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Three River School District copes with waste water issues

By

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One of Three Rivers School District's waste water treatment plants, built in the early 1980s at Fleming Middle School, is in bad shape.

Two other water sewage plants, also wholly owned by the school district, serve both North Valley High School and the ODOT Manzanita Rest Area on I-5 and Hidden Valley High School.

As the nearby North Valley Industrial Park grew, the now-failing Fleming plant additionally began treating that waste water as well. The plant is currently running below capacity, treating about 11,000 gallons of waste water daily. Half that volume comes from the two schools and the other half comes from the industrial park.

Josephine County officials want the school district to get out of the sewage business.

"The repairs to the Fleming plant will be costly and there's no funding vehicle for the school district to obtain assistance," said County Public Works Director Rob Brandes. "Grants for water sewage treatment plants are only awarded to public utility entities."

One study that analyzed the Fleming facility concluded that "the plant is in poor condition and not recommended for future expansion."

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Lady soccer seniors



(Photo courtesy of Kelli Augustadt for The Illinois Valley News)

Rachael Starr (left), Taylor Byrne, Camelia Swenson, Nancy Segura, Erika Anderson, Chawna Crawford and Mikael Cusumano

Jo-Co jail aces surprise inspection

By

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The Josephine County Jail receives an unscheduled inspection every year from a Grand Jury comprised of lay people appointed by the District Attorney's office.

The surprise inspection evaluates the conditions and management of the jail and Sheriff Gil Gilbertson is pleased to announce that, once again, the jail received top marks.

"The inspection went very well," he said. "We're inspected four to six times a year by various agencies and we consistently come out with 99 to 100 percent compliance with both state and federal jail standards. We're very proud of this."

"The jury believes the jail is a very well run and managed

facility that the county can and should be proud of," said the jury foreman. "It makes every reasonable effort to protect the rights, safety and dignity of the inmates."

County Jail Captain Vicki Smith was congratulated.

"We believe that Captain Smith takes pride in a well-run operation given the limitations she must operate under," the jury wrote in a statement. "She and her staff have well earned that pride. Congratulations to Sheriff Gilbertson and the staff of the Josephine County Jail."

"We have small staff," Gilbertson said, "but we still manage to do it right. The hard-working employees we still have on the payroll have really rallied and do a fantastic job. They're dedicated, loyal and professional."

The jury said the jail would clearly benefit from additional funding to become an even more valuable asset to the community and better ensure the public safety.

While the jail has 262 beds, only about 128 are currently occupied by the worst of the county's offenders, leaving too many thieves and domestic abusers on the streets.

Gilbertson said most of the 128 beds are filled by "Measure 11 and Measure 1145 prisoners," which are the most serious or violent criminals that cannot be released. There's often no room left to hold those charged with lesser crimes while they await trials.

"This is another result of the lack of funding," Gilbertson said. "We are obligated to run the jail in a safe manner, so we are limited to how many inmates we can hold there."

"A fully functioning jail is critically important as a behavioral modifier," Gilbertson added. "If there's a real possibility that a bad guy will get caught and face real consequences, that helps deter crime."

See Jail on A-12

City moves to protect watershed

By

Judy Hoyle

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During its regularly scheduled Oct. 13 meeting, the Cave Junction City Council approved John Gardiner's proposal that the city send a letter to Senator Ron Wyden requesting that the O&C Act of 2014 include language to protect the city's watershed in the Illinois River basin.

This type of protection, called a Special Management Unit (SMU), has already been

included in the current legislation for other potentially impacted municipalities, including Clackamas, Hillsboro, McKenzie and Springfield.

Other organizations which have already sent letters in support of protecting the city's water resources include the I.V. Soil and Water Conservation District (IVSWCD) and I.V. Watershed Council (IVWC), the Kerby Water District (KWD), I.V. Community Development Organization (IVCDO) and the Rogue Basin Coordinating Council (RBCC).

Gardiner and fellow IVSWCD / IVWC

board member Gordon Lyford, an irrigation and water rights specialist, contend now is the time to advance the proposal to the federal government. Wyden's O&C legislation has gone through revisions over the past two years, starting out as the "Oregon and California Land Grant Act of 2013." It's currently being "marked up" in Washington in advance of getting reintroduced as the O&C Act of 2015.

At issue for the Cave Junction SMU is approximately five percent of the 232-square-mile watershed which flows into the East Fork of the Illinois River.

Supporters say that if properties in the SMU are allowed to be clear cut, winter rain will quickly run off the slopes and increase the chance of erosion of top soil and winter flooding. Clear cut harvests mean rain water doesn't have the opportunity to percolate into the soil. After the water flows away in winter, it won't be available to flow into streams during Oregon's dry summers and this lowers summer flows on the Illinois River, potentially limiting the city's ability to deliver water to residents.

See Watershed on A-12

Commissioners meet in Cave Junction

By

Judy Hoyle

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Josephine County Commissioners met for their quarterly Illinois Valley session on Monday at the Josephine County Building in Cave Junction.

All three commissioners fielded questions from about two dozen residents following an informal joint session with Cave Junction Mayor Carl Jacobson and city council members Daniel Dalegowski and John Gardiner.

Most of the discussions revolved around the possible outcomes of the Nov. 4 midterm election, par-

ticularly on how Measure 91 might impact the county around the questions of whether and how marijuana might be taxed.

Measure 91 legalizes use and tightly regulates sale of recreational marijuana for adults 21 and over, freeing law enforcement for other priorities. The measure regulates and taxes the sale through the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. Tax revenues would benefit schools, state and local police and alcohol and drug treatment and prevention programs.

Commissioner Cheryl Walker pointed out that the board has been trying to elicit information as to how county residents want them to proceed with regulating marijuana if Measure 91 passes. Commissioner

Simon Hare said they would probably form a task force to make recommendations to the board.

One way the commissioners have elicited comment is by placing an advisory question, 17-65, on the Nov. 4 ballot which asks: "In your opinion, should Josephine County tax the production, processing, transporting and selling of marijuana and its products?"

In answer to some questions, Walker pointed out that this advisory question is different than the county's proposed ordinance to allow a 10 percent tax on the sale of marijuana and products. By passing this ordinance before the statewide vote, Josephine County commissioners and officials of nearly 50 other municipalities and

counties were hoping to get something on the books before the election. The current language in the ordinance is subject to revision.

At the same time, Walker and Hare pointed out that the state absorbs most of the revenue generated by such potential income streams, including liquor and lottery funds. They said they didn't expect marijuana to be much different.

One audience member pointed out that since this is a Home Rule jurisdiction, any potential tax would have to be approved by voters.

Several audience members complained about the relatively large number of state troopers who appear annually around the same time as the marijuana harvest, but the commis-

sioners stated that they have no control over those decisions.

Another discussion revolved around a pilot project in seven Oregon counties which is funded by a state grant. The project is an attempt to raise revenues by reminding businesses that current state law requires them to report the amount of equipment they own. The county currently has 3,300 licensed businesses.

"This has nothing to do with business income or inventory," Walker explained. "Also, the first \$16,500 of equipment value is exempt from taxation."

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