

# Illinois Valley News

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## Restricting marijuana leads to rowdy meeting

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Josephine County Commissioners Cheryl Walker and Keith Heck faced a standing-room-only crowd, Tuesday, June 28, at their final forum seeking public input about potential changes to county zoning laws in regard to cannabis cultivation. The crowd became raucous at times, and, at one point when they were unable to retain order, both county commissioners walked out of the meeting.

The topic on the table was the board of commissioner's decision to examine options for the potential regulation of cannabis production in rural residential zones. Though agriculture and farming are already allowed, with the proper approval, on properties zoned rural residential, the current county land-use regulations have no mention of cannabis-related uses. According to Commissioner Walker, they are focusing on properties zoned rural residential because, "this is where we have the most complaints, the most issues, the most violations."

Multiple attendees voiced concern about water usage, light pollution and increased traffic on residential roads. When one woman, who lives in a small rural neighborhood in the Illinois Valley, complained about the smell of a neighbor's grow, she was noisily booed by the crowd. Another man spoke of "the grower next door" who had "run rough-shod over everything."

As evidenced by a show of hands, the crowd was largely comprised of medical marijuana growers worried about new regulations. Some attendees carried signs reading "Educate before you regulate," "Patients' Lives Matter," and "Enough With the Lies." A few stated concern about the commissioners' motives. Marijuana advocate and former county commissioner candidate Mark Seligman suggested that Commissioner Walker supported restricting medical marijuana grows on properties zoned RR5 because she wants to eliminate competition for her medical marijuana grow, which is on land zoned for exclusive farm use. Commissioner Walker did not respond to the accusation.

Cave Junction resident Catherine Austin referenced a recent meeting of the Illinois Valley Airport Advisory Board at which Commissioner Walker and the advisory board were reputed to have discussed the possibility of cultivating cannabis at the airport to raise revenue for the county. At this, Josephine County Planning Department community development director Julie Schmelzer delivered an impassioned plea to attendees to educate themselves. "There is a lot of misinformation out there," she said. After having attended all four of the countywide meetings, she had "yet to hear anything constructive. All I keep hearing are lies."

"We do not do Google Earth spying," Schmelzer said. "We are complaint-driven only." She then encouraged those involved in medical marijuana cultivation that may have constructive suggestions to join the committee which the planning department is forming to explore regulation options.

The yelling and heckling were interspersed with calls for cooperation and increased communication among neighbors and local government. One grower from the Williams area admonished his fellow farmers to "communicate, adhere to the rules, and be good neighbors."

Local farmer, Christopher Hall, pointed out that many small farmers in Josephine County grow produce on their rural residential land and then sell at the Cave Junction Farmers' Market or the Grants Pass Growers' Market. He asked Walker and Schmelzer if the new regulations would target all small farmers, or just those small farmers who grow cannabis. Hall grew up on a farm in Vermont and asked, "When, in the history of America, did people who farmed not live on their farms?" This was greeted with applause and cheering.

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## IVHS 2001 vintage



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

The class of 2001 enjoy a sunny day at Deer Creek Vineyards in Selma July 2. Nicole K. Fox, Ashley Durham, Josh Scott, Ben Campbell, Cindy Wright, Alicia Linnell, Greg Arnold, Shelly White, Ryan Miller, Mike McDowell, Ryan Christensen, Jerrod Bruner, Julie McDowell, Lynelle Franks, Alina Squires and Brandon Henry.

## IVHS Alumni take over

Judy Hoyle  
IVN Contributing Writer

The annual IVHS Alumni Reunion weekend was another grand success with reunion events taking place for members of the Classes of 1951, '56, '61, '66, '71, '76, '86, '91, '96, 2001 and 2006.

The weekend culminated in a warm, family celebration Sunday morning with alumni, their spouses, children and grandchildren at Jubilee Park Pavilion.

Breakfast was prepared by I.V. Fire District volunteers as a fundraiser for their organization, with 10 percent of the proceeds going toward the scholarship fund. The crew included members of the I.V. Community Emergency Response team. Over 150 meals were served.

The Valley Girls Opportunity Quilt raffle ticket sales garnered over \$200, according to Carol Dinkel Dickson ('74). The funds raised by this annual project go toward the Boys and Girls Club and one additional organization each year with a portion going toward alumni scholarships.

IVHS Alumni and Friends raise funds to benefit others, including contributing to the IVHS Grad Night, and IVHS girls basketball and awarding scholarships for graduating IVHS seniors.

This year's award winners were Alia Parker, who received a \$4,000 academic scholarship and Greg Klingbell who received a \$4,000 vocational scholarship.

Klingbell will attend Cascade Culinary Institute in

Bend with plans to become a chef. Parker plans to become a renewable energy engineer and will attend Rogue Community College followed by Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls.

The Sunday morning silent auction featured gift baskets assembled by the participating classes as well as various treasures and bargains.

The annual Grand Prize Raffle included a bistro dining set, barbecue and utensils, and an overnight stay for two at Vertical Horizons Treehouses, a Taylor's Country Store \$30 gift certificate and 2 tickets to the Britt Festival. The winner was Colt Hill.

The O'Brien second prize package of a two night tipi stay and dinner for two at McGrew's, an Out 'n' About zip line package and an

Augustino Estate wine basket went to Darnell Smith.

The Caves Package, including an overnight stay at the Chateau, \$50 dinner voucher and a Great Cats World Park tour was awarded to Karen Stiles.

The fourth prize was a Galice rafting trip plus overnight stay at Lake Selmac Resort. It was awarded to Shanna and Dennis Rhoten.

President JoAnna Granville Gavlik ('99) was MC for the day's activities and announced all the winners.

The 23rd annual membership meeting took place at noon with Gavlik presiding. Donna Zimmerman Tellyer ('56) gave the treasurer's report.

SEE ALUMNI ON A-10

## Ghost Cars: No tow if no value



(Photo by Dan Klapheke, Illinois Valley News)

Cars waiting to be crushed at Jerry's Towing impound yard. Swift states he has not crushed in three years.

By Dan Klapheke  
IVN Staff Writer

When a vehicle wrecks in the Valley, there's a good chance Jerry's Towing will eventually clean up the mess. The company has a contract through Oregon State Police (OSP) for such incidents, and law enforcement or Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) will call if they deem the wreckage a hazard to the road or environment.

However, when a vehicle is abandoned on the side of the road, and even though Jerry's towing has the salvage rights to it, it's near-worthless.

"If it's something I can make some money on--if I can make a couple hundred bucks out of the rig--I'll go get it," said Ken Swift, owner of Jerry's. "If it's a burnt shell and it's on somebody's property, then I want some money to haul it off."

Swift bought Jerry's from his father-

in-law, but the service has been around since the 1970s. Swift said he's noticed the rise in abandoned vehicles, but only picks up about 10 in a year. Recently, however, he's stopped picking them up altogether.

"We used to be able to make a couple bucks off of them, tonnage-wise, for scrapping them out," Swift said. "And you got lien sales, there's paperwork to pay for; so I've quit taking them."

The lien sale process gives Jerry's the right to salvage an abandoned vehicle. For example, if Swift tows an abandoned vehicle from along the side of Redwood Hwy., he has to fill out paperwork on the vehicle's information in an attempt to contact the owner. The owner is sent a notice and given a deadline for when they can still claim the vehicle, and if they don't, it's Jerry's to collect any worth on it.

But there's a cost to the paperwork, both monetary and in time. Swift said

each case is different, but the price of the paperwork can range from \$25-\$125, depending on where the vehicle's from. Then the paperwork can take anywhere from three weeks to three months, again depending on the vehicle's origin. Oregon is generally painless, Swift said, but a Florida vehicle's paperwork is a long and expensive ordeal.

The lien sales used to be a smaller part of the towing and salvage process, but Swift said the main reason is the value in scrap metal has plunged.

"Tonnage-wise, it ain't worth nothing," Swift said. "Now, three or four years ago it was \$217 a ton. So that makes it well worth your while." Since then, the value has dipped to \$10-\$15 a ton.

SEE CARS ON A-10