

Illinois Valley News

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Jail levy, pass or fail what happens next

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The long feared public safety fiscal cliff is upon us, and Josephine County voters are faced with a stark choice. A levy measure of 93 cents per \$1,000 will appear on the May ballot, and unlike five previous levy attempts, this one is officially supported by the Josephine County Board of Commissioners.

According to a fact sheet put out by the board, the measure, if approved, will bring the number of jail beds up to 185 and also free up funds to pay for a new patrol configuration. Three deputies will reside in the areas they serve: one each for North Valley, Murphy/Williams, and the Illinois Valley. An additional three or four deputies will have roaming duties and the Cave Junction deputy will continue in place.

Alternatively, if not approved, all county patrol deputies will be eliminated, including the deputy currently detailed to Cave Junction, as he will not have backup. Layoff notices have already gone out to 17 deputies. The only remaining deputies will be those on contract to the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and Marine Board. Sheriff Daniel and Lieutenant Snyder will remain on board, but will only be able to respond to crimes against persons.

Emergency fire and medic service response times may decrease substantially, as first responders have to await police backup before going into dangerous situations.

The number of jail beds will hover around 80 to 90, but none will be available to the county. The remaining beds will be on contract to the U.S. Marshals, City of Grants Pass and the state for Measure 11 prisoners. All arrests by the Oregon State Police, the sheriff's office, parole and probation will be cite and release only.

The levy budget also includes \$2.4 million to reopen the Juvenile Justice Center with 14 beds. Without the levy, the county will continue its current policy, which is to rent three beds in Douglas County.

County Commissioner Lily Morgan, in an interview with the *Illinois Valley News*, provided details on a number of questions about the levy. The following is a list of questions and her responses:

SEE LEVY ON A-9

DeFazio in the hot seat

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

U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio (left) talks to Illinois Valley High School (IVHS) senior Aliena Goff Tuesday, April 18 at IVHS. DeFazio fielded questions from a cordial crowd ranging from Social Security to his record on the environment.

Arrest in burglary of CJ Dairy Queen

According to a press release from the Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) Monday, April 24, 2017, JOSO received a report that the Cave Junction Dairy Queen had been burglarized in the early morning hours of April 24. Numerous food items including ice cream and meats were reportedly stolen.

Subsequent investigation by the JCSO led to the arrest of a 17-year-old male juvenile suspect. The juvenile was arrested and transported to the Juvenile Department who rents beds from Douglas County. The juvenile was lodged on charges of burglary II, theft II, criminal mischief II and possession of methamphetamine. JCSO is still investigating this incident and asks that anyone with information to contact them at 541-474-5123.

IVFD claims insurance costs may rise without levy

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The upcoming levy vote for the Illinois Valley Fire Department (IVFD) aims to provide funding so that they can add and equip four career firefighter/EMTs to their department's staff. This levy, should it pass, will double the amount of career firefighters on the force and will cost 0.50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. It comes with a guarantee, by the IVFD, that 100 percent of the funds will stay in the Illinois Valley though their assistance may sometimes be used elsewhere as part of a mutual aid agreement with neighboring

counties. As it stands, and according to Fire Chief Dennis Hoke, the IVFD tends to receive more auxiliary assistance for critical situations than it provides.

"We're trying to improve our response time," Hoke said, "We could impact somebody's life because having somebody at the station available to respond, when brain death is in four to six minutes, is huge." In addition, and on the subject of response time, Hoke added that structure fires double in size every 30 seconds so the protection of property is also affected greatly.

The main problem, which is forcing the IVFD to ask for a levy, is that over the past several years the

rate of volunteerism has declined to a record low. In the past, the IVFD has had as many as 40 professionally trained volunteer firefighters but that number now stands at 13.

Hoke attributes this decline to the large time commitment required for becoming a qualified volunteer firefighter and the widespread usage of cannabis for which the IVFD is forced, by their insurance provider, to randomly test for every quarter. Hoke added that the decline of volunteerism is an unfortunate national trend theorized to stem from economic hardship and is not solely a problem of the Illinois Valley.

Although property taxes would increase if this levy were to pass there is a hidden financial benefit

which might, at the bottom line, have the potential to fully pay for itself. Currently, the Insurance Service Office's (ISO) fire rating for the district is four out of 10, with lower being better, within 5 miles of the fire station. According to Hoke, the 5 mile radius comprises 75-80 percent of the fire district but outside of that radius the rating is slightly higher. Personally, Hoke said that his home is outside of that radius and is rated at a five.

"I've had business owners come up to me and say they're saving as much as \$200 a year," Hoke said, before adding that, "For me specifically, [at his residence] I save \$100 a year." Continuing on, Hoke claimed that the rating will

likely rise, if the levy fails to pass, to a five or six within the initial radius when the district is rated again three years from now.

"I don't like having to use the idea of a levy to bring people on but we have really nice fire trucks and I've got to have people to staff them," Hoke concluded.

Publisher's note: In the April 19 edition of the *Illinois Valley News* a story ran that stated the Cave Junction City Council voted to support three levies, the IVFD levy was not included. This may have given the impression the city did not support this levy. The city had voted to support that levy the month prior.

JoCo Public Health opens CJ Women's Health Clinic

Jason McMillen
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The Josephine County Public Health Department has recently rebooted their Woman's Health Clinic at the county building in Cave Junction following a change in business practices and a private-public partnership with AllCare Health. The clinic will provide "well women" exams, family planning, birth control options, confidential pregnancy tests and STD screenings, including HIV.

It will accept most insurance plans and can offer services on a sliding fee scale for those who are uninsured. The public can make

appointments from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month. Diane Hoover, the Josephine County Public Health director, said that they won't turn anyone away; even if they can't pay. In addition, Hoover said that walk-in's are welcome but those who have appointments will be the priority. Like all health care services, records are confidential.

In the near future, the clinic will offer immunization services but for now they are unable to do so. When they are able to provide this service, appointments can be made from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month. When both programs are up and running they will likely remain a permanent fixture in the Illinois Valley.

"It's always been important for me, as

the public health director, to see where we can provide services to the residents of the Illinois Valley," Hoover said, "Services shouldn't just be available around the county seat."

The Women's health program will be operated by nurse practitioner Jenny Kowalczyk while the immunizations will be handled by Misty Morningstar.

"[Jenny] just has a great personality and so does Misty Morningstar. They're just easy for women to relate to," Hoover said, admitting that she would go to the two for her own healthcare if she didn't work with them.

Those who want to schedule an appointment may call 541-474-5329.

(Courtesy photo for the *Illinois Valley News*)