

## Chetco declared conflagration



(Photo by Laura Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Two Chinook helicopters stationed at the I.V. Airport Runway 18/36 Monday, Aug. 28. The airport will be closed for firefighting operations starting Tuesday, August 23, until further notice.

## I.V. Senior Center buys county building

Anita Savio

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The Illinois Senior Center has negotiated the purchase from the county of the Cave Junction Josephine County Building for \$340,000. The senior center made the decision to purchase the building because it is being forced to find a new home for its thrift store, where they currently rent at 321B S. Redwood Ave. The owner of that property is requiring them to vacate, as she has other plans for the building.

With the purchase of the county building, a long time local resource will now pass into new hands, with both the county and the senior center asserting benefits to the community, though also leaving some uncertainty about what will happen to current occupants.

According to County Commissioner Simon Hare, the conversion of this physical asset into cash will allow the county to address two new investment priorities:

“The I.V. airport lacks a fire

suppression reservoir that holds water. It’s the last infrastructure element the industrial park needs in place to be shovel-ready for development.” Hare added that a budget for that project has not been developed.

“And I’m going to suggest to the Board [of County Commissioners] the creation of a small working group from the Valley or a taskforce to address ways the county can help improve internet and vital communication services to the Illinois Valley. This is a high priority for me and the Board.”

Sam Nichols, senior center board director and building committee chairman commented, “It’s quite an accomplishment for the senior center to buy this building.”

He added that that the new location will accommodate a larger thrift store, with the money coming out of it going to the benefit of the community.

A senior center press release enumerated the many ways in which the organization serves the Illinois Valley: Numerous enrichment activities for seniors at the senior

center facility on River Street; availability of the facility on River Street for use by other organizations, such as the Valley Girls annual quilt show and the Red Cross monthly blood drive; sponsor of the Little League and youth soccer; vouchers to needy families redeemable at the thrift store; lunch for veterans on Veterans Day; participation in the Evergreen School fundraiser; and sponsor of high school student organizations through the senior center monthly breakfasts.

The county building currently houses five tenants: Illinois Valley Soil and Water District, Illinois Valley Watershed Council, Illinois Valley Baptist Church, Josephine County Public Health, and Food and Friends. All tenants have 60 day notice clauses in their leases.

Nichols stated the senior center has the intent to rent out some offices but, beyond that, will be using the rest of the building.

“But,” he added, “we haven’t had a chance yet to measure and figure out what we have.”

*“The I.V. airport lacks a fire suppression reservoir that holds water. It’s the last infrastructure element the industrial park needs in place to be shovel-ready for development...”* Simon Hare, Josephine County Commissioner

## Fires rage north and south of C.J.

The Chetco Bar fire is approximately 18 miles northwest of Cave Junction. The Chetco Bar Fire operations team announced early the morning of Aug. 29 the following information:

**Weather and fire behavior:** The trend of warm overnight temperatures and poor humidity recovery has set the Chetco Bar Fire up for another active fire day Aug. 29. Humidity levels are expected to begin climbing this afternoon. Ridgetop temperatures could reach the 90s. Fire burning in the tops of single trees and groups of trees is anticipated, with the potential for embers to fly up to 0.4 miles ahead of the fire. There is a high potential for large fire growth in areas where wind and terrain align.

Aug. 28, while shading from smoke helped moderate fire activity Monday, it also presented challenges to aerial attack due to poor visibility. In the afternoon, smoke cleared enough that helicopters were able to work the northwest edge of the fire to support of crews and heavy equipment. The most active burning occurred in the Emily Creek drainage, the East Fork of the Pistol River and along the eastern flank in the Kalimiopsis Wilderness.

As of Aug. 29, there was a reported 5 percent containment on the fire’s west edge. Crews will continue scouting for and constructing primary and alternate containment lines and setting up hose-lays and water sources to be used in securing those lines. Constructed fireline includes a mix of line directly along the edge of the fire and some that is further from the fire’s edge in strategic locations. Firefighters will scout for and build direct and indirect lines along the north and east perimeter.

The risk to the Brookings area has diminished enough that larger structural engines are no longer needed. Chetco Bar Fire’s Unified Command continues to utilize structural task forces that have the smaller engines. Oregon State Fire Marshal’s Office is working on a re-engagement plan with local fire departments and districts to be prepared with structural resources should conditions change. Additional structural resources will be demobilized as the threat to structures diminishes. Our mission to protect the community and surrounding area remains the same.

More than 100 National Guard firefighters are coming to assist with mop up operations on the fire’s western perimeter.

**Evacuations/Closure information:** Residences within parts of the Level 3 evacuation zone starting at the junction of Shady Lane and South Bank Chetco Road east, and including Freeman Rock and Salmon Run Golf Course have been reduced to a Level 2 Evacuation.

To the south we have the Eclipse Complex southeast of CJ about five miles west of Happy Camp. According to Inciweb, the Eclipse Complex is now 60,533 acres and 24 percent contained.

The western flank of the Oak Fire remains east of the South Fork of Smith River. Crews are scoping potential contingency lines between Bear Basin Butte and Sugarloaf Mountain in case fire activity does cross the Smith River.

There will continue to be one-way controlled traffic and/or occasional temporary closures of Highway 96 from west (south) of Happy Camp to The Clear Creek Ranch due to fire activity. From 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. the road will be shut down for fire and emergency vehicles only during these times. There may be longer delays due to dense smoke and/or debris on Hwy. 96 in the fire area.

SEE FIRE ON A-5

## Lions announce Labor Day music and talent show line up

Jason McMillen

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Although the parade, entertainment and vendors are the mainstay of the Illinois Valley Lions Club Labor Day Festival, there is one culminating moment that defines it; the motorcycle raffle. The tradition, according to an estimate, is now 21 years old.

Steve Lyons, a longtime member of the club, said that he, John Waltermeyer and Shawn Jewett have been working diligently all year, from January to September, to make this incredible raffle take place. The bike is a 2005 Pro Street Custom with 180 horsepower, an S&S 124 inch motor and even includes a nitrous oxide supercharging system. Lyons summarized the motorcycle’s power by simply saying that it’s “scary fast.”

The bike was built for *Easyriders Magazine* back in 2005 and although its appraised value is \$37,000, the Lions Club acquired it for \$20,000. The club typically only commits \$15,000 to the raffle so this year’s event is quite a bit more tantalizing than average. Because of the bike’s increased cost, the Club tacked on another 100 potential tickets, up from the usual 300, for a grand total of 400. Reportedly, the current owner of the bike, the builder’s brother, was in possession of it for many years and was finally ready to get rid of it. He was, according to Lyons, happy to sell to the Club at a reduced cost rather than wait indefinitely for a higher bid.

SEE LIONS ON A-8