

\$10,000 approved for local library

Caroline Griffith
IVN Contributing Writer

The Cave Junction City Council voted Monday, June 20, to approve the 2016/2017 budget, including a \$10,000 contribution to the local library. The monies given to the library come from "state revenue sharing" funds. These funds are derived from the state liquor sales tax and then redistributed to Oregon cities based on population and income level. According to city recorder Ryan Nolan, these funds are generally used to help provide basic city services, and over the last few years the city council has opted to give a portion of them to the library because they believe it is an important asset to the community.

Kate Lasky, executive director of the nonprofit Josephine Community Libraries, thanked the council for its investment in the community. Last year, thanks in part to the generosity of the City of Cave Junction, the I.V. Library was able to provide increased services to students by partnering with Lorna Byrne Middle School to start a weekly after-school bus service to the branch. The library was also able to offer space to home-school groups and begin renovation of the children's room. Lasky informed the council that the much-awaited renovation had been delayed due to asbestos concerns, but the new children's section should be ready before the next school year begins.

The adopted budget is based on a city property tax of \$1.8959 per \$1,000 of assessed value, which the council voted to renew. This tax rate has not changed since 2006. Mayor Carl Jacobson said, "The last thing we want to do is raise taxes and make people upset."

On a related note, the council voted once again to table any discussion on two proposed sales taxes that may or may not be referred to the voters of Cave Junction. Councilor Dan Bosch, who wanted to have all council members present before voting on the fuel tax or the cannabis sales tax, proposed the delay since Councilors Margaret Miller and Daniel Dalegowski were not in attendance. The council is still seeking public comment on these ordinances, which may be voted on at the next meeting.

Councilor John Gardiner then asked the council to rethink the verbiage of the proposed cannabis sales tax so as to avoid "the 'M' word." According to Gardiner, "This pejorative and racist term (marijuana) was invented some 89 years ago by those who were responsible for the prohibition of this plant, as a means to vilify people of color." He recommended "that we not use racist words when we talk about this in council, and that we use the proper term cannabis in our speech, even if the 'M' word must be used in writing for some legal reason." That discussion was also tabled until the next meeting.

The Cave Junction City Council meets the second Monday of each month, 7 p.m. at 222 Lister Street. The public is welcome and comments from the public are taken at the end of each meeting.

Love burns at Barter Faire



(Photos by Dan Klapheke, Illinois Valley News)

This year's Hope Mountain Barter Faire went Friday-Sunday, June 17-19 on the 4000 block of Holland Loop. The event featured music, dancing, fire demonstrations, a children's area and other activities.

Reserve does not mean surplus, county says

Anita R. Savio
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Oregon House Bill (HB) 4175 provides Josephine County with the option to use certain public works monies to fund rural patrols. An initial motion by county budget committee member Margaret Goodman to utilize that option was voted down, but she has called for an accounting maneuver that will keep those funds in play.

The monies Goodman is referring to are Title 1 U.S. Forest Service timber payments. County practice with these payments, which fluctuate from year to year, has been to put them in the Public Works reserve fund, comingled with other reserves. But when reserves are spent, there is no

way to separate out which amounts came from Title 1 and which from other sources. Goodman wants to change that.

"I made another motion to simply track the funds separately, so we would know how much was available that could be used for sheriff's patrols, if that should become necessary at some future time."

According to Goodman, the county can only say it has about \$1.5 million of Title 1 funds right now, over and above what may be left of comingled funds.

Goodman is careful to draw a distinction between Public Works reserve funds and any so-called "surplus."

"A reserve is not exactly the same as a surplus because a surplus implies that it isn't needed. It's very important to have reserves on hand for emergency situations, and,

under ideal circumstances, I would like to see us have much greater reserves than we have today."

But making reference to the so-called "fiscal cliff" that the county is facing, which Sheriff Daniel warned could result in the layoff of all of the county's deputies, Goodman added: "County budgeting is an exercise in prioritization across departments. While our reserve funds for Public Works are not nearly as great as I would like to see us have, we have no reserve funds at all for public safety."

But what if the "big one" hits and the Illinois Valley is cut off from Grants Pass and I-5? What will the county do if it lacks public works reserves? Goodman responded: "If the big one hits, we don't have anywhere near enough funds to even make a drop in

the bucket. We'll have to rely on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), like everybody else."

Public Works Director Rob Brandes agreed there are no surplus funds in his department's budget. The 2015/16 FY budget includes 45 percent in reserves, including Title 1 or roughly \$3.8 million of his total \$8.5 million annual budget.

That amount may sound like a lot, said Brandes, but the average amount of road and bridge repair reserves among Oregon counties is 159 percent. That places Josephine County in the ninth or 10th lowest among all Oregon counties.

Brandes admits there is "no magic" to determining reserve amounts.

SEE ROADS ON A-11

Ghost Cars: Chief Hoke on abandoned vehicles

By Dan Klapheke
IVN Staff Writer

Over the past year, the Valley has seen a rise in crime due in large to lack of law enforcement in the area, and a development from that is a wave of abandoned vehicles on the side of the road. Some are burned and become dangerous to the environment, but many are simply abandoned. These rogue vehicles pop up throughout the Valley, but they'll still be sitting empty in the same spot weeks later.

A question among many that rises from this phenomenon is, why are they still there?

Dennis Hoke, Chief of the

Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) and certified paramedic, said whether or not the vehicle gets removed depends on where it is.

"If it's a road hazard, if it's potentially gonna impact the environment--like it's leaking oil into a drainage ditch, something like that--then we would have it removed and have it towed away because of the impact," Hoke said. "If it's a hazard to traffic, we need to get it off the road. And so then we tow it."

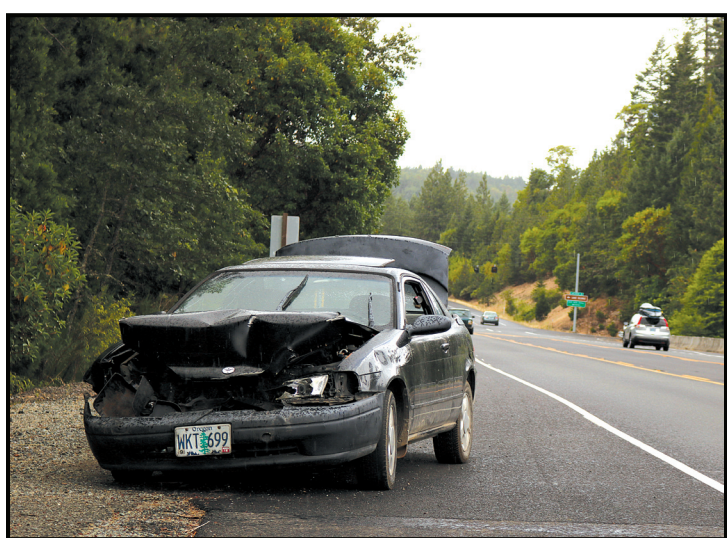
The problem comes with wrecks on private property, Hoke said.

"If there's no hazard, then I really don't have the authority to do anything with it," Hoke said.

For example, an apparently stolen car was torched on Reggie Boltz's Rock'n R Ranch in early June. IVFD arrived and put out the blaze, spread a solution over leaked fluids to ensure safety, then left. But even though the vehicle was not Boltz's, it was on his property, therefore it is his responsibility to get it towed if he wants it gone.

"Zero salvage, zero ability to recoup any money for it, and they're not gonna tow it," Hoke said, referring to Jerry's Towing, who has a contract with IVFD. "It's not costing us anything, but it's costing Jerry's towing."

SEE CARS ON A-11



(Photo by Dan Klapheke, Illinois Valley News)

Black Toyota sits on the side of the road in Selma. The vehicle sat for almost 10 days.