

Illinois Valley News

Wednesday, October 19, 2016, 1 Section, Volume LXXIX No. 31

Published Weekly for the residents of the Illinois Valley

A cannabis conversation

By Laura Mancuso
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A cannabis conversation left a crowd of 40 motivated and inspired to be proactive about their concerns.

On Oct. 14 Healthy U hosted a “Cannabis and Community Conversation” presented by Oregon Humanities, an independent, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

According to Eliot Feenstra the facilitator from Oregon Humanities, the focus of the event was not to solve problems or change laws but to facilitate a respectful conversation about how the cannabis industry is shaping and reshaping our valley.

Feenstra asked the participants questions and encouraged them to express their feelings, views and experiences. The participants included cannabis growers and nongrowers from a variety of age groups.

Illinois Valley resident Roy Houston who graduated from the IVHS class of 1962 explained how he and his wife voted for legalization and that they have nothing against cannabis, but knowing what they know now, they might not have voted for it. “We just want to sit on our deck and not smell it,” Houston said.

Sonny Moore, a resident whose family has lived in Cave Junction since the ‘70s, said it was all about “perception.” He noticed that this was the first year there was “a new element that does not care about the land.”

The main concerns expressed about the new cannabis industry were the surge of new fences being put up around the Valley blocking beautiful views; new growers were not being good stewards of the land and being disrespectful neighbors; the use of pesticides on medicine; polluting rivers with chemicals; greed of new growers in the area that were not giving back to the community; increase in housing prices making it difficult to buy a home; lack of tax and wage regulation; and crime from the “black-market side” of cannabis.

Katherine Bryan, owner of Deer Creek Vineyards addressed their concerns, “This is a dynamic industry, changes are happening all the time,” she urged residents to “provide information about your community to your legislators. Be proactive about your concerns.”

Other participants came to talk about how cannabis has made an important impact on their life by providing financial security. Paco Despacio, resident of Cave Junction explained how he used the trim from cannabis to get money, “It helped prevent my house from being foreclosed on. It has been an economic benefit to a lot of people. Not only for survival, but giving them a little extra income to participate in the community.”

Kayla Starr who called herself a “Granny Grower” made a proposal about forming a fund that would make it possible for cannabis growers to give back to their community by donating money that would be used for economic development, improving schools, and art and beautification projects to better the community.

SEE CANNABIS ON A-12

Fall flowers



A Jager marijuana bud growing in Selma. Jager is sometimes referred to as the Halloween bud due to the deep green and purple flower often with fiery orange hairs.

JoCo joins O&C lawsuit maneuvering

Anita R. Savio
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Legal maneuvering over the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) latest O&C management plan is in full swing, as Josephine County dropped participation in the Association of O&C Counties lawsuit, while joining as plaintiff in two others. All three of the lawsuits allege that BLM’s 2016 Resource Management Plan does not provide adequate timber harvests, as per the original O&C mandate.

The decision to drop out of the Association’s lawsuit, according to Josephine County Legal Counsel Wally Hicks, “freed us up to join the two other lawsuits for certain strategically

advantageous reasons which would not be appropriate for us to reveal at this time.”

JoCo has now joined the lawsuit known as Swanson III, so-named after the Glendale-based timber company that initiated the action but is no longer part of it. Still a part, but likely to lose standing, is Rough and Ready Lumber Company, which is now closed. But, said Hicks, by filing as a plaintiff, the county keeps that suit alive.

However, added Hicks, the U.S. Department of Justice, representing the BLM, is certain to challenge Josephine County’s inclusion in Swanson III.

Judge Richard Leon of the U.S. District Court for Washington D.C. had already ruled that the BLM was required

to follow a certain statutory harvest level for two of the six O&C regions: Medford and Roseburg. Josephine County is in the Medford region.

Josephine County is asking that the court extend that ruling to the other four regions, and also require the BLM sell timber inventory that has accumulated since 2004, when the 2004 Western Oregon Plan Revision went into effect.

Hicks explained that the county would benefit if the court’s ruling were extended to the other four regions because our county receives a percentage of all timber sale receipts, no matter in which of the six regions they take place.

SEE O&C ON A-10

City candidates take stage at candidate forum

Caroline Griffith
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Cave Junction City Council and mayoral candidates made their cases to the voters Tuesday, Oct. 11 at a town-hall style forum, hosted by the *Illinois Valley News* and held at the County Building. Candidates answered questions posed by *Illinois Valley News* publisher Dan Mancuso, as well as a few questions from the public. Not surprisingly, the main topics of the evening were public safety, cannabis and how to raise revenue for the city.

First up were candidates for council position 4. Incumbent John Gardiner and challenger Mark Dillinger agreed on many issues, with their main differences being their plans for how to solve the problems facing the city. Dillinger’s main goal, if elected, is to improve the city’s image by cleaning it up. “This city looks like we don’t care because on every street corner we have transients,” he said. Gardiner wants to focus on helping the

council to reach out more effectively to groups like the Chamber of Commerce. Gardiner opined, “We have been way too reactive and not proactive enough in resolving the big issue we have, which is, of course, security.”

Mancuso pointed out that both of these issues, public security and transients, could be mitigated by enforcing current codes and asked how the candidates would work to enforce current codes, and how they would pay for this. Dillinger suggested a crew of volunteers, though there would need to be oversight. “Code enforcement is high on my list,” he said. “We already have on the books codes for vagrancy, codes for loitering, but we don’t enforce them.” Gardiner acknowledged that the deputy is stretched thin, but, he said, “I think the idea of a volunteer code-enforcement team is one worth looking at.”

The candidates were then asked how the city could benefit from the current cannabis boom. Gardiner said, “Our job in council

is to reflect the needs and wishes of the citizens. If we don’t do that, then why should they vote for us?” He added, in regard to a failed proposal to tax cannabis sales, that he had gotten a lot of feedback from citizens about the tax being unethical.

“How to actually tap into it: Once we withdraw from the lawsuit, we can get back into it,” said Gardiner. Dillinger said, “I think that our city needs every penny that we can get from anything and anywhere we can get it. I do not think that we should have grows within city limits. As far as what we can do to capture it, I think that we should tax these grows to the full extent that we can.”

The City Council recently discussed bulk water sales and how to bring bulk water prices more in line with the prices paid by city water customers. When asked how they felt about raising bulk water rates in order to bring in more revenue from cannabis growers, both candidates were supportive of the idea. Dillinger said, “If people have chosen this city to do business in, and grows are a business, then

we need to collect revenue from them like we do other businesses.” Gardiner supports a rising-block tariff in which the more water one buys, the more they pay, but he cautioned, “We must be aware of the context here: the more we put pressure on people getting water, the more they are going to take it illegally from our rivers and

streams.”

In closing, Dillinger said, “I am going to invite as many opinions from everybody so I can make an informed decision. I do not feel that the same-old same-old should continue.” Gardiner let voters know that he is fired-up for another four years.

SEE CITY ON A-10



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, *Illinois Valley News*)

Mark Dillinger (left) and John Gardiner during the candidate forum Tuesday, Oct. 11, at the Josephine County Building in Cave Junction. Both men are vying to win council position 4.