

Weather Watch

Cave Junction

Thursday, Sept 21

Showers

High -- 57 Low -- 44

Friday, Sept 22

Partly Cloudy

High -- 63 Low -- 45

Saturday, Sept 23

Sunny

High -- 69 Low -- 48

Sunday, Sept 24

Sunny

High -- 73 Low -- 51

Monday, Sept 25

Mostly Sunny

High -- 76 Low -- 54

Tuesday, Sept 26

Sunny

High -- 80 Low -- 57

Wednesday, Sept 27

Partly Cloudy

High -- 82 Low -- 57

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

Sep	High	Low
8	81.5	57.1
9	85.8	59.4
10	87.6	53.7
11	95.8	53.8
12	91.0	56.6
13	90.9	51.7
14	78.8	49.8

Sept. Rain: .37" YTD Rain: 116.91"

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Bagel Junction

119 S Redwood Hwy

Cave Junction OR 97523

Squatters unleashed

Jason McMillen
IVN Contributing Writer

Although the City of Cave Junction has been trying to evict the band of squatters residing at 425 River Street for years, it has thus far been unable to do so. According to neighbors, who preferred to stay anonymous because of the squatters' increasing hostility toward them, the problem has only gotten worse as time goes on. The property presents a legal challenge because the city cannot get permission to evict the squatters or levy any kind of fine because the property owner died without a will. Essentially, nobody owns the property and it's in a sort of legal limbo.

The supposed wife of the deceased man, though her status as his spouse is dubious and unconfirmed, made an initial attempt to transfer the property over into her name but suddenly stopped. According to city attorney Pat Kelly, the woman likely is avoiding finishing the process because she has a \$50,000 revenue judgment that would immediately attach should she attain ownership of the property. The alleged wife, who is physically disabled, moved out about a year ago when she entered foster care.

Neighbors have reported a long list of problems that have arisen from this situation including the illegal dumping of human waste and the subsequent smell of feces wafting through

adjacent properties. "The smell is unbearable," one neighbor said. Other complaints include constant noise and traffic day and night, populations of rats and mice which were never present before, illegal campfires and drug deals.

In total, it's estimated that around 10 people are living on the property in trailers, motor homes, the out building and the shed. Although the property has no water or sewage services, they've reportedly managed to acquire electricity. One neighbor alleges that they are illegally tapping it off the grid.

The supposed wife, who initially attempted to remove the squatters, later signed a document stating that they are living there with her consent. All sources, including Kelly, reported that they have reason to believe the woman is accepting small sums of cash from the squatters as rent.

Periodically, the squatters' dogs escape the property and chase people down the street. One citizen of the neighborhood reported that they had personally experienced this and, fearing great bodily harm, they warned the dog off with pepper spray. With school starting soon, neighbors are concerned that a commuting child might be attacked.

The neighbors have repeatedly called and filed complaints with a multitude of different civil agencies, the city and the police but have thus far made little headway in alleviating

(Photo by Laura Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Unleashed dogs and trash at 425 E. River St. Tuesday, Sept. 19, have neighbors barking mad.

the problem. One neighbor was even willing to buy the property so that, with his permission, the city would have the authority to trespass the squatters but the deal fell through a couple of weeks ago. "It's a big circle, everyone's passing the buck and nothing's happening," A neighbor said, infuriatingly exhausted from their years long struggle.

Because of the neighbor's attempt at purchasing the property, Kelly said that he had relaxed the city's legal pressure with the anticipation of the problem soon being resolved. When the deal was called off, he immediately filed two lawsuits which were sent out Aug. 29 and Aug. 30. The first will fine the squatters daily while simultaneously attempting to get a court order to remove their trailers.

The second lawsuit is asking a judge to declare the alleged wife as the owner of the property so that the city can fine her for all offences daily. Should the fines stack up to the value of the property, which is quite low now considering that the squatters negligently lit the house on fire and trashed the entire area, it can, according to Kelly, be repossessed by the city. Unfortunately, the city will not recover any of their mounting costs from selling the property because the state has a lien on it.

"I'm certain that I will get judgments against them and I'm certain I'll get a court order to remove [the trailers]," Kelly concluded. Despite inquiry, no firm timeline was given regarding when these lawsuits will become effective.

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