

Valley Warming Center opens doors: by Christine Perala Gardiner, I.V. Warming Center Volunteer

The Illinois Valley Warming Center (IVWC) will open again this year when the temperature drops below 40 F. Located at Immanuel Methodist Church on Watkins St., the warming center season begins Dec 8, and will open any time the cold threshold is crossed between now and March 16. The IVWC is a mission of Immanuel United Methodist Church, and is supported by volunteers from many area churches as well as other supportive citizens and organizations. This is the only warming center in Josephine County that remains open all winter.

The IVWC has a mission to feed anyone who is hungry, and to provide assistance to those living without housing for any reason, helping folks to stay warm at night in cold weather. Those who have lost their homes, are at highest risk in our society.

People living under such high stress conditions usually have greater nutritional needs and often struggle under significant health issues such as diabetes or mental health issues.

The IVWC recently reached an agreement with the IV Fire District to enable the center to function legally under the zoning

code. IVWC has also submitted a grant application to UCAN in Grants Pass, for basic supplies such as cots and fresh bedding. The IVWC hopes soon to be able to offer shower and laundry coupons to anyone who needs that assistance, for use at the local laundromat.

New this winter, the IVWC will provide for two staff to stay overnight in the WC facility. This will improve security for all involved. Operation of the center requires eight volunteers each night. Major tasks for volunteers are: donations of food, cooking/ food preparation; assisting with the evening shift for guest arrival from 7:30 to 10 p.m.; the overnight shift from 10 p.m. to 5:30 a.m., and breakfast from 5:30 to 8 a.m.

Anyone is welcome to stay, and companion animals are also welcome. The rules of conduct for the IVWC are very clearly spelled out, and anyone who does not respect the rules must leave. This creates an atmosphere of safety and respect, so the IVWC can continue to function. Many guests of the IVWC last year helped with kitchen chores and cleanup. Most are grateful

for the opportunity to get out of the cold and create some stability in their lives.

Most folks will agree that it hurts our community to have ragged, hungry people living on our streets. Getting our fellow citizens the help they need to get back on their feet is a benefit to everyone's economy. We know that preventative health care saves money by keeping people well so they don't need Emergency Room services. It's the right thing to do to get folks off the street when it's cold and wet out. Didn't Jesus say we must help those less fortunate in order to follow Him?

Pastor Charles Chase has asked the community to help in any way they can. The IVWC needs many more volunteers to help staff, so that the work is spread more widely. Donations of food, cash, volunteer time and supplies are always welcomed. To contact Chase, please call 541-287-0740 or email rev_chase@peoplepc.com

Josephine County conservation funding opportunities

Farm owners have an opportunity to receive assistance for conservation improvements. The Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) cost share applications through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are due January 16, 2015. Funding opportunities are currently available for the installation of high tunnels, and for conservation practices on organic or transitioning to organic farms throughout Josephine County.

High Tunnels are unheated greenhouse enclosures to help extend the crop growing season for farmers. Generally, farmers using High Tunnels grow produce to market locally. Practices benefitting organic or transitioning production include cover cropping, crop rotation, nutrient management, pollinator hedgerows, and irrigation improvements, among others. If you think you might be interested in the EQIP program or have any questions, contact NRCS at 541-673-6071 for the Illinois Valley area or 541-664-1070 for the rest of Josephine County to talk about it.

Landowners are encouraged to contact NRCS early so that we can work with you in a timely manner. Applications are accepted at the

Natural Resources Conservation Service offices located at 2593 NW Kline St, Roseburg, OR or 89 Alder St, Central Point, OR.

Originally established by Congress in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), NRCS has expanded to become a conservation leader for all natural resources, ensuring private lands are conserved, restored, and more resilient to environmental challenges. The NRCS works with landowners through conservation planning and assistance designed to benefit the soil, water, air, plants, and animals that result in productive lands and healthy ecosystems.

NRCS, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Local contact information is located in the telephone book under the federal government listing or can be found online at: www.or.nrcs.usda.gov.

Its a wrap for “A Solstice Story”



(Photo by Judy Hoyle, Illinois Valley News)

The cast of “A Solstice Story” listens for audience response to their song during their curtain call.

SOOF ... Continued from A-1

“We would appreciate anyone with any clues about the robbery to share the information,” Fierro said. “People may not realize that they know something important. Anyone who was shopping that Tuesday night after 6 p.m., if they have any memory of others in the store, or saw anyone creeping around outside, or can remember any vehicle descriptions, please call

us at 541-592- FOOD (3663). Also, we’re asking residents in the neighborhood to let us know if they remember people or vehicles that didn’t seem to belong on Tuesday night or early Wednesday morning. We’re not giving up until we find out who did this and we’re offering a reward.”

Camera’s were also stolen, so if anyone notices these items

circulating, please inform store management.

“We would like justice right now, but God has his own timing,” added SOOF trustee Sami Lewin. “I know that God knows, and He will deal with them in his perfect time.”

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