

## City signs support letters for the levies

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The Cave Junction City Council passed three resolutions, Monday, April 10, in support of tax measures that will be on the ballot in May. Councilors voted unanimously to support and endorse the Animal Shelter Levy, the Adult Jail and Juvenile Detention Center Levy, and the Josephine Community Library District. Illinois Valley voters will have the opportunity to vote on four tax measures in the May 16 election.

Before entering into discussion of the various ballot measures, the council approved a park use request from the Illinois Valley Soil and Water Conservation District for a sustainable cannabis fair to be held in Jubilee Park May 7. Chris Hall, president of the Cave Junction Farmers' Market, which is co-sponsoring the event, told the council that the event is being billed as "Fish friendly, field friendly and family friendly." The focus of the event is to educate local cannabis growers on organic practices, soil ecology and best watering practices. The request was unanimously approved.

Council also approved a cannabis business application for Bud Bros., an OLCC licensed recreational marijuana retailer. In addition to recreational sales, Bud Bros. will also conduct limited medical cannabis sales at 335 South Redwood Hwy. The application was approved in a 3-2 vote with Councilors Mark Dillinger and Jean Ann Miles voting "no."

The council then passed a resolution in support of measure 17.77, the five-year Animal Shelter Levy, which would replace the three-year tax levy that is set to expire in June 2017. In its endorsement of the levy, the council acknowledged the importance of the animal shelter and animal control services. In addition to running the animal shelter, Josephine County Animal Control investigates cases of animal abuse, neglect, hoarding, and abandonment and enforces state, county and city laws that regulate dogs running at large and dogs that are dangerous or a public nuisance. If passed, measure 17.77 would impose a temporary tax of \$0.08 per \$1,000 of assessed value on county properties.

The council went on to pass a resolution in favor of the noncontiguous, Josephine Community Library District. Responding to the will of voters, who rejected a countywide Library District in 2014, this proposed district includes only communities which are home to the four branches of the library. Measure 17.79 would form a permanent library district, with an elected board of directors, at a rate of \$0.39 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The council voted unanimously to endorse the district. Councilor Lindsey Gillette said, "I see libraries as an essential function of a community and essential to community development, so if we are going to continue to develop our community, it is essential to have this service." Councilor Jean Ann Miles agreed suggesting, "Maybe we can cut down on some of our vices in order to support our library."

The resolution of endorsement for measure 17.80, the five-year Adult Jail and Juvenile Detention Services Levy, was also passed unanimously. If passed, this temporary levy would impose a tax of \$0.93 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Funds raised from this levy would go into a dedicated fund which could only be used for the adult jail and juvenile detention services. This would free up general fund monies to be used for sheriff's patrols. While acknowledging that measures like this can be a burden on some citizens, Councilor Miles said, "There will be no vote that will be more important for our citizens to make other than to vote for this levy. I am perfectly willing to not get a pizza once a month, or not get two pizzas a month, or three pizzas a month. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to make sure my 92-year-old father is safe. We are already paying for not having law enforcement. If you think things are bad now, it is only going to get worse if we don't pass this levy."

Council also had a lengthy discussion with Shelly Davis of I.V. Little League who requested that the city reduce or waive park use fees for this year's season. The league is experiencing financial hardship due to a snack-shack break-in in which concession equipment was damaged or stolen. As a result, they are having trouble paying their \$600 park use fee for this season. Councilor Dan Bosch pointed out that the council gives the local library branch upward of \$10,000 every year and "I personally feel that Little League is just as important to the community as the library, maybe even more. I wouldn't mind deducting the money that they spent on security improvements from their fee this year, so they can get ahead." Council decided to postpone taking action until the next meeting so they could have time to mull over possible solutions. City recorder, Ryan Nolan, said, "Who knows, maybe a newspaper article about Little League not being able to afford lights might generate \$600."

The Cave Junction City Council meets the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. Meetings are held at City Hall, 222 W. Lister Street. The public is welcome.

## Don't look back



(Photo by Birdy, for the Illinois Valley News)

Thalia Atlas (center) entertains during the April 15 "Cavetown Underground" performance. The play was based on the Greek myth Orpheus and Eurydice, a story about love, trust and loss.

## Oregon Legislation declines to tackle GMO bills

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Local governments in Oregon will continue to be prohibited from regulating genetically engineered crops.

Bills to ease the ban both failed to make it out of committee at the legislative session, the Statesman Journal and Capital Press newspapers reported.

Those who oppose local government action say rules regarding genetically modified crops should be enacted at the state or federal level, not through a patchwork of county ordinances.

Voters in two southern Oregon counties — Jackson and Josephine — approved anti-GMO ordinances in May 2014. The one in Jackson County was allowed to stand because it had qualified for the ballot before lawmakers approved the ban that stopped communities from taking the regulatory action.

The Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee recently heard conflicting testimony about the frequency of cross-pollination among genetically engineered, conventional and organic crops.

Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, who chairs the committee, said Thursday that too many questions remain about the extent of

cross-pollination and the efficacy of mediation if a conflict arises. "I want to get a sense if there are problems with contamination or if there are problems with the mediation process," he said.

It's the third time environmental and farm groups have tried and failed to pass the legislation, which they say is needed to prevent genetically engineered crops from contaminating organic and conventional crops.

"Our farms remain at risk of contamination because the state has not put any protections in place," said Carol Valentine, a resident of Josephine County, which saw its ordinance struck down by a court.

Lawmakers still are considering another bill that would let farmers sue Monsanto, Scotts Miracle-Gro and other companies that hold patents on genetically engineered seeds if crops grown from those seeds contaminate traditional or organic crops.

The bill would allow landowners to seek three times actual economic damages if genetically engineered organisms are present on their land without permission. It is scheduled for a work session next week in the House Judiciary Committee.

## Lake Selmac spillway to get face lift

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The aging spillway bridge containing Lake Selmac is set to be replaced this summer with construction starting in August and taking an estimated three months to complete. As it stands now, the bridge poses a serious hazard because in the case of an emergency, like an earthquake, it would likely fail. "The dam itself is rated one of the worst in Oregon," Sarah Wright, parks manager, said.

Additionally, the bridge is not rated to support large emergency vehicles, for example a fire truck, because the bridge and spillway was constructed in the '60s and, as such, is woefully noncompliant with current standards. "It's well beyond its useful life," added Chuck DeJanvier, county engineer, supporting Wright's conclusion.

While the bridge is being made compliant and strong enough to adequately support large emergency vehicles it will also be upgraded to allow a larger volume of water to be spilled out in a shorter time span than before. As it stands now, the channel is entirely too narrow and will be expanded to better handle extreme flood years. According to Wright, the height of the dam will also be extended.

The project will be partially funded via a federal grant through the Oregon Department of Transportation and every dollar awarded, according to DeJanvier, will have to be matched by the Josephine County Public Works Department who is in charge of the project. The contract has been awarded to MJ Hughes Construction and is currently estimated to cost around \$1.87 million.

The lake will essentially be split in half for the three month duration of the construction because of the closure

of Lakeshore Drive, but clear detours will provide access to both sides of the lake. Although Wright feels that the construction will only be a minor inconvenience to tourists, Wayne Zallen, one of the new owners of the resort, thinks it will negatively affect his business dramatically. However, after saying this, he further went on to say that Josephine County has been very upfront about what has to be done and is appreciative that they are waiting until late in the summer when business slows down so as to not unnecessarily hurt his bottom line.

"It's for the benefit of all of us," Zallen said, admitting that the spillway's health is undoubtedly tied to his business's life span, "In the big picture of things it's a small amount of time."

In the future, other projects are needed to improve the aging infrastructure around Lake Selmac, but as it stands right now, none of them are finalized and approved.