

# Josephine County Crime Briefs:

by Sam Marsh, KLDR 104.5 FM / KAJO 1270 AM / 99.7 FM

Grants Pass Police used cellphone tracking technology early yesterday to locate and arrest a man who was misusing the emergency call network. The 9-1-1 Dispatch Center received its first call from a male subject later identified as 30-year-old Anthony Daniel Tolbert Wednesday at about 8:25 a.m.. Dispatchers said Tolbert refused to provide his name or location and that he sounded “paranoid and schizophrenic.” The suspect called 9-1-1 and hung up several times over a 20-minute period. Using cellphone tracking technology, officers were eventually able to locate Tolbert at a residence in the 400-block of West Harbeck Road and place him into custody. He was lodged in the Josephine County Jail for Improper Use of 9-1-1.

An Illinois Valley man will spend 20 months of his young adulthood in state prison after being convicted of stealing a vehicle and vandalism last summer. According to Josephine County Court records, 19-year-old Seth Len Myers of Kerby was ordered last week by Circuit Judge Lindi Baker to serve the time with the Oregon Department of Corrections. Court records show Myers pleaded guilty to charges of Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle and second-Degree Criminal Mischief for an incident that occurred in mid-July. Jail records show Myers was apprehended by the Sheriff’s Office in November on a warrant for failing to appear in court for the mentioned charges plus crimes of Felon in Possession of a Restricted Weapon and Probation Violation. Judge Baker additionally sentenced Seth Myers to serve 12 months of post-prison supervision, revoked his driver’s license for a year, and ordered

him to pay fines and assessments.

The Oregon State Police arrested a Josephine County man this week for numerous sex crimes and investigators are asking other victims to come forward. OSP reports Detectives arrested 50-year-old Mark Christopher Boothe Monday. Boothe was lodged in the Josephine County Jail on suspicion of five counts each of first-Degree Sexual Abuse and first-Degree Sodomy. Jail records show he is being held in lieu of posting \$750,000 bail. Boothe has been a Merlin resident since 1992 and jail records show his current address is on Crow Road. Detectives believe there are more victims and are asking anyone that is a victim or knows of someone who has been a victim of Boothe to contact the OSP Southern Command Center at 1-(800)-442-2068 or \*OSP -- ask for Detective Eve Thornton.

A Cave Junction woman may be facing a felony weapons charge after she tried to purchase a gun at a Grants Pass pawn shop last weekend. The Oregon State Police responded to a firearms purchase denial at Cash Connection on SW 6th Street Saturday afternoon. Troopers said 58-year-old Clara Denise Lewis-Bennett tried to buy a gun, but was refused because she is a felon. Lewis-Bennett was not arrested, but a charge of Providing False Information in Connection with the Transfer of a Firearm against her was referred to the district attorney’s Office for consideration.

The Illinois Valley Fire District was investigating the cause of a fire that destroyed a vacant home in Kerby early yesterday. On Tuesday at 7:24 a.m., IVFD responded to the reported structure fire in the 100-block of Holton Creek Road. The vacant house was fully-engulfed in flames when units arrived on scene. The neighbor’s mobile home was within feet of the structure, so crews first worked to save that dwelling. It was not damaged, but the vacant home was destroyed. IVFD responded with one engine and two water tenders. Also responding was one engine from Rural Metro Fire Department and one unit from American Medical Response. There were no injuries reported. The local fire district’s Citizen Emergency Response Team.

The Josephine County Board of Commissioners made quick work of their final weekly business session of 2018. The Board approved all six of the administrative items on the agenda. Among those was the approval of the cover letter of the Josephine County Code. The Commissioners also approved an annual non-union wage cost of living adjustment of 3 percent and approved building maintenance worker and office manager positions for the Airport Department. Additionally, the Commissioners approved a request to use property reserve funds for the replacement of the Grants Pass Airport Caretaker’s Residence and also approved a Commercial Ground Lease and Contract for Sale of Buildings for the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum on Redwood Highway near Cave Junction.

# Year in Review: July

- Mayor Daniel Dalegowski discussed three proposed taxes to fund law enforcement at the July 9 city council meeting: pot, food and fuel. He estimated that the taxes would bring in more than \$825,000 for law enforcement.
- On July 10, the fire season planning session presented the latest updates on fire season conditions. There was discussion on nearby fires, fuels and fire ecology and building local resources and networking.
- The Healing Hearts and Hooves fourth annual dinner and auction took place July 21. This fundraiser was held at the Augustino Estate, with food catered by Casa Amiga and music by Gary Margason.
- Valley residents cried foul on the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as the deadline loomed for submitting comments on the Clean Slate Environmental Assessment. Many old growth trees found in the hotly contested 311-acre logging proposal in Selma’s Deer Creek Watershed were targeted for logging six times in the past 20 years.
- The wildfire situation this summer was serious enough without additional human error making things worse. Seventy percent of wildfires in Oregon are started by people; so fire managers stressed how imperative it is to not take any unnecessary risks with equipment use at home, camp fires in the forest, fireworks, tossing cigarette butts, or even poor decisions while driving. Fire managers also said good citizens should confront or help educate others who are endangering the community.
- In and around the Illinois Valley, firefighters from the U.S. Forest Service (F.S.), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) and the Sun Star Fire Club accomplished an amazing degree of coordination to limit fire growth as they initially attacked local blazes. With most of the smaller fires extinguished or contained, focus shifted to the Natchez and Klondike Fires.
- On July 17 the big tree in the Junction Inn parking lot, aka the Cave Junction Christmas tree, was cut down in anticipation of the new Grocery Outlet scheduled to open

at the end of this year. Jeff Stiles from Oregon Caves Chevron donated the location in his parking lot. The two trees that hover above where the Rosie’s Inferno Pizza truck parks will be the new location for the Christmas tree lighting going forward.

- The Siskiyou Folk & Bluegrass Festival was held July 28 at Lake Selmac. The proceeds of this musical fundraiser have been committed to a senior of Illinois Valley High School next year.
- On Saturday, July 14, Susan Hatch went to North Valley High School in Merlin to participate in Josephine County’s American Cancer Society Relay For Life. While she was there, Hatch presented the event coordinator Stephanie Baker with a \$900 check in donations from the Illinois Valley community and then walked the “Survivor Lap” around the track. Hatch first started participating in Relay For Life in 2007 after her husband, David, died from prostate cancer in 2006. “I made a promise to myself that I was going to stay involved and make a difference,” said Hatch.
- The Public Works Department, which is in charge of waste water treatment, has a wish list of equipment that needs to be replaced or upgraded if they are to continue releasing safe, treated sewage water into the Illinois River or diverting it to irrigate the Illinois Valley Golf Course in the summer months. Revenue from increased city water rates will contribute to the aforementioned upgrades.
- Residents of the Illinois Valley converged upon Lake Selmac on the Fourth of July as they have for years to celebrate 1776, and on the morning of July 5, like clockwork, Josephine County Park employees were present with only a handful of volunteers to clean up the mess left behind by patriotic party-goers. “It looks like a bomb went off,” Josephine County Parks Director Sarah Wright remarked when asked about the scene. “There are thousands and thousands and thousands of pieces of little trash, on top of the boxes of fireworks. People just leave their stuff scattered everywhere. It’s everywhere around the entire lake.”

# Year in Review: August

- The Illinois Valley Visitor Center made an effort to create a better defensible zone around the property in case of fire. To accomplish this, several trees were removed and shrubs and vines dug out. The replacement of vines and overgrown shrubs with a new, low profile, xeriscape planting will help reduce ladder fuels and the larger plants that produce more burning embers. Xeriscaping is a landscaping practice that utilizes drought-resistant plants.
- In August, the Klondike Fire was over 58,000 acres and 569 firefighters were working to increase containment levels beyond 15 percent. Fire managers had hoped to contain the Klondike north of Illinois River Road, as a good defensive position to protect both Selma and the rest of the Illinois Valley, and also, to keep flames away from private properties and nearby communication towers that serve many Valley residents.
- On July 23, the Cave Junction City Council voted 5-0 to send a 3 percent recreational marijuana tax to the voters to fund law enforcement, but no motion passed regarding sending a gas and restaurant tax to the voters.
- Illinois Valley News writer Cri Solo reassured readers that wildlife knows how to endure fire season: Just like you know how to evacuate your home and neighborhood in case of emergency, animals know-how and when to get away from wildfire. Some animals, such as amphibians and reptiles, don’t flee at all, but burrow underground or hide out in wet areas until the fire has passed. Some animals will die - those that are already sick or injured generally - but wildfires don’t wipe out entire populations.
- Cave Junction’s smoking ordinance No. 569 went into effect which placed a smoking ban in parks and extended the Indoor Clean Air Act restriction of no smoking within 10 feet of any public building doorway. The ordinance was passed by the council Feb. 26 of this year and it prohibits smoking and vaping in city parks in addition to downtown business entrances.
- After 28 years, three landlords and a room full of memories, Kathy Jett has made a big change in her life. As of Aug. 1, Jett Sett hair salon, located at 219 S. Redwood Hwy., was sold to Denise Krska.

- For 46 years the Illinois Valley Lions Club has put on the annual Labor Day Festival and this year’s Grand Marshal for the parade was none other than Lynn Johnson, owner of Illinois Valley Real Estate.
- For 25 years the Illinois Valley Lions Club has provided the Valley with their free Medical Equipment Loan Program. Besides gait belts in the warehouse, you could find wheelchairs, shower chairs, two-four wheel walkers, grab bars, three-wheeled scooters, adjustable hospital beds and mattresses, bedside rails, toilet risers, portable toilets, a Hoyer lift, canes, oxygen tanks and tubing, crutches, leg braces and much more on offer.
- Volunteers were needed for manual weed removal around Lake Selmac: Eurasian watermilfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum) is a common aquatic invasive plant that has plagued lakes across the country since at least the 1940s. “Milfoil is an invasive species and Lake Selmac is completely overgrown with it,” remarked Josephine County Parks Director Sarah Wright. “It’s been out of control for many years, and so it impedes on recreational use of the lake.”

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