

# Illinois Valley News

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## RiverStars



(Photos by Birdy for the Illinois Valley News)

Arwyn Branum (above), Jayden Conrad, Maliyah Meisenburg, Riley Branum. Elijah Ocean (bottom left) and John Gardiner ham it up while Taylor Hammers (bottom right) performs a solo during "SuperReal" Sunday, Dec. 10 at Lorna Byrne.

## Attorney calls RR-5 variance a sham

Jason McMillen  
IVN Contributing Writer

On Dec. 6 the Josephine County Board of County Commissioners approved Ordinance No. 2017-002, which aims to regulate the production of cannabis on Rural Residential (RR) land. Simon Hare, who recused himself entirely from all action related to the ordinance Nov. 1—citing the public's perceived conflict of interest—abstained while Lily Morgan and Dan DeYoung voted in favor. The county expects a series of lawsuits in response to the new laws, most specifically from Farm & Agricultural Rights Management, a collective of affected parties rallied under Ross Day, a decorated land use attorney.

Ordinances in Josephine County have a 90 day grace period before becoming effective during which time citizens have the opportunity to circulate a petition which, should it gain the required amount of signatures, will refer the issue to the voters.

The local regulations come in tandem with Senate Bill 1057 and House Bill 2198, whose untested and titanic modifications to the production of both medical and recreational cannabis will change the face of the industry. "We don't even know how many producers will stay in business," Representative Carl Wilson said in a letter urging the commissioners to delay the ordinance until the effects of state law could be assessed.

Although the rules have yet to be crafted, a variance process will, in theory, allow select operations on RR properties 5 acres or less to continue on as micro scale farms but only if they are able to prove, on a case-by-case basis, that their grow site will not interfere with neighbors. However, Day holds that the process is a "sham" and that the commissioners are misrepresenting what a variance is, thereby giving farmers a false sense of hope. All other recreational grow sites on properties 5 acres and less will be outright banned while those on properties more than 5 acres will only be allowed to operate at the Oregon Liquor Control Commission's (OLCC) Micro Tier I and Micro Tier II levels.

SEE SHAM ON A-5

## Evergreen's grade has silver lining

*"Studies show that if kids are reading at third grade level by the end of third grade, they will graduate from high school. If kids understand fifth grade math by the end of fifth grade, they have a better chance of graduating from high school."*

Dave Regal, Evergreen Elementary Principal

Anita R. Savio  
IVN Contributing Writer

In a frank and far-ranging interview, Evergreen Elementary School Principal David Regal spoke of the school's strengths and challenges. Evergreen serves kindergarten through fourth grade, plus a Life Skills class that equips special needs students with the skills they need to thrive in the classroom, overall school environment and the world beyond. Fifth grade students attend Lorna Byrne Middle School.

Regal started off with a discussion of Evergreen student scores, as detailed on its yearly "report card" issued by the state. Compared to other elementary students in Oregon, Evergreen's scores are a mixed bag. The school's report card for the 2016 - 2017 school year shows that Evergreen students rated a "3" out of a possible "5" in academic achievement in each of the two key subjects of English language arts and math, where "5" is

the highest possible score and "1" is the lowest. That puts Evergreen students roughly in the middle of the pack, at about a "C" level grade.

On a higher note, the same report shows that Evergreen students earned a "5" in academic growth between third and fourth grade. Improvement is measured by the change in scores on the Smarter Balanced test, administered to students throughout Oregon. In other words, Evergreen students were in the top range of students around the state in terms of how much they have progressed academically. Not only that, but the "5" grade was up from a "4" the previous year.

Regal hastened to add that academic growth does not automatically happen between third and fourth grade, but is based on the intensive work the school has to do with students at the lower levels.

"And that's part of our problem," he said. "Kids are often not school-ready. That's why you have a low academic

achievement level, because kids are still trying to close the gap."

According to Regal, about 50 percent of kids entering kindergarten at Evergreen have not been in any kind of a preschool. And although there is what he describes as some great preschool programs available in the Illinois Valley, the programs do not have enough places for all the children who would benefit from them.

Pre-school programs mentioned by Regal include the Head Start program for very low income children, age's three to four. About 25 to 30 graduates of that program enter Evergreen each year. Another is the Preschool Promise program, also operated by Head Start, that serves 17 three and four-year-olds from slightly higher-income families. Regal also mentioned the local Christian Academy preschool as being an available resource.

SEE GRADE ON A-5

## Chetco Bar road closures reduced

GOLD BEACH— On Dec. 8, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest managers significantly reduced the Chetco Bar Fire Temporary Closure Area on the Gold Beach Ranger District.

They have now reduced the number of road miles closed within the closure area by about 62 percent and the number of acres by about 65 percent.

The changes follow several meetings Rogue River-Siskiyou N.F. Supervisor Rob MacWhorter and Gold Beach District Ranger Tina Lanier held with employees, Curry County commissioners and Curry County Sheriff John Ward. They also met with members of the Curry Citizens for

Public Land Access, and Chetco Bar Fire-Curry Prevention and Recovery groups.

The two Forest Service managers also spent much of last week visiting burned areas within the 191,125-acre Chetco Bar Fire to assess hazards and find ways closures could be reduced.

"We heard the public's concerns about access to their national forest and reduced the size of closed areas to improve access," Lanier said. "We understand closures can be a major inconvenience and will continue to reduce the size of closures as conditions improve."

SEE CHETCO ON A-9

## Bud Junction puts a different spin on cannabis sales

Read about it on A-12

 **Chevron** **MERRY CHRISTMAS**  

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