

# Year in Review: September

- Checto Bar Fire takes center stage, Valley surrounded by fires: On any given day the "extreme smoke conditions" plaguing the Illinois Valley might be attributed to any of the 35 wildfires surrounding the area, but the fire on everyone's mind, the Checto Bar Fire, the nation's largest - which has kept Curry County residents on the run since July - has now crept too close to the Illinois Valley for comfort. On Monday, Sept. 5, this fire made a big run south and east, chewing through 4.5 miles of brush in the old Biscuit Fire burn scar, prompting a Level 3 "leave now" evacuation order for residents of the Oak Flat area, up Illinois River Road, near Selma. Also, a Level 1 evacuation notice for residents living west of Highway 199, from Hayes Hill to the California border, was issued.
- I.V. Lions Club member Steve Lyons said that the 2017 I.V. Lions Club Labor Day Festival had a great turnout considering the smoke. He also said they had good ticket sales from the motorcycle raffle, selling around 375 tickets and they gave away almost \$1,500 in 50/50 raffle ticket money. On Tuesday, Sept. 5, Lyons was on his way to deliver the 2017 motorcycle to raffle winner, ticket No. 386, to Donald Joe Hyleman of Cave Junction.
- Sept. 16, Senator Merkley hooked up with Oregon State Representative David Brock Smith for the day and the pair toured the action around the Checto Bar Fire.
- It was a night of tribute for Denny

Hare who died Aug. 7. On Sept. 13, nearly 75 family and friends gathered for a special "Open Mic" night to share stories and songs in Hare's honor at the Wild River Brewing and Pizza. Hare, father of Josephine County Commissioner Simon Hare, was well-known in the Illinois Valley as a farmer, stonemason and jack-of-all trades. His furniture and weather vanes were renowned.

- Tensions ran high at the Aug. 28 Rural Planning Commission meeting which was held primarily to take public commentary regarding the new, and potentially devastating, proposed text amendments to the Rural Planning Code and Order No. 2017-034 regarding cannabis production on Rural Residential (RR) land. The building was packed with those who wished to express their thoughts, feelings and opinions. Over the course of the meeting grandfathering existing operations, new setback lines and changes to county code were discussed.
- Former Josephine County (JoCo) Public Health Department director Diane Hoover, widely credited with rehabilitating that department's fiscal health, left her job a little more than a month ago and has taken on a new role as Community Program Manager for the Grants Pass Blue Zones Project.
- Shifting seasons; shifting strategies on the 'unusual' Checto Bar Fire: Everyone was thrilled when rain and cooler temperatures came along Sept. 7 and tamped down the two-

month old Checto Bar Fire.

- St. Patrick of the Forest Catholic Church was "tagged" - that is spray-painted with graffiti that said "smoke meth and hail Satan," and the community reacted fast to remove the obscene messages.
- A skating party Sept. 22 brought teen volunteers, young athletes and community organizers back together to get the wheels rolling on Phase Two of Cave Junction's Skate park development.
- Grownunity, a newly established community cannabis group in Josephine County, aims to combat the upcoming Rural Residential (RR) farming regulations, which many consider to be just short of a ban, by advising the Board of County Commissioners with economic data coupled with a neighborhood survey that will hopefully illuminate the full scope of the issue.
- Pickett West Timber Sale's first auction, which will be held at the Grants Pass Interagency Office Sept. 14 at 9 a.m. will result in the potential logging of 287 acres of old-growth forest, a classification of forest that's particularly important to environmental activists because of its ecological importance and resistance to fire. The Pickett West Timber Sale, according to KS Wild's program director Tim Ream, is a low elevation timber harvest that is located very close and throughout several communities, most especially in the Illinois Valley and Applegate area. "This is

not something that we're going to just allow to happen without putting up a fight," Ream declared.

- Squatter House: 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.
- Longtime resident of the Illinois Valley Maureen "Mo" Connolly lost her home near the 7600 block of Caves Highway to a house fire during a summer vacation to Italy Aug. 17.



(Photo by Laura Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

The city has been going through an arduous process to clean up the E. River St. squatter house.

# Year in Review: October

- Early Checto Fire history - Firefighters jump fast but human lives come first! Last week the local, state and federal agency partners that collectively fought the nearly 200,000 acre Checto Bar Fire hosted a series of four public meetings in the towns most affected by the fire (Brookings, Gold Beach, Agness and Cave Junction), with their final presentation at the Illinois Valley High School. It was reported that after lightening sparked a small fire that smoldered for three weeks, July 12 a passing commercial airline pilot noticed the smoke just above the Checto River in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness and called in the location. Then, according to RRSNF officials, within 15 minutes of that initial report, the decision was made to "fully suppress the fire." ... Upon landing, their perspective changed, it was reported that it was too steep and dangerous in there ... after 24 hours of attempted direct suppression tactics, the firefighters were forced to pull back.
- IV Fire District returns from California fire fight: As firefighters finally got ahead of the historic blazes in Northern California

that claimed at least 42 lives and destroyed 5,700 structures, two of 10 Oregon "strike teams" returned to their home stations last week, including firefighters from the Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD). "Oregon's deployed resources have been performing extremely well," said Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple.

- Bridgeview Vineyard faced extreme erosion damage from Sucker Creek during last winter's torrential downpour, losing an estimated \$100,000 in grapevines and infrastructure. The new biological fortifications were completed by I.V. Soil and Water Conservation District and the project cost about \$320,000 but 75 percent of it was funded through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Emergency Watershed Protection Program which was available after the area had been declared a disaster zone.
- Cannabis tax dollars on the way: On Oct. 6 the Oregon Department of Revenue's public information officer Joy Krawczyk wrote in a press release that state level cannabis tax dollars will be

distributed, for the first time, to cities (10 percent), counties (10 percent), the State School Fund (40 percent) the Mental Health, Alcoholism and Drug Services Account (20 percent), the Oregon State Police (15 percent) and the Oregon Health Authority (5 percent). All distributions, totaling nearly \$85 million, will be complete by Oct. 11 and will be regularly handed out on a quarterly basis thereafter.

- IVFD Board back in action: After a prolonged controversy which resulted in the resignations of several board members, including the board's former president Ron Humphres, the Illinois Valley Fire District's (IVFD) Board of Directors has been replenished and they're once again ready to perform their duties. "It's refreshing to have a board that's engaged. We used to have that but it deteriorated and now I think we have that back again," said Fire Chief Dennis Hoke. The Board has added Carol Dickson as president, Bob Butler and Gary Price.
- Veterans Day marks the beginning of a new display project at Kerbyville Museum and History

Center. A "Wall of Honor" exhibit is planned for the 2018 tourism season, and the museum board is inviting the community to participate by submitting photocopies of their family members in uniform.

- Marble Caves Distillery: Rod Warner, owner and founder of Cave Junction's Marble Caves Distillery, opened the doors to his tasting room last year and has been hard at work refining his business ever since. The tasting room, located at 7247 Holland Loop Rd, is open Friday to Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the winter and Thursday to Sunday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the summer.
- Siskiyou Field Institute now harvests solar energy for education: On July 13 Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI) flipped its electric meter into generating mode thanks to a brand-new solar energy system made possible by Pacific Power's Blue Sky renewable energy customers. The Selma-based environmental education nonprofit will officially cut the ribbon on the solar project Sunday, Oct. 21.
- Trouble at the golf course: Gary Noleroth, president of the Illinois Valley Golf Course's board

of directors and spokesman for the Illinois Valley Golf Association said that the course has fallen on hard times and, if things don't improve, there's a good possibility that at some point they may have to close their doors. Noleroth said memberships are available for those who want them and that all donations and contributions are being greatly appreciated - they can be sent to P.O. 749 in Cave Junction.

- The Illinois Valley boys' soccer team ranked second among 3A/2A/1A-SD5 Special District 5 teams was flying high after three consecutive wins on the road, earning them a spot in this year's playoff games.
- Ordinance No. 2017-001, which aims to eliminate unsightly, disruptive or potentially dangerous practices regarding fencing, lighting, buildings and erosion, went into effect Oct. 30. Letters were scheduled to be sent out to all known growers, regardless of zone, informing them that they have 30 days to comply. Should growers fail to comply, the county will take legal action against them.

**We are more than locals, we are your buds!**

**THE ONLY OMMP CLINIC ESTABLISHED & RESPECTED FOR OVER 14 YEARS**

28267 REDWOOD HWY CAVE JUNCTION

Medical Marijuana Certification • Primary Care

**SOUTHERN OREGON ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE**

CALL US FOR AN APPOINTMENT

**541-779-5235**

WWW.SOALTMED.COM



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Boys soccer team at home Sept. 29, against the Rogue River Chieftains.

Starting or Growing a Business in Illinois Valley?

**Need money?**

Micro Business Loan Funding Always Available!

\*Start-up, existing, home-based or other business enterprises

\*\$200 minimum to \$25,000 maximum

\*Apply at the IVCDO office - 201 Caves Hwy.

\*Questions? Phone 541-592-4440

**ALL CUSTOM JEWELRY DESIGNS & REPAIRS DONE IN HOUSE!**

TUES - FRI 9:30 AM - 5:30 PM

SAT 10 AM - 2 PM

SUN & MON CLOSED

23772 Redwood Highway

KERBY, OR

**541-592-4838**

**Yanase Jewelers**

**Marble Caves Distillery**

Hand Crafted Spirits

Great gift ideas for under \$20.00

7247 Holland Loop - Across from Holland Store

Tasting room open Friday - Sunday 1 - 5 PM

**Recently Expanded to Serve You Better!**

**Oregon Caves Chevron**

**541-592-3080**

**Family owned and operated for over 31 years!**

**DIGGIN' LIVIN'**

**Organic Groceries - Farm Store - Deli**

143 S REDWOOD HWY CAVE JUNCTION OR

541-592-4483

NEW HOURS: MONDAY - SATURDAY STORE 9-7 DELI 9-5

SUNDAY STORE 10-3 DELI 10-5

OPEN ALL DAY FOR BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

SOUP DAILY SELECTION VEGAN OPTION AVAILABLE

BACON SANDWICH

VEGGIE SANDWICH

BREAKFAST BURRITO

MAPLE PECAN WAFFLE

FARMHOUSE WAFFLE

TURKEY PESTO PANINI

PORTABELLO MELT

THAI CURRY WRAP

DIGGIN BURRITO

TEMPEH REUBEN

TURKEY CRANBERRY

DIGGIN VEGGIE

CHIPOTLE CHICKEN WRAP

BUILD YOUR OWN

**WILD BILL'S OREGON OUTLET**

Glass Pipes & Smokin' Supplies

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE

WE NOW HAVE CBD OILS!

Locally blown glass, incense, papers, candles, butane, vaporizers, pipes, jewelry, T shirts, grinders clothes and much more!

Monday thru Saturday 10:00 am to 7:00 pm and Sunday 12:00 pm 5:00 pm

We'd like to wish everyone to have a Happy Holidays from us all at Wild Bills!

202 N Redwood Hwy

Cave Junction OR 97523

541-761-9084

facebook.com/Wild-Bills-Oregon-Outlet-LLC