

Getting Healthy



(Photo by Laura Mancuso, *Illinois Valley News*)
Dulcie Moore (right) learns about health benefits from walking during the Health & Wellness Fair presented by Healthy U Jan. 24 at the I.V. Senior Center.

Airport ... Continued from A-1

Asked how he felt the project is coming along he said he isn't privy to all the discussions between MCDC and its investors, but understands things are going well.

"I am told by Manor that they have already signed some very big companies and are close to signing several others who will be investing," he said. "They really can't do anything until they get more investment partners signed up and their money in the bank."

In early December, Graves and Josephine County Commissioner Cherryl Walker traveled to Seattle for discussions with the FAA. They sought approval for all potential activities that could be encompassed in the upcoming development at the Illinois Valley Airport.

"We did not get everything we wanted, but we got everything we needed," Graves said. "The FAA has agreed to allow any and all contemplated activities associated with the coming UAV-TOC to take place on the airport, as long as the activities they consider 'non-aeronautical' in nature are located away from the flight line and aeronautical activities are not blocked from the flight line."

Graves said an agreement with the FAA will need to be renewed every five years. In order to do that, the airport must demonstrate that it is continuing to seek legislative relief from land-grant use restrictions placed on Josephine County when the BLM and Forest Service deeded the land to us in 1987.

"This is very good news for the IV Community and for IV Airport, as it allows us to move forward with development plans without the fear of future roadblocks from the FAA," he said.

Walker talked about the project as an economic boon for the region.

"This project will be a substantial economic boost to Josephine County and the Illinois Valley in particular," she said. "Over the 30-year term of the lease, it will diversify our economic base and provide jobs throughout our community. I look forward to seeing this project develop over the next few years."

AARP teams with I.V. Family Coalition to offer tax help

By
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IVN Contributing Writer

Illinois Valley residents of all ages will soon be able to take advantage of free tax preparation services offered by the AARP Tax Aide program. The program gets underway February 4 and continues through the end of tax season. The service will be provided at the offices of the Illinois Valley Family Coalition on Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The nationwide AARP program started in 1968 with just four volunteers, but now involves more than 35,000 volunteers and 2.6 million taxpayers at more than 5,000 sites. All volunteers go through extensive training and pass a test designed by the IRS.

According to Tax Aide Instructor Gwen Childs, it is generally low- and middle-income taxpayers who benefit most from the service. She notes that volunteers are trained to assist with most types of returns. Among the few exceptions are income from a house rental and most businesses, except for very small ones.

The new tax consideration this year is the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), notes Childs. She explains that while most people won't be affected, everyone who bought insurance through Cover Oregon needs to file to work through any subsidies.

"Some people will simply be reporting, but some will get a refund and some will pay, depending on income and any advanced payments through Cover

Oregon," she said.

Childs, who first began volunteering with the program in 1997, finds helping people to obtain unexpected refunds the most rewarding aspect.

"A couple of times a year I find a client who has repeatedly made a mistake and we are able to correct several prior years' returns, plus the current year, and that is a happy surprise for them," she said.

Childs highlighted three cases that she found memorable.

"A working woman came in who was married to a person on military disability," she said. "They had several children. But for a number of years, she had erroneously filed Married Filing Separately (MFS) because, as she said, 'My husband has no income.' Because the Earned Income Tax Credit is not available to MFS, she lost out on several thousand dollars each year. We were able to file amended returns for three previous years and get refunds for her."

Childs said on another occasion, a very competent woman had been doing her own return, but made the mistake of going to the regular tax table instead of the special table for investment income.

"So, she had paid \$2,000 to \$3,000 too much for several years," Childs said. "We submitted three year's amended returns. Now, she comes to us every year."

A third case involved a man who also did his own returns.

"He had a child in college, but didn't know about education credits," she said. "Again, we filed amended returns and got him a refund."

Childs adds that all current year

returns are filed electronically and direct deposit refunds are available within as little as ten days of filing, in most cases.

For those who are reasonably computer savvy, Childs mentions that free tax software from a number of vendors, in many cases well known vendors, is available through the Free File program of the Oregon Department of Revenue. Only certain taxpayers are eligible, as there are income and other limitations. But to see if you fall within the limits, the simplest way to get to the appropriate Web page is to simply google "Oregon free file."

To make an appointment in Cave Junction, call the Illinois Valley Family Coalition at 541-592-6786.

For those whose schedules require an evening time or a different day, the Grants Pass tax preparation program is open Monday through Saturday and one evening a week. Call the Grants Pass office at 541-956-4450. This is also the number you should call if you have a question about whether your return falls within the guidelines of the program.

When you come to your appointment, be sure to bring last year's return, if you have one; your social security card; photo ID; your Cover Oregon statement, if applicable; and all documents related to income and expenses.

Interested in becoming a tax aide volunteer yourself for next year? You can sign up at the AARP website. You can call the Grants Pass office at the number above. Or you can simply let the site supervisor know when you come in to get your own return prepared.

Court ... Continued from A-1

Mecca said six months to a year-and-a-half is a typical timeframe for murder cases, with the average being about a year.

"Some cases are more intensive in the sense of investigation," he said. "It might be a case of 'Who done it?' Or, the defense team may need to order a mirror investigation of all the evidence, to

ensure the state's case is kosher."

Mecca added that it can also take time to discern if the accused is mentally stable or not and, when drugs or alcohol are factors, it sometimes requires a state hospital to determine mental fitness, to ensure the accused is clearheaded enough to enter a plea.

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