

Weather Watch

Cave Junction

Thursday, Sept 7

PM Thunderstorms

High --79 Low -- 60

Friday, Sept 8

Showers

High -- 76 Low -- 57

Saturday, Sept 9

Sunny

High -- 82 Low -- 57

Sunday, Sept 10

Sunny

High -- 86 Low -- 62

Monday, Sept 11

Mostly Sunny

High -- 91 Low -- 63

Tuesday, Sept 12

Sunny

High -- 85 Low -- 61

Wednesday, Sept 13

Partly Cloudy

High -- 83 Low -- 59

Following are the high & low temperatures, and rainfall recorded at The End of the Road in O'Brien by Cheryl Johnson:

August	High	Low
25	85.7	50.0
26	96.2	50.6
27	98.7	53.0
28	100.5	52.2
29	99.7	52.2
30	89.8	47.2
31	91.2	49.9

Aug. Rain: .0" YTD Rain: 116.54" Average Yearly Rain Total: 89.11"

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Cherryl Walker leads Health Department during transition

Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Senior Contributing Writer

Former Josephine County (JoCo) Commissioner Cherryl Walker took the helm as interim director at JoCo's Public Health Department last July to help shepherd the department through a period of transition and reorganization after previous director Diane Hoover shifted into the private sector.

Hoover is now a Community Program Manager with the Blue Zones Project, a national program promoting healthy lifestyles that chose Grants Pass for a pilot project. See accompanying article.

Walker, who chose not to seek re-election, last year, was a logical choice, as she'd recently served as the board's liaison to the Public Health Department, and, during her four-year tenure as a commissioner, had served on an Association of Oregon Counties public health committee.

"At the direction of the board, JJ Scofield [JoCo's human resources director] called and asked if I'd take the position," Walker said. "Diane left just as some departmental organizational changes were being made, so I was asked to stay at the helm while this process continues. Diane had three other managers, but two had left and one was out on medical leave - so the board needed someone with working knowledge, someone who knows the departments."

A number of services and programs currently fall within the Public Health department, including animal protection and the animal shelter; restaurant inspections; vaccinations; family

planning; disease prevention; school-based health services; and Women's, Infant and Children's programs. The department also distributes health-related educational materials and helps county residents apply for the Oregon Health Plan. Many of these services are mandated and funded by the state.

Other public health programs include the Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening Program; Communicable, Preventable Disease Program; Family Planning Services; HIV prevention programs; Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic; Public Health Preparedness (Bioterrorism); Vital Records; and the department also ensures compliance with all public health laws, rules, and local ordinances. Environmental health programs encompasses drinking water; air quality; public swimming pools and spas; tourist accommodations; solid waste health nuisances; West Nile Virus information; surface water safety; and reporting complaints. Many of these programs are prevention services designed to help keep the community a safer place in which to live.

"It'll be better for the new director to come on after the reorganization is completed," Walker explained. "The whole department is being streamlined and restructured to be in line with the modernization of public health services. In the past two or three legislative sessions, the state has passed some public health modernization bills - so at the county level we'll need to adjust in how we deliver these services to the public in the 21st century."

Walker, who figures she'll serve as interim director for three-to-four months, said the department's reorganization process is "right on schedule." She

said a community health worker and the tobacco prevention specialist were recently transferred to the Juvenile Justice department. "Now they're housed with all the other substance prevention programs, the alcohol, drugs and tobacco programs."

Another likely change in the offering could include the transfer of animal control officers to the Sheriff's Office, per the request of county District Attorney Ryan Mulkins, who has concerns regarding due process, investigations and firearms training.

Walker is also helping the department by talking to current employees about what they do: refining their job descriptions and making staffing recommendations within the various programs. "Also, I've been consulting with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) in Salem to make sure we are in compliance with various state statutes," she said. "OHA is our major source of funding, thus we must be in compliance."

In total, there are about 30 positions in the Public Health department and Walker said some are vacant, and will remain so, until the reorganization is complete. She said when those jobs open up, there'll be job announcements.

While happy to help out during the transition, Walker's not interested in applying for the permanent director position. "The public will be better served by hiring a new director who has the training and expertise in public health," she said. "Plus my husband and I are both retired now and we're very busy with other interests and activities - but we don't mind still being of service to our community when we can."

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WRAP ...

Continued from A-10

Another crowd favorite, the talent show run by Steve Culver, had such tough competition this year that the judges reported, "All the acts were great and we had a very difficult time picking first, second and third places." The winners were as follows: Children 12 and under- first place, Madison; second, Lily and Liylah; third, Baylee and Aleigha; Teen competition – first place, Anabella;

second, Michael; third, Kaylee; Adults – first place, Dustin; second, Bonnie and Jerry; third, Angela.

This year the Corn Hole Tournament was sponsored by PAPA and the Corn Hole Winners were as follows: first place, Jessie and Ty; second, Travis and Andy; and third, Wess and Pat.

And in conclusion, the softball game had an exciting homerun ending with the winner being R.I.P. sponsored by Annie Pinois in memory of her son and husband. The players on R.I.P. are from Cave Junction, Grants Pass and Medford.

The second place finisher was Sinister Mob from Medford. There were 11 teams playing during the 3-day tournament.

(Photo by Laura Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)
Teen runner up Michael came with her own cheering section.

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