

Ready ... Continued from A-1

"If we put any people in these buildings and a fire breaks out, everyone would wish they had functioning fire safety infrastructure," Chase said. "If the mill burns down, like what just happened in Springfield, then people lose their jobs again."

Chase, Rice and Illinois Valley Fire District Chief Dennis Hoke met with Rough & Ready mill representatives on site last February.

"Months ago we presented them with everything they need to have done to open up and a number of these critical life-safety deficien-

cies have not been dealt with," Hoke said. "This mill has a history of non-compliance and they've gotten away with it. But, I won't allow that to happen on my watch. My charter is to protect the people and I feel strongly that both mill employees and our volunteer firefighters should never be placed in harm's way unnecessarily."

According to Chase, Rough & Ready co-owner Link Phillippi is now "enthusiastically complying" with all the issues, but says it's a daunting task to complete the work before the deadline.

"We're not trying to create any hardship," Chase said. "We're asking Mr. Phillippi to give us a report on what he has in place now and what he's trying to accomplish, so we can all work together to get this mill open and get these family wage jobs on line for the community."

"We've contracted an engineer to help us get this all sorted out," said mill co-owner Jennifer Phillippi. "I think we're in good shape, we should be done on time. Fire sprinkler systems are being installed now. In the mill, I don't think we have any prob-

lems, we're just getting the kinks out of the system. We're tweaking each machine center."

Phillippi says the lack of code compliance in the co-gen plant was a misunderstanding.

"We had sent in all the drawings in 2007 and received a foundation permit and thought the county had everything they needed," Phillippi said. "But, it turns out that a another permit was needed. It was an oversight that we are getting corrected right now."

Seventy people will be coming back to work at the mill. About 40

people are already on the job. Phillippi says everyone is working hard to get the whole facility in "tip-top shape."

"It's really exciting that we're getting so close," Phillippi said. "It's great to see all these people coming back who haven't seen each other for while. There's big smiles when they spot each other. Everyone is re-connecting."



(Photo by Ellie Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

A memorial for Aaron Clouser at the corner of Millie and Hussey.

Fire ... continued from A-1

Selma resident Melissa Barker, whose home is on the fire's border, was paralyzed by fear of losing everything that she has.

"I can't even answer simple questions," she said. "And all of this is one year to the day of last year's Labrador Fires. All I have to say, to the men and women working to save my house and my neighbors right now, I will be forever grateful and I thank you from the bottom of my heart! We love you guys for protecting, as best you can...our lives."

Reeves Creek Road was closed, except to residents, but Highway 199 was

open as of Tuesday. No evacuations had been initiated.

The structures are being protected by firefighters from the Illinois Valley Fire Department, Rural-Metro Fire Department, Grants Pass Fire and Rescue and a task force from Jackson County fire districts.

The Reeves Creek Fire is burning on land protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry's Grants Pass Unit.

The fire was reported Monday at 6:38 p.m. The cause is being investigated.

Martinson ... Continued from A-1

When Vautier opened the door, she immediately saw Martinson, who had used the service in the past, often to take food for his indigent friends.

"I think he came to the food bank because he knew it was a safe place to turn himself in," Vautier speculates. "He first asked for Tim (Leyba, food bank manager) but Tim was in Grants Pass picking up food from the central bank. Then he said he wanted me to call 911 because he wanted to turn himself in."

Martinson was also concerned that his friend, "Pumba," get some food. Pumba who is homeless and has trouble walking, was in Jubilee Park at the time. While Dugas used her own cell

phone to call the authorities, Vautier assembled a box of canned goods for Martinson's friend.

"He was telling us about the leather loincloth he made," Vautier continued. "He was nice and pleasant like he always is. It was just kind of simple. I asked him a couple of times to be sure, but he was really clear about asking us to call 911."

Vautier never felt worried or threatened by the man who has a tattoo on his back of a pit bulldog with the word "Out-law" inscribed underneath. The OSP had described Martinson as "armed and dangerous."

After accepting the box of food, Martinson waited a few

minutes in the Fountain of Life Assembly of God church parking lot for the police, then stated, "I'm taking this food to Pumba."

He began walking toward Jubilee Park when the police arrived.

"He spent some time there, and after a little while they came and picked him up," Vautier said.

Vautier has experienced a very memorable summer. Last month she miraculously walked away from a head-on collision in Selma which totaled her truck. "I've been in the paper way too much," she reflected dryly.

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