

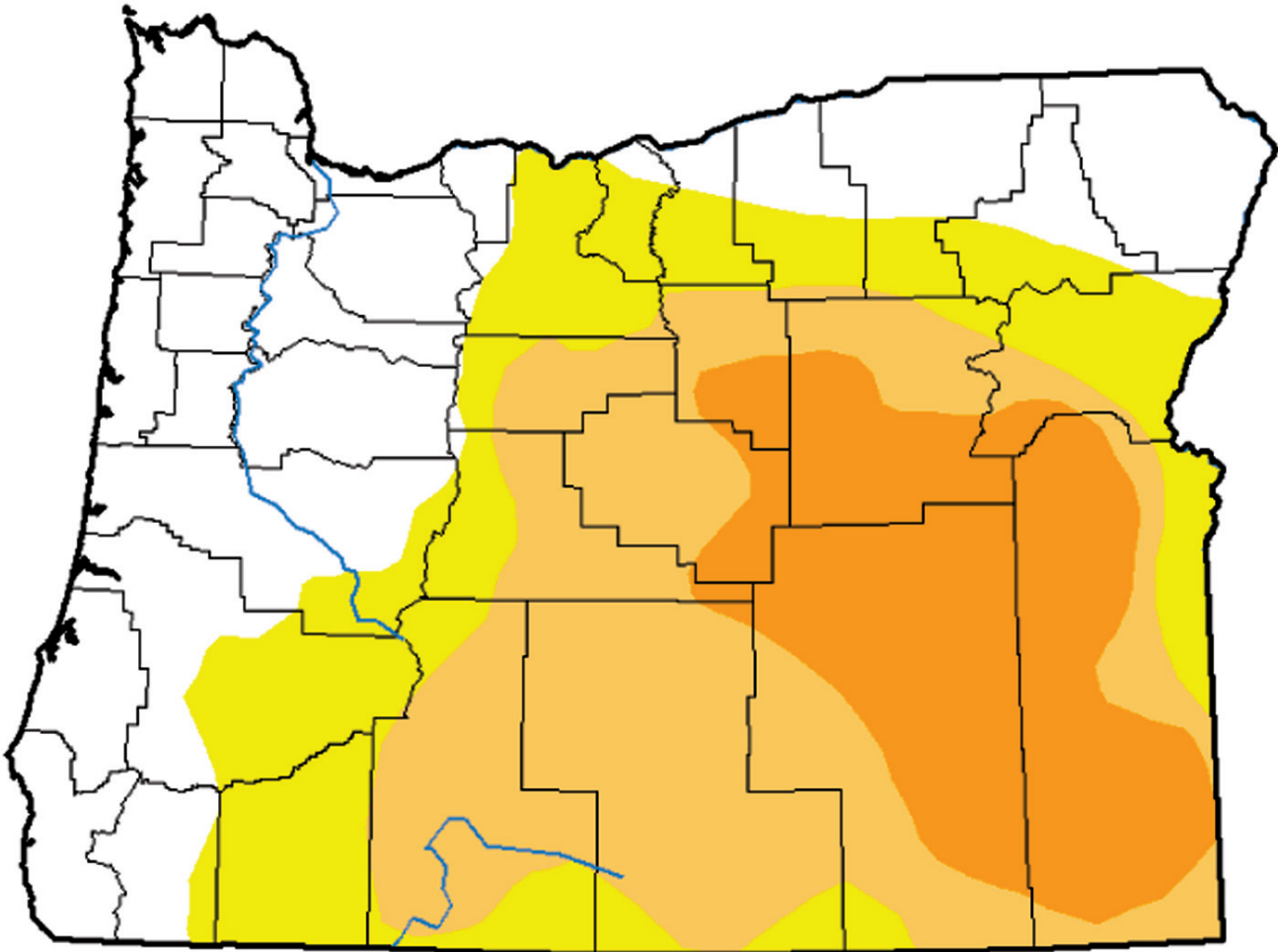
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Drier summer expected for the Valley



Iris Chinook

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According to the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), as of May 22, 2018, 45.30 percent of our state is experiencing moderate drought conditions. This is up from the percentage last week. 66.52 percent of the state is considered abnormally dry and 33.48 percent is experiencing no drought conditions. Abnormal dryness or drought is currently affecting approximately 739,000 people in Oregon, which is about 19 percent of the state’s population.

Fortunately for the Illinois Valley, we are still in that 33 percent but the rest of the summer is looking drier with the forecast for July estimating about 58 percent of normal precipitation.

In the Seasonal Climate Forecast, a report issued May17, 2018 by

- None: No Drought
- D0: Abnormally Dry
- D1: Moderate Drought
- D2: Severe Drought
- D3: Extreme Drought
- D4: Exceptional Drought

Oregon Department of Forestry meteorologist Pete Parsons, June in Josephine County is expected to provide approximately 97 percent of average precipitation based on an average taken from other La Nina years - 1985, 1996, and 2006 - called analog years, versus the overall 1981 through 2010 long-term average. The bulk of this rainfall is expected to come in the first half of the month. Along with this, the forecast is looking for above-average temperatures in June.

The outlook for July is less rosy. Josephine County is expected to receive just 58 percent of the analog year’s average; significantly below average

rainfall in what is the driest time of year. Combine this with lots of very warm days (average of 3 degrees F above normal) and an elevated chance of excessive heat throughout the month and you have a good recipe for wildfire.

“Rainfall across southwest Oregon is below average and the above-normal temperatures this May are causing grasses to cure rapidly in the lower elevations,” said Dave Larson, Southwest Oregon District Forester. “In order to help curb the number of human-caused fires, especially escaped backyard debris burns, the conditions are ripe to declare fire season.” The start of fire season

in the Illinois Valley was declared June 1, 2018. The fire danger level for the public will start off at Level 1 (green), which means that starting June 1 the following restrictions are in place on Oregon Department of Forestry lands in Josephine and Jackson counties:

- No burning of debris piles or debris in burn barrels.
- No fireworks.
- No tracer ammunition or exploding targets.

Charts from the USDA Snotel report online also point out a “Current Snow Water Equivalent” of just 23 percent of normal as of May 30, 2018. To keep tabs on conditions and do your own research on statistics throughout the state, visit: <https://www.drought.gov/drought/states/oregon> and www.plantmaps.com/interactive-oregon-drought-monitor-map.php.

Driver sought in hit-and-run that killed 1

A vehicle struck and killed Corey Fletcher, 31, on U.S. 199 around 2 a.m. June 2. According to a release from Oregon State Police (OSP), Fletcher and Andrea Ayala, 23, were traveling on 199, when, during an argument, Fletcher leapt from the moving vehicle.

Ayala pulled over and sought assistance with a conscious but injured Fletcher. While attempting to get Fletcher back in the vehicle, a northbound vehicle struck the couple. The unidentified vehicle stopped, and then took off heading in the direction of Cave Junction.

Troopers say Fletcher suffered fatal injuries and died on-scene. Ayala was taken to the hospital with unknown injuries.

This is the second time in the past five years when a driver struck a person on this section of 199 and took off. On Oct. 30, 2013, Jarred Q. Houston, 21 and Robert R. Calvin, 41, were killed in a hit and run shortly after midnight in an area near the June 2 incident. Five years later, their deaths have yet to be solved.

If you have any information on this incident, please contact OSP Southern Command Center at 541-474-3174 – case number SP 18-201309.

What’s all the buzz at Diggin’ Livin’s downtown hive?

Christie Fairchild

IVN Contributing Writer

At Diggin’ Livin’ (DL), food is their forte and keeping it local is their mission. The all-organic deli sources from nearby farms, the crops of which DL’s bees pollinate. Employees buzz around stocking the shelves with organic and wildcrafted foods. As colorful murals grow on the walls and the small stage begins to hold its space, adding art and music seems only natural.

Saturday, June 9, will kick off “Second Saturday” open mic nights at Diggin’ Livin’ from 4-7 p.m. “Second Saturday” is a spinoff of “First Fridays,” a monthly art walk event happening in many towns and cities around the country where businesses stay open Friday evenings once a month to showcase local art to the public.

The hope is for other businesses to join in, creating a Cave Junction Second Saturday Art Walk. First Friday used to be something the town engaged in and Joy Catherine McEwen, owner of Diggin’ Livin Farm, Store and Apiary said, “Everyone... everyone used to be a part of it. It was really nice because it got people to be a part of their downtown.”

Friday evenings in Cave Junction is the time for farmers market at Jubilee Park, so DL decided to switch it up to Second Saturday. Paintings by Owl Meds will be displayed until July 14, when tile-works by Miguelo will take their place.

“Open mics are an opportunity for community building, to see each other, make collaborations, make connections, make friendships,” said McEwen. “We want everyone to sing and do art. Even if you’re not some beautiful, beautiful singer - still sing! Sing and smile.”

Hannah Sauchyn, manager of the store, says an important part of sharing art is being able to self-express. “Doing something creative, outside of your normal survival mode, daily activities - there are tons of forms of art ... people say they aren’t artists but they are!”

Previously, at DL there has been mostly music with some poetry, but they invite diversity, including dance.

According to McEwen, diversity is a very integral part of this community. If you look at the bees as an example, they forage from some of the richest biodiversity in the country, from snowberry to manzanita, poison oak to blackberry, creating a medicinal and nutrient-rich honey not soon forgotten.

McEwen describes DL as a hub, or a hive, where people within the community can sell the food and art that they produce, strengthening community bonds and increasing its value.

“So much technology highlights the need for us to have a space like this available, for people to come together and talk about things like food,” McEwen explained. “Sharing art encourages others to share art. Sometimes you’re nervous to and then you see someone else share theirs and you are proud of them. You feel empowered.”

Grocery Outlet readies to break ground in June

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Regardless of how you feel about Grocery Outlet setting up shop in Cave Junction at the intersection of Caves Highway and Highway 199, the discount food outlet is still on course to break ground in June 2018. Layla Kasha, vice president of marketing, points out that they are still waiting for permits to be finalized but she doesn’t anticipate any problems with that process. The Northern California-based company is planning to open the Cave Junction store in the spring of 2019.

The business model used by Grocery Outlet differs from typical franchise operations in several ways. Although the parent company builds and owns the facilities that house the

discount grocery store, the store will be managed by what the company refers to as “Owner/Operators.” Owner/Operators are selected four to five months before opening and then undergo a rigorous training program with other owners for up to nine months. Locals are given priority in that selection process. “We really like to place people from the community where we’re building the new store. We’re all about local,” said Kasha. Store owners pay the parent company a percentage of profits and other monies but Kasha points out, “Most of the money stays in the community,” and added, “We partner with community food banks and the local chapter of the chamber as well as support other community organizations in the effort to maintain a ‘hyper-local focus’ on business.”

Additionally the new Owner/ Operators will be looking to hire 30 to 40 people from the Valley to fill the open positions in the new store.

Another difference from a typical franchise operation is that the goods for sale and the overall focus of the store is decided by the owners with each store’s inventory being tailored to the needs and preferences of the community.

Grocery Outlet is a third-generation company. They started in Berkley in 1946 and just celebrated the opening of their 300th store two weeks ago. Twenty more stores are slated to open before the end of the year with most of them being in the western states. Currently, Oregon is one of six states of operation in addition to Washington, Idaho, California, Nevada and Pennsylvania.