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Cave Junction man facing felony assault charges after OSP investigation

According to a press release from the Oregon State Police (OSP), a Cave Junction man faces felony assault charges after a Dec. 29, 2014, incident.

John Gerard Hogan, 54, was arrested Jan. 7, and faces charges for First Degree Attempted Assault, Unlawful Use of a Weapon, Reckless Driving, Criminal Mistreatment in the First Degree and Driving While Under the Influence of an Intoxicant.

Dec. 29, 2014, at approximately 10:55 p.m., OSP troopers responded to an Aries Lane address in Josephine County for a report of a disturbance with shots being fired. The involved male subject, later determined to be Hogan, was reported to be in his vehicle outside the residence where he was making threats toward others and creating a disturbance. The caller reported Hogan was firing shots from his truck and later rammed his truck into another vehicle that arrived on scene during the disturbance.

An ongoing criminal investigation by OSP detectives determined that Hogan struck the second (arriving) vehicle with his truck numerous times at the residence and then chased the vehicle and its occupants down the road as he continued to crash into it from behind. Hogan eventually crashed his truck shortly after leaving the scene and was later hospitalized for injuries he received as a result of the crash.

One of the victims in the second vehicle was also transported to Three Rivers Community Hospital where she was treated and released. The investigation indicates that alcohol may have played a role in the incident.

On Jan. 7, Hogan turned himself in to troopers at the Grants Pass office and was arrested. He was lodged in the Josephine County Jail on a \$50,000 bail. No photographs are available for this release.

Brush busters



(Photo courtesy of Sarah Gruening for *The Illinois Valley News*)

Eugene based Northwest Youth Corps crews working on a trail near Bigelow Lakes Trail.

Northwest Youth Corps accomplishes valuable trail work

By

Annette McGee Rasch

IVN Senior Contributing Writer

For about a decade, the Northwest Youth Corps has assigned crews to work on trails within the Wild Rivers Ranger district, and in 2014, crews cleared the entire 27 miles of the Illinois River Trail.

“For years now, this Ranger District, as well as other Districts, has struggled to keep up on the maintenance of our trail system,” said US Forest Service Recreation Technician George Brierty. “With diminished funding, we haven’t been able to hire our own trail crew, but with our partnership with the Northwest Youth Corps, who come fully supplied with good leadership and experience, we have been able to get a lot of good work done.”

Three of these crews worked on several projects in this area, from early September through mid October.

In the Red Buttes Wilderness the Sucker Creek Trail was opened up; and the Boundary trail and Tanner lakes trail were both “ambitious projects” for the crews, who utilize hand tools like cross-cut saws, loppers, axes and shovels.

“They were very determined. Some

of these trails were a little difficult for the crews because of elevation changes, but they pushed through and made great progress,” said Northwest Youth Corps Program Coordinator Sarah Gruening. “They had a celebration dance when the trail was complete!”

The Northwest Youth Corps, celebrating its 30-year anniversary, is funded by nonprofit organizations that partner with watershed councils, and state and federal land management agencies to engage youth and young adults in service projects and outdoor education.

“Over the last three decades we’ve provided crews for federal, local and nonprofit partners throughout the Pacific Northwest,” Gruening said. “Our crews have completed thousands of hours of noxious weeds removal, fence construction, trail building and maintenance, tree planting, fuel reduction and parks maintenance.”

Based out of Eugene, the Northwest Youth Corps has four regions for participants to choose from: Idaho, Washington, Northern Oregon, and Southern Oregon and Northern California. Each region has four youth crews participating in this residential program. The crews travel throughout their regions for five weeks, camping near project sites.

Participants develop valuable job skills and learn about conservation and environmental issues, while receiving high school credit. The crews are comprised of nine, 16 to 19-year-old members that are supervised by two staff members. The program does not exclude youth who may have gotten into trouble - coordinators work with probation officers so that all children can benefit from the experience.

One of the 2014 crews on the Wild Rivers district also worked on the Lake Mountain/Bigelow lakes trails. And on the Mount Elijah trails, crew members installed drainages to prevent erosion and rutting, and Gruening said it was a great learning experience, as crews had to assess several locations to determine which types of drain would be most suitable.

“While the crew was working on this trail, it snowed on them. They loved it! They ran around camp throwing snowballs and singing Christmas songs, even though it was only October,” Gruening said.

The crews often hike a mile or so into the back country, learning how to work together and how to stay dry and warm.

“And the food is great. We have a wonderful nutrition program, to make sure they get all the nutrients and calories that also taste good,” said

Gruening, who is from Minnesota and has spent the last three years traveling around this region. “The Siskiyou’s are so unique and provide a wonderful learning opportunity.

“The youth all come together at the beginning of the sessions and don’t know each other. They’re unsure about how to interact, but by the end of the session they’re like family,” Gruening added. “This most recent crew that worked in this area really bonded over singing.

“The change in some of these children, just after a few weeks, is awesome,” Gruening said. “Some of the parents jokingly ask, ‘What did you do to my kid? They came home and now they’re helpful around the house and don’t have to be asked to do chores, they’re more engaged.’”

“The youth on these crews always have a good positive attitude and their work ethic is terrific,” said Brierty, who has worked for 20 years in the Wild Rivers District.

While the youth volunteer their time and labor, if they complete the program they receive bonuses between \$1,000 to \$1,200, and some crew members come back and become employed as crew leaders. If Valley youth are interested in the program, they should go to www.nwyouthcorps.org.

Battle over medical air transport brewing

By

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IVN Contributing Writer

Until recently, Josephine County was the only county in Oregon which did not have a resident air ambulance service. Mercy Flights, a not-for-profit service with 1,300 Josephine County subscribers, is based in Medford.

Two months ago, Oregon Lifeguard (OLG), began offering emergency helicopter service based at the Grants Pass Airport in Merlin. They also have an airplane based at the Medford Airport.

Dr. Martin Hill, the county’s supervisor of emergency medical services issued a policy directive Dec. 15 ordering that “the company with the quickest response time to have a helicopter at a patient will be used.”

Several in local emergency services are questioning this sudden development. The board of the Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) has passed a resolution to continue to call Mercy Flights first, due to a good working relationship and long established protocols with the not-for-profit service.

Deputy Chief Lang Johnson of the

Grants Pass Department of Public Safety wants training between his crews and OLG crews to take place before initiating service from them.

On Monday, local fire chiefs, including Johnson and IVFD Chief Dennis Hoke, met with Josephine County Commissioner Cheryl Walker to discuss the situation.

Hoke’s concerns are twofold. One is that OLG parent company Classic Air Medical, with bases in Arizona, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming does not have as clean a safety record as Mercy. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has cited pilot error in three helicopter crashes between 2000 and 2012. In comparison, Mercy Flights has had only one accident 30 years ago with a fixed wing (airplane).

“We never deal with fixed wing here, only rotary (helicopter). They’re comparing apples and oranges,” Hoke said.

Hoke believes that Mercy loses as much as \$200,000 per year. “They make up for that loss with their other two services, ambulance and fixed wing. A for-profit rotary business can’t afford to do that for long. When Oregon Lifeguard

figures out there’s no money in this and they pull out, we’re stuck with nothing,” he said. He points out that there were only 55 callouts for air ambulance service in the county in 2014, about once a week on average. “My concerns have always been over the long term that there’s not enough demand to support two air ambulance businesses.”

Kai McSwain, chief executive officer and managing director for Oregon Lifeguard has worked in health care for 14 years and in the air medical field for 5, and felt better service was needed here.

“All the surrounding counties have at least one provider and some, like Douglas County have two,” he explained. “Currently the service is driven by monopoly in the market, not driven by need.”

“I worked at Asante for 10 years and know the area. Josephine County is the perfect place to be located, because it’s underserved, has difficult road conditions and it’s a central location to be able to serve the surrounding counties,” McSwain said. “We can reach out to Coos Bay, Roseburg or Jackson County.”

See Flights on A-10

Expanded Siskiyou Community Health Center services now available

By

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The Siskiyou Community Health Center (SCHC) has come a long way since its humble beginnings as the Takilma Peoples Clinic in 1973. The modern clinic has been located at 25647 Redwood Highway since 2007.

“We’re pretty excited about providing expanded services to Illinois Valley residents,” said Kurt Higuera, SCHC’s CEO for the past seven years. “And this facility has the capacity to expand even more, according to need, as the community grows.”

The clinic now has a pharmacy, which has been open on a limited basis for a few weeks, as staff work out the bugs of the new computer system.

“Before we open the doors to the broader public, we need to be sure all systems are functioning correctly to ensure that everyone has a good user experience,” Higuera said. “We expect to achieve full running status within a month.”

The new pharmacy operates under a federal designation that allows qualified community medical centers to offer affordable drugs to patients on a sliding scale. Similar to prescription programs at Wal-Mart and Fred Meyer, SCHC patients will be able to obtain generic prescriptions for four or nine dollars.

“It is awesome to be able to bring this service to the Valley,” said SCHC Director Karen Stewart. “Many people don’t have prescription benefits.”

See Health on A-8