 2007 and 2011, 86 crashes were reported within the Cave Junction study area, with 53 of these accidents occurring at intersections. Of these reported crashes, 51 resulted in minor injuries; 32 caused property damage only; and three crashes resulted in a fatality or severe injury.

The intersection of Lister Street and Highway 199 experienced 11 crashes, with most of these resulting from left-turn conflicts off of the highway. The River Street and Highway 199 intersection experienced the second highest number of crashes, mostly related to failures to yield the right-of-way.

Two other tricky spots experiencing higher numbers of crashes are at the in-

tersection of Highway 46 (Cave's Highway) and Frederick Court, where there were three rear-end crashes during the study period timeframe, due to following too closely or speeding; and six crashes at Laurel Road and Highway 199, where half involved fixed-objects like ditches, signs and guardrails. These collisions did not exhibit clear patterns, but were determined to be due to driver error. Vehicles were either traveling too fast for conditions or making illegal traffic maneuvers.

During the May 9 Art Walk, between 5 and 8 p.m., ODOT staff, including Dorell, will be on hand with maps and visual aids in front of the County Building, to answer questions and get feedback. Anyone with concerns, questions or comments are encouraged to stop by.

People can also call or go to city hall to get more information and view maps. Folks can also attend the regular city council meeting May 12 at 7 p.m., where recommendations to ODOT regarding the repaving project will be discussed. City officials also plan to host an open house where the public can view potential changes and make comments.

Work on these transportation projects is slated to begin and be completed in the summer of 2015.

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