

Healthy U News: Litter

by Nicole Rensenbrink

I love our beautiful valley. I often am reverent about its beauty and grateful I get to live here. Driving from Grants Pass down into Sauer's Flat and seeing that marvelous section of farmland with the high Siskiyou in the distance is always a blessing.

But, there's nothing that detracts from it as much as looking down at the road and seeing fast food cups, a dirty diaper, an empty beer can or an ashtray dump. Litter shouts, "Trashy" across a gorgeous landscape as effectively as the slash mark in the middle of a circle negates whatever's inside it. Litter says

"I don't care" and "this place doesn't matter."

Even small items of litter are problems: according to the website litteritcostsyoudo.com, 50 percent of all litter is cigarette butts made of cellulose acetate that takes 10 years to disintegrate.

And sometimes one person's spring-cleaning becomes a community mess: another source of litter falls to the road from uncovered truck beds (plenty of us have seen that following a pickup on a dump run).

There are tons of litter, not only on land, but also in the sea. Sadly, 1.9 billion tons end up in the ocean every year. According to wdcs.org,

ocean litter has a devastating impact on sea creatures: an estimated one million birds and 100,000 marine mammals and sea turtles die each year from being become trapped in plastic or eating it. It is one of the biggest threats to whales and dolphins.

Litter's expensive. According to Keep America Beautiful, litter reduces community property values by seven percent and the U.S. spends \$11.5 billion on cleanup each year.

Litter seems to me to come from ignorance, convenience, or rebelliousness. Perhaps some people were raised in environments plagued by trash and think of litter as a fact instead of something they

are responsible to either add or detract from. One of the reasons people litter is because litter is there already. Others don't want to walk the distance to the next trash can: a Walt Disney study surveyed how far people are willing to hike to a trashcan. It found that trash receptacles must be placed within 30 feet of each other in order to be consistently used.

Is it possible that others, new to adulthood, see littering as a statement about their power to do whatever they want? Perhaps, as the age group found to litter most are those between 18-34.

No matter what the reason, littering is a choice we don't have to make.

Imagine how our valley would look if it was free of all litter. Imagine attractive trashcans with cigarette butt disposal features within an easy walk for everyone in each of our small towns, and imagine that everyone used them. Imagine that the quarterly CJ Clean Up Day (like it on Facebook to learn how to join) had hundreds of Valley folk searching far and wide for any remaining trash to pick up.

Imagine all of us working together, to make our valley shine.

The staff and volunteers of Healthy U present this column as part of their mission to promote health in the Illinois Valley.

County asks for cannabis advisory committee members

Jason McMillen
IVN Contributing Writer

The long debated cannabis advisory committee, which directly supports the Josephine County Board of Commissioners with information, advice and opinions, was approved as of July 7, 2017. The motion, designated 2017-033, carried two to zero in favor of forming the committee. Commissioner Lily Morgan was not present at the weekly business session, and therefore couldn't vote, but has advocated for the committee's formation in the past.

The group will be formed as soon as possible and will ideally consist of nine at-large members. The final number of members, according to Commissioner Simon Hare, depends on the number and quality of the applications they receive. Positions on the committee will be appointed by the board of directors. Hare hopes that the group will be formed by the end of the month and that it, like all other advisory committees in Josephine County, is volunteer based. As such, committee membership is unpaid. "I hope we have a good variety of applicants to choose from," Morgan wrote on the topic, "We are looking for people who want to be part of solutions in our community."

Applicants who wish to be on the committee must be Josephine County residents and have a stake in the cannabis industry. Some examples, though not limited to this list, are: producers, processors, agricultural suppliers, land use representatives, prevention specialists, water systems experts

and citizen advisory committee representatives. Terms are two years in duration but there are no restrictions as to how many times a member can be re-appointed. It should also be noted that term length can be expanded in the future, should it be desired by the board of directors. Applications can be found on the Josephine County website under "committees."

The group's first task, after having its chair, vice chair, community development director and liaison appointed, will be to review the proposed rural residential restrictions for commercial recreation cannabis production, according to Hare. The plan to prohibit the growth of commercial, recreational cannabis in rural residential zones is to force growing operations into the agricultural areas of Josephine County. Hare said that a project study revealed that the county has around 20,000 arable acres of agriculturally zoned land that

are underutilized for agricultural purposes. Another goal of the push to get OLCC licensed growers out of rural residential zones is to "avoid conflict with neighbors" though, as of May 2017, there hasn't been a single complaint filed against them.

Regarding the further regulation of cannabis, Commissioner Dan DeYoung said in a recent, private, meeting with Illinois Valley residents that he has an idea for acquiring tax dollars from growing operations though it's still in the concept stage. The tax would be based on the square footage of growing operations and would charge them a set amount for every foot of land that is used in their grow site. Although he has met with resistance at the state level on the subject, the state's position being that taxing a specific commodity is not possible, he said that they've already set a precedent for it. "You tax Doug fir and pine," DeYoung said.

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