

Don Moore to represent the Valley on housing council

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IVN Contributing Writer

Josephine County Housing and Community Development Council (JCHCDC) is the local housing authority. The agency provides rental assistance to low income families through the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program.

This federally funded program provides rent subsidies that enable income qualified participants to lease privately owned rental housing. It also owns Harbeck Village, a 48 unit tax credit project in Grants Pass offering two to four bedrooms per unit.

Former Cave Junction Mayor Don Moore was recently appointed to become a JCHCDC commissioner. In a recent telephone conversation Moore stated, "I want to make sure the I.V. and Cave Junction are fairly represented on the council. I asked one of the other commissioners to come to the I.V. and the person said, 'Oh no, I never go there.'"

"There's a backlog of over 600 applications for Section 8 housing and there's really no construction here since the recession. Unfortunately, there's no economically viable

proposition for building affordable housing.

"I'd like to see a Harbeck type of project built here at the end of Burgundy St. If we could find some funding, we could build on these parcels. Our valley hasn't grown out of this recession and we need a helping hand up. I think we could get grants for this if we present it right.

"We need to take care of people that are at an economic disadvantage. When you're living below the poverty level, 50 percent of your earnings go to rent as opposed to 15 percent for someone with a family wage job."

Asked about the burgeoning "Tiny House" discussions in the Valley, Moore said, "I think it hasn't been thoroughly examined. It takes quite a lot to put up a regular house. You need to set up separate water, sewer, and electricity and place the structure on a proper slope so it's not going to get flooded. There are state and federal laws for housing and if you put the house on wheels, you'll come under ODOT for safety regulations.

"I would prefer to see more multi-family developments. We need higher density in the city to prevent urban sprawl and make sure residents are close to services. We also have a growing elderly population unable to afford to remain living in their own homes. We've got

to take care of the elderly and families with children."

Cave Junction is not alone in having to face an affordable housing crisis. Oregon's Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Portland) recently completed an Oregon Affordable Housing Tour. He held roundtable discussions in major cities with local and state advocates about what the federal government can do to help address the housing crisis that is gripping the entire state.

Additionally, Merkley heard directly from Oregonians who have been affected by rising rental prices, lack of available housing and skyrocketing housing prices.

In a press release, Merkley stated, "Throughout this tour, I've heard from Oregonians who have become homeless due to rental increases and families who qualify for affordable housing only to face a wait list that is years long. It's clear that the housing crisis is affecting communities in every corner of the state. We have a shortage of affordable housing units and rental prices that have spiraled far beyond workers' wage increases. This tour underscored that we need officials at every level of government working together to find solutions."

Some of the ideas discussed during the Oregon Affordable Housing Tour included:

- Create greater flexibility for public housing authorities to use federal vouchers for portable rent subsidies or bundle them to preserve and renovate multi-family buildings.
- Dedicate a portion of federal HOME grants and vouchers to the states with the highest need.
- Build on Oregon's pilot project to integrate housing with healthcare delivery as part of a Coordinated Care Organization using Medicaid dollars.
- Make existing housing vouchers more effective by changing the Fair Market Rent Calculation in communities where rent is rising quickly.
- Increase flexible funding for locally-developed comprehensive plans.
- Expand the affordable housing conversation to include the positive impact of stable, affordable housing on children's educational success.

The JCHCDC is seeking a tenant representative who receives direct assistance from this housing authority. Applications will be accepted until noon on April 20, 2016. Applications are available at the Josephine County Courthouse, Room 154 in Grants Pass or the county website: www.co.josephine.or.us. Call 541-474-5221 for further information.

Dishing it out at the Big DQ: by Robert Hirning

It was a warm, lazy spring afternoon back in 1972. Four of us had been up in Selma, I think, and heading south through town someone suggested that we stop off for ice cream at the Dairy Queen. I had been in there on earlier occasions for a Chocolate Dip or a Blizzard without any trouble, but this time one of those signs caught my eye as our old dodge van wheeled into the parking lot. A clandestine group, reputed to be called the "Illinois Valley Betterment Committee," had these things printed up and sold them for 50 cents out of a storefront across the street. In large black letters the sign read: "WE DO NOT SOLICIT 'HIPPIE' PATRONAGE." Many, in fact most, stores had them in the window at that time, but the Dairy Queen had been one of the few safe zones up to then. I knew there would be trouble as we walked in the door and saw the scowl on Mrs. Brook's face; probably she had taped up the sign only that day.

Looking back on it now after more than four decades, the revulsion for "hippies" seems more understandable in context of the time. This small rural community

was suddenly besieged with what was perceived as a Martian invasion. Long hair (No. 1 stigma), flamboyant clothes, immodesty and perceived odd behavior put people off. Values at the time expected good people to support our government and honor public officials from the president on down. If Uncle Sam went to war to stop communism in Southeast Asia there was good reason for it. If these wild dope-crazed savages expected to just march in and be accepted, after swimming naked in the river and having wild parties and disrespecting local customs and values, they had another thing coming. This was the look on Mrs. Brook's face.

"You'll have to eat it outside," she said before we had even ordered. Now this was something new since we had always been able to sit down in one of the booths with the Formica table tops and red vinyl covered seats. Not wanting to actually refuse the sale, but hating the perceived enemy, she glared back over the soft freeze machine as she filled cones and paper bowls. From our point of view this was a dilemma, whether to refuse to

eat outside before getting our ice creams or after, we chose the latter. After exchanging serious glances at each other, we ambled over to the booth, cones and cups in hand.

Mrs. Brooks was furious now. "You will eat that outside," she managed to utter through clenched teeth and grabbed a spray bottle from behind the counter. Other patrons began to notice that something was up as this white uniformed dragon rushed out brandishing her spray bottle at arm's length. As she reached the booth, we could smell the ammonia, which became many times stronger as she sprayed down the Formica in front of us. This act definitely threw down the gauntlet. We had several choices and no time to discuss anything. Undoubtedly the vision of sit-ins at southern Woolworth lunch counters not even a decade before came immediately to mind. Realizing that we were disobedient and silently digging in for the long haul, Mrs. Brooks retreated to behind the counter.

Reaching for the phone she glowered daggers at us and proceeded to dial a memorized phone number. Muttering into the

receiver, it was clear that she was speaking to someone of authority, undoubtedly the police. As she hung up the receiver I stood up and approached the counter. Not knowing exactly what to say and since we had all remained almost totally silent throughout the entire encounter so far, I was able to only blurt out something like "We're all human just like you" or "Please calm down, we're all one." Her response was immediate, "You shut-up and sit down" she growled. The police would be here any minute and everything should remain unchanged so that he could throw the hippies out once and for all. We kept eating and she kept glaring until Officer Christianson raced into the parking lot and screeched to a halt.

At the time Cave Junction actually had a police department, although Chief Christianson and the aging squad car was all there was to it. Christianson saw himself as a Marshall Dillon out of "Gunsmoke," a great western lawman chosen to enforce justice for the good guys; and it didn't take much to know who the bad guys were. A 10 gallon hat and a white horse would have

completed the picture but, all things considered, he had to settle for a mismatched khaki uniform and dented Ford Galaxie. He once issued me a parking ticket, perhaps the only one the City has ever issued to this day, but that's another story.


"Chris," as he was known to his friends, swaggered in through the glass door and stood menacingly over his prey. "Didn't she tell you to leave?" he said drawing out the words as he hooked both thumbs through his belt. Looking up from the last bites of my sugar cone, I thought about it. Actually Mrs. Brooks hadn't ever told us to leave. "No," I blurted out, "She told me 'shut up and sit down.'" This was not the answer Chris had expected. This order, if true, was actually tantamount to telling us to stay; which was exactly what happened. Officer Christianson sauntered over to Mrs. Brooks much as a manager approaches the mound and speaks in hushed tones to a pitcher who has three men on base and no outs. By this time, having finished our ice creams, we all stood up at once, disposed our trash in the swing-topped can and walked out through the glass door to the truck.

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