

## Where are all the volunteers?

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IVN Senior Contributing Writer

When it comes to supporting libraries, school reading programs, sports programs, theater, arts, festivals and more, the Illinois Valley enjoys a sweet level of volunteerism; but in the critical areas of community health and safety, neighborhood protection and fire protection - those numbers really drop off.

In years past, the Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) had about 40 volunteer firefighters. Now, there are only 13 qualified volunteers and four paid firefighters to handle the Valley's emergencies.

"The requirements have changed, and partly, that's because society is so litigious," said IVFD Chief Dennis Hoke. "There's rigorous schooling plus medical training, then, we meet every Tuesday night to maintain that training requirement."

Hoke currently fills the gaps on his team with the IVFD's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), a group of 19 volunteers dedicated to helping out in disasters. The CERT volunteers are trained for basic search and rescue, deal with fire hazards, do damages assessments and take care of evacuations and traffic control. "We really capitalize on that group, because they do not have to have all the training that firefighters have," said Hoke, adding that CERT, along with the IVFD's six support service volunteers, do as much as they can to keep firefighters rested up and ready for the tasks only they can do." Right now, if we have a structure fire during the day, we're lucky to get even two fully trained volunteer firefighters," Hoke added. "So we're looking for more volunteer trainees."

And those interested in pursuing a career in emergency services or the medical field can get a great deal from the IVFD. Three people are currently enrolled in IVFD's student program, where in exchange for serving 10 shifts a month (when not in school), IVFD pays a significant portion of their college tuition, and, these students can live for free at one of the fire stations, if desired. This deal is also available to students interested in other fields as well.

"We really hope our levy passes so we can hire four more emergency medical technicians (EMTs) certified firefighters," Hoke said. "Sixty-seven percent of our calls last year were medical. EMTs can respond to medical situations at a higher level."

Cave Junction Patrol volunteers hope another levy will pass muster with voters: the public safety levy. Patrol volunteers try to fill the gaps in local law enforcement services, but they too, suffer from a serious shortage of help - and now, volunteer patrol leader Jimmy Evans fears that if this latest measure fails crime in the Valley will only get worse.

Evans took note last week when county officials announced that the district attorney's office is losing funding for its support staff, so he wonders how crimes will be investigated and prosecuted. "With no beds at the jail it will all be cite and release except for the most violent of crimes - and patrols will be all but nonexistent. Basically a perfect storm is brewing for a fully lawless county. Thieves already rove the neighborhoods and businesses every night, at all hours, and there's a growing number of unidentified suspicious individuals entering the city."

"And by all appearances, common sense in our community looks to be at an all time low, as our patrol volunteer patrol numbers are down," Evans added. "With any further reduction in law enforcement coverage we anticipate both CJ and the Illinois Valley will experience an even greater prevalence of drugs, theft and serious crimes."

Measure 17-80, a five-year property tax levy with a rate of 93 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, would fund the jail and reopen Josephine County's (JoCo) Juvenile Detention Center. JoCo Sheriff Dave Daniel says this will allow the spending of other monies on increased patrols in rural areas.

SEE WHERE ON A-14



(Photo by Judy Hoyle, Illinois Valley News)

**IVCanDO awarded Organizations of the Year to I.V. Fire District and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) April 20. Maintenance Div. Chief Kris Sherman (left), CERT volunteers: Jean Ann Miles, Sally Beck, Sue Riegel Williams and Charlie Fouch. IVCanDO board member Karen Chase.**

## You awake?



(Photo courtesy of the IVFD Media Dept)

**Two travelers were awakened around 1 a.m. when a driver lost control of a vehicle that ended up inside their room at the Holiday Motel. According to a release from the Illinois Valley Fire District the SUV was going northbound when it lost control. The vehicle went in the ditch came out of the ditch crossed the southbound lane went through a fence and into a structure. No injuries were reported. According to the Oregon State Police, the driver was charged with multiple charges including DUI alcohol and reckless driving.**

## Hamburglar nabbed in DQ break-in, ice cream bandit still on the loose

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Around 2 a.m. Monday, April 24, a pair of burglars ransacked the Dairy Queen in Cave Junction. The burglars stole, out of the walk-in freezer and by the case, things like: chicken strips, chicken patties, hamburger patties, hot dogs and onion rings. They also stole the majority of ice cream cakes out of the cake freezer. The two suspects cut power to the building before entering, presumably in an attempt to disable the cameras.

Despite cutting the power, the duo was caught on camera anyhow because the surveillance system can also operate on a backup battery. "The sheriff's department was really good," Clark said, "We contacted the detective that was handling the case from before and he came right out that afternoon and took pictures and video."

After the investigation, one suspect, a juvenile age 17, has been arrested by the sheriff's department in connection with the crime. It is theorized that one

of the suspects has broken into the Dairy Queen before, allegedly making this their second burglary of the same establishment.

Reportedly, the duo made several trips in and out of the building with their ill-gotten gains. Considering the weight and volume of the items stolen the burglars were likely in possession of a vehicle but, unfortunately, the camera system wasn't watching the front door that day so it couldn't be identified.

As far as a property damage is concerned two locks were cut, one for the power box and one for the cake freezer, plus the front door's window was smashed. The locks were estimated to cost around \$20 each and replacing the window was around \$900. Interestingly enough, Nancy Clark, assistant manager, reported that she put a lock on the power box the day before it was cut. The value of the food items stolen has not yet been calculated but Clark estimates that it was probably worth several hundred dollars.

"It just gets a little discouraging after a while," Clark said, summarizing

the staff's feelings. Clark further elaborated by explaining that they have been broken into four times this year so far. Four times in as many months. "I've been at this store for eight years and in eight years we've never been broken into until this year," Clark added.

Because of the theft of food items, the business was forced to decline requests for certain meals for a period of time until they were able to restock the freezer. However, Clark said that they had enough leftover to get by. "Most of the customers were pretty understanding," Clark explained, "There was a couple things we were out of and we just explained they took it all. They'd just order something else. Everyone's always really good about stuff like that."

Though the Dairy Queen has been repeatedly vandalized and burglarized Clark stoically said that things, "can always be worse."

"We really appreciate the sheriff's department," Clark said, in her closing statement, "They're doing an amazing job on it and so we just want the community to know that."

## Neighborhood watch mega meeting scheduled

Judy Hoyle  
IVN Contributing Writer

A Public Safety Outreach Campaign kickoff is slated for 6:30 p.m. May 4 at Wild River Brewing and Pizza.

Billed as an assembly of neighborhood watch groups, organizers are asking that one or two representatives from existing watch groups, or those interested in forming a group attend this special session.

"We're trying to help new watches get started and also help those that already exist. The idea is to have information across platforms, so that if someone does something stupid in Selma, for

example, everyone knows about it as soon as possible so we can all be on the lookout," said I.V. Fire District (IVFD) Chief Dennis Hoke.

"We're asking anyone who is interested in starting a neighborhood watch, or representatives who already belong to a group who want to further their ability to communicate, to please attend this meeting," he said, and added, "We're looking at developing a website for just the leadership of Neighborhood Watch groups so this information can be shared from Selma to O'Brien."

"We know that a small population is causing most of the problems," Hoke explained. "I was at the sentencing for the guy who

stole all the equipment from Fire Station One, and the judge said, 'I convicted you in 2015 and you haven't paid restitution in that case yet.' This guy is a career criminal. He was sentenced to 20 months in jail, plus restitution. He'll be out of jail in 20 months, but at least we'll know where he is."

Hoke concluded, "It's not about forming a militia or creating a new government, it's basically neighbors watching out for each other."

In preparation for the kickoff, organizers Guenter Ambron and William Douglas have been going door-to-door in Cave Junction to businesses, as well as churches and homes to hand out literature.

"Anyone can be a resource to community safety, to aid and participate. Reach out to a neighbor or someone in a neighboring street or area. Our objective is to invite at least one person from every street or neighborhood in the Illinois Valley to attend the kick-off meeting," Ambron said.

Ambron's motto for the outreach group is, "When anyone reaches out for help, I want the hand of our community to be there, and for that I'm responsible."

Although thwarting criminal activity will be the primary focus of this new group, emergency preparedness efforts in the community are starting to receive more attention.

SEE MEETING ON A-5