

Illinois Valley News

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Remembering the fallen



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Members of the Glenn Morrison Post No. 70, American Legion salute the flag during the annual Memorial Day flag ceremony at the Cave Junction City Hall Monday, May 29.

IVFD sets timeline for new hire testing

"I know it's a financial burden," Hoke admitted, "[but] we're going to do everything in our power to give [the community] the best possible service within the budget that they've given us." - IVFD Chief Dennis Hoke

Jason McMillen

IVN Contributing Writer

The Illinois Valley Fire Department's (IVFD) levy for four new full-time firefighter/EMTs passed soundly during the recent special election and now the IVFD is gearing up for the application process that will start in August, far in advance of when the funding will arrive in November. In-person



(Photo by, IVFD Media Dept)

IVFD firefighter Dan Johnson

testing will begin in September or October and the top scoring candidates will move on to the highly important interview stage. All things said and done, Fire Chief Dennis Hoke estimates that the new firefighter/EMTs will be ready for service by the end of November or the first part of December.

One of the issues that needs to be addressed before testing begins is exactly how the test will be weighted in its three parts: physical agility, written knowledge and the panel interview. Typically, for other fire departments, the top scorers of the physical and written test, both weighted at 25 percent for a total of 50 percent, proceed to the interview stage which is weighted at a further, and impressive, 50 percent.

However, the IVFD is currently unsure as to whether or not they will stick to that standard or modify it to better suit their needs. In addition to deciding how the test will be conducted, the IVFD needs to decide what additional qualifications, like advanced degrees, the applicants should have before applying. According to Hoke, advanced education is becoming more and more important, and therefore standardized, among firefighters.

During the initial stage of the process, Hoke easily anticipates 150 or more individuals will send

in their applications. Even now, Hoke's had at least 50 people, from IVFD volunteers to career firefighter/EMTs from other departments, inquire about the positions.

Although nothing has been firmly decided about the process yet, the interview panel, Hoke said, will likely be comprised of at least three Illinois Valley fire chief staff members as well as the somewhat unusual inclusion of a person outside of the organization to get a "well-rounded view" of the applicant in question.

"These are coveted positions. We get the best of the best," Hoke said, adding that he's been part of testing "consortiums" for positions such as these that have had up to 3,000 applicants in the past.

Hoke made a point to thank the community for their support in passing the IVFD levy as well as the public safety levy because, while they're two separate organizations, they tend to work very closely with one another and cannot do their job effectively without the support of having "adequate law enforcement" in the county.

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Voters say yes to books

Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Contributing Writer

The future is bright for Josephine County's libraries! With the recent passage of Measure 17-79 by 53 percent, a permanent county library district will finally come together and library supporters say they're fully committed to a "seamless transition of services."

"It's a new chapter - and it's great," said Kate Lasky, Josephine Community Libraries (JCLI) executive director. "Libraries must be funded by communities to keep their doors open for longer hours; the kids really need more after-school time; and we really need newer and better books - all this costs money. Even the city of Cave Junction was giving us \$10,000 a year, but that was a temporary hand out."

A group of motivated volunteers have worked hard to keep JoCo's libraries open after they closed down in May 2007. Only four months later these community volunteers formed JCLI, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring library services remain available to all county residents. By December 2009, JCLI had reopened all four county libraries. However Lasky said that volunteers can only do so much; thus Cave Junction's library has only been open 13 hours a week.

Lasky said JCLI was always regarded as a temporary bridge to public funding, and now, in the coming months, the group will work to ease the transition of the library system's leadership to the new library district board of directors. Beecher Ellison, John Harelson, Laurel Samson, Judy Williams and Jennifer Roberts were all elected to serve two-year terms on this board. Lasky hopes Valley residents will run for the board in the future.

Enthusiastic about the benefits that long-term, sustainable funding will bring, Roberts said, "This smaller district will provide a secure foundation for the future. ... Most importantly, the library will have the stability it needs to continue providing vital library services in innovative and creative ways."

"We want to start the library district off right," Lasky said. "The district won't begin receiving tax funding until November, and during that transition time, JCLI will continue to provide all the services and programming our community relies on." This means a spring fundraising drive has begun and volunteers will remain important, both now and in the future.

SEE LIBRARY ON A-5



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

SFI readies for Birds & Brews event

Jason McMillen
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The Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI) is gearing up to host their sixth annual Birds and Brews fundraising event June 3. It starts at 8 a.m. with a bird walk led by the Siskiyou Audubon Society's experienced bird watchers and ends at 6 p.m. after locally brewed beer tasting, wine tasting, catered cuisine and live music.

SEE BIRDS ON A-5

Moon Tree run and 555 dedication

Judy Hoyle
IVN Contributing Writer

The morning of June 3 will offer a variety of family activities at the I.V. Airport, including the annual Moon Tree Run and the popular I.V. Fire District's Firefighter Association breakfast, featuring the best pancakes on the planet.

SEE 555 ON A-5

Josephine County CASA program, protects children's physical health

The CASA program was started by a judge in the mid-70s, who knew the adversary situation was not providing a clear picture of what was best for the child. Studies show that, when there is a CASA involved, children are 98 percent less likely to be abused.

STORY ON A-12