

Josephine County Crime Briefs:by Sam Marsh, KLDR 104.5 FM / KAJO 1270 AM / 99.7 FM

A Selma man was jailed on outstanding warrants and for felony drug possession after Grants Pass Police received a citizen tip about the suspect vehicle in the Sears incident. The Public Safety Department reports a caller contacted them April 13 believing they had spotted the suspect vehicle which ran over a Sears employee -- stating that it was located in the east end of the Walmart parking lot. Officers immediately responded, but quickly determined it was not the suspect vehicle in the Sears heist. However, they arrested the driver of the Nissan truck -- 36-year-old Byron Lee Merideth -- on warrants issued by the Grants Pass Public Safety Department and Josephine County Sheriff's Office. The warrants contained one parole violation and two probation violations related to previous crimes of possession of methamphetamine. In addition, Merideth was charged with a new crime of felony possession of meth. He was lodged in the Josephine County Jail on a no-bail detainee.

A Cave Junction woman was arrested for suspected drug possession after she was pulled over by the Oregon State Police (OSP) in the Fish Hatchery area over the weekend. OSP reports troopers stopped a Jeep Grand Cherokee driven by 41-year-old Melissa Karen Fulton near the intersection of Fish Hatchery Road and Leavitt Lane Friday at about 8:30 p.m.. Troopers said they stopped Fulton for a lighting violation and upon contact they observed a plastic baggie with crystallized residue in plain sight. The substance in the baggie was consistent with methamphetamine and a glass smoking device with more meth residue was also found. Fulton was cited and released for driving while suspended and no insurance. Her vehicle was impounded. The substance was sent to the OSP Crime Lab for analysis and a charge of possession of a controlled substance was sent to the district attorney's office for consideration.

A traffic complaint from a concerned citizen resulted in the weekend arrest of a Cave Junction woman for impaired driving in the Illinois Valley. The Oregon State Police (OSP) reports troopers pulled over a Subaru Legacy driven by 37-year-old

Elizabeth Pruitt on Redwood Highway in the Cave Junction area April 12 at about 6:45 p.m. Troopers said a citizen called 9-1-1 to report the Subaru was being operated erratically and they believed the driver to be impaired. The citizen actually stopped to confront Pruitt in a parking lot and reported she was highly intoxicated. According to OSP, Pruitt admitted consuming alcohol and using seven different prescription medications. She showed signs of substantial intoxication, but refused to participate in field sobriety testing -- so she was placed into custody for driving under the influence of intoxicants. Pruitt was transported to Grants Pass and lodged in the sobering center where her blood alcohol level was determined to be exactly twice the legal driving limit.

Josephine County Sheriff's Office Summary Report reveals heavy workload so far in 2019:

The Josephine County Sheriff's Office continues to handle a large workload as documented in its summary of activity for March 2019. The sheriff's office responded to 2,279 total calls for service last month, with 1,459 calls handled by patrol deputies and 244 calls handled by dispatchers. There were 471 bookings into the Josephine County Jail and the sheriff's office issued 107 warrants. There were also 245 animal-related calls in March. Deputies also attempted to serve civil papers in Josephine County 331 times. According to the summary report, 80 concealed handgun licenses were renewed by the sheriff's office -- which also issued 64 new concealed handgun licenses. So far in 2019, the sheriff's office has responded to more than 7,249 calls for service with the vast majority of those calls coming from the Illinois Valley and city of Cave Junction. A total of 266 warrants have been issued so far this year.

A Cave Junction man is facing multiple charges involving weapons after a traffic stop conducted yesterday by the Josephine County Sheriff's Office. The sheriff's office reports deputies pulled over a vehicle driven by 23-year-old Jayton Troy Spangler near the intersection of North Caves Avenue and East River Street Wednesday at 3:11 p.m.

Deputies said they stopped Spangler for a traffic violation and they spotted a pipe used to smoke methamphetamine when he stepped out of the vehicle. They said he also told them there was a firearm under a backpack in the front passenger seat. Spangler was placed into custody while the firearm and meth pipe were seized. He was charged with unlawful possession of a firearm, unlawful possession of ammunition and contempt of court. After being cited for driving while suspended and no insurance, Jayton Spangler was transported to Grants Pass and booked into the Josephine County Jail. His vehicle was impounded.

OSP arrested Illinois Valley man for DUII after Redwood Highway traffic stop:

The Oregon State Police (OSP) arrested an Illinois Valley man for impaired driving April 10 following a traffic stop on Redwood Highway. OSP reports troopers pulled over a Honda driven by 39-year-old Robert Leslie Miller of O'Brien near milepost 9 of US Highway 199 Wednesday at 10:15 p.m. Troopers said they stopped Miller for driving 90 miles per hour in a posted 55 mph speed zone. Upon contact, they said the driver displayed several signs of impairment. He originally consented to participate in field sobriety tests, but changed his mind and refused to participate. Miller was placed into custody and charged with driving under the influence of alcohol. He was also cited for Speeding after providing a breath sample that was nearly twice the legal driving limit. Robert Miller was lodged at the Grants

Pass Sobering Center and his vehicle was impounded.

Cave Junction man with reputation for fleeing from law receives 22 months in prison:

A Cave Junction man with a reputation for fleeing from law enforcement won't be running anywhere for most of the next two years. Josephine County Court records show 39-year-old Merle Leonard Southard, Sr., was ordered last week by Circuit Judge Pat Wolke to spend the next 22 months with the Oregon Department of Corrections. According to Court records, Southard pleaded guilty in two separate cases last month to crimes of second-degree burglary committed Feb. 24 and second-degree criminal mischief committed March 4. Merle Southard has been incarcerated since he was arrested in early March by the Josephine County Sheriff's Office. Deputies spotted him in Cave Junction and knew he was wanted on a local felony warrant for parole violation. He took off running and led deputies on a pursuit through the interior of an Old Stage Road home before he was eventually captured on Caves Highway. "Merle the Squirrel" was also sentenced to 12 months of post-prison supervision.

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