

Illinois Valley News

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County COVID update

Josephine County remains in the “Extreme Risk” category for COVID-19. Between the dates of Dec. 27, 2020 to Jan. 2, 2021 there were a total of 183 new cases.. As of Jan. 4, 2021 there was a total of 1,525 cases and 28 deaths reported (2%). JoCo reports that there are 1,757.9 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people.

The following cases were reported by zip code: 97523 had 61 cases and 97538 had 24 cases.

Due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases and the need to allocate resources more effectively and focus on the immediate needs of their community,

SEE COVID ON A-6

Vaccine program ramps up

Brown says goal is to vaccinate ‘250 people per hour’

Andrew Selsky
Associated Press

SALEM — Hundreds of people received COVID-19 vaccines Friday at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in a mass vaccination that the doctor in charge called “the most meaningful work of my career.”

Next week, the operation will be stepped up with the Oregon National Guard having been called up by Gov. Kate Brown to support the mission in Salem.

“The goal is to vaccinate 250 people per hour, vaccinating thousands of Oregonians,” Brown announced during a Zoom call with reporters.

SEE VACCINE ON A-9

New council is official



Photo by Laura Mancuso for the *Illinois Valley News*

Cave Junction Councilor Tina Casey Jones (left), Mayor Meadow Martell and Councilor Jesse Dugas were sworn in at City Hall Thursday, Jan. 7.

Councilors share their priorities with the *Illinois Valley News*

Laura Mancuso
IVN editor

The re-elected Cave Junction Mayor Meadow Martell and newly elected councilors Tina Casey Jones and Jesse Dugas were sworn in and certified to begin their terms as elected officials at City Hall Jan. 7. City recorder and election official Rebecca Patton conducted the ceremony and the public was able to watch the session on Zoom.

The *Illinois Valley News* reached out to the newly elected council and asked what they were looking forward to focusing on for the city of Cave Junction in the new year. The following is how the mayor and councilors responded by email:

Martell replied, “As Mayor, I am committed to actively moving forward with revitalizing our downtown businesses. The Oregon Main Street Program works with communities to develop

comprehensive, incremental revitalization strategies based on the community’s unique assets and character. Ninety-four cities in Oregon are currently participating in this program and seeing amazing results. Now, with the devastating impact of COVID-19, working to re-energize our downtown businesses is even more crucial.

“I also think it is timely and important to focus on reviewing and updating the City Charter.”

Both Jones and Dugas had downtown improvements on their minds as well, along with Jubilee Park upgrades and addressing the homeless issue.

Jones replied, “My initial focus is going to be 1) partnering with Mayor Martell to get the next phase of the MOU project going - security cameras, followed by the beautification of the hwy 199 phase going. 2nd priority is pushing forward

with the Jubilee Park upgrade and expansion (splash pad, pavilion and new ball field).

“Additional priorities are (in no particular order) helping Mayor Martell in rewriting the city charter (for voter approval), and getting a REAL (actionable) plan to address the homeless issue.

“That should tie up the next 4 years!”

Dugas replied, “First I would like to thank everyone who voted and trusted me for this position. I’m looking forward to working with the other members of the council and putting Cave Junction first.

“My focus will be working to create safe options for our youth, communicating with our county commissioners on options regarding the homeless situation in our community, as well as the park and downtown renovation projects.

SEE COUNCIL ON A-10

Town lighting project set to finally begin

Public safety in Cave Junction is a major concern of businesses, residents, city government and visitors alike. Both the Illinois Valley Community 20/20 Vision and Strategic Plan and a business survey conducted by the Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce showed strong concerns for property security, pedestrian safety, appearance and increasing downtown commercial activity.

The Cave Junction Downtown Lighting Project is one of the results of an agreement between the city of Cave Junction and the Josephine County Commissioners to keep some of the proceeds from the sale of the County Building local.

The project will increase lighting for pedestrian safety and security of downtown businesses, as well as expand the City’s current streetlight system. Utilizing low power LED bulbs in durable fixtures, the project will address many at-risk areas around downtown businesses and parking. All light fixtures will be directional and conform to minimize unwanted illumination of the night sky.

SEE LIGHT ON A-10

Records reveal Trump fans who stormed Capitol

Michael Biesecker, Michael Kunzelman, Gillian Flaccus and Jim Mustian
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The insurrectionist mob that stormed the U.S. Capitol at the president’s behest last week was overwhelmingly made up of longtime Trump supporters, including Republican Party officials, GOP political donors, far-right militants, white supremacists, and adherents of the QAnon myth that the government is secretly controlled by a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophile cannibals. Records show that some were heavily armed and included convicted criminals, such as a Florida man recently released from prison for attempted murder.

The Associated Press reviewed social media posts, voter registrations, court files and other public records for more than 120 people either facing criminal charges related to the Jan. 6 unrest or who, going maskless amid the pandemic, were later identified through photographs and videos taken during the melee.

SEE CAPITOL ON A-9

County enters seed planting contract

CJ Schatza
IVN copy editor

The Board of Josephine County Commissioners authorized a project to plant trees in several areas of the county at their first weekly business session of the new year Wednesday, Jan. 6, which was held on Zoom.

IB Reforestation LLC, a Central Point-based government contractor that provides support activities for forestry, was selected to carry out the planting. Conifer seedlings will be planted at Hog Creek, Panther Gulch, Buckeye Mine and other sites.

Dave Streeter, the county’s forestry director, said that about half a million seedlings will be planted. “There’s actually two contracts,” Streeter explained. “Because of the size, the quantity of seedlings that we were planting this year... we decided to break those up into two contracts and offer them up so that we didn’t run into the possibility of maybe a smaller contractor that wasn’t capable of planting all of them in a timely fashion getting one contract and us getting in trouble being able to plant them.” IB was the firm that gave the lowest bid on both contracts, Streeter added.

Commissioner Dan DeYoung asked Streeter if any of the sites of the seedling planting

overlapped with a youth tree planting event that was scheduled for February but had to be canceled due to coronavirus restrictions. Streeter said that none are, but that the area in which the youth tree planting will occur has already been site prepped.

Board Chairman Darin Fowler stressed that the cancellation was “through no fault of our own.” “The tree plant will not go on due to the governor’s orders. Let’s put responsibility where it is,” Fowler said. “That was not our idea, not our desire to cancel that.” Streeter interjected to say that he waited until “the last possible minute” to cancel, hoping that restrictions might lift.

During requests and comments from citizens, Margaretta Stone Zoomed in to the meeting to discuss the proposed transit hub expected to be implemented next to the 11-unit apartment building she owns in Grants Pass. Stone said that the safety concerns and traffic congestion posed by the hub would degrade the quality of life of her tenants. She said she had previously spoken to Scott Chancey, the county’s transit superintendent, who told her that the county would provide security services for the hub. But Stone feared this meant chasing “disruptive people” over to her building. She advocated for moving the hub location, which Chancey allegedly entertained the notion of.

SEE COUNTY ON A-10

SHOT IN THE ARM FOR IVFD



Photo courtesy of Illinois Valley Fire District

Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) took the steps necessary to help protect their frontline personnel and the community from COVID-19. On Jan. 7, IVFD Fire Chief John Holmes (pictured), Division Chief/Fire Marshal Kamron Ismaili, firefighters Garret Goo and Kyle Lane, along with support member Jerry Allen, were five of the members of the department to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. IVFD would like to thank the American Medical Response and Grants Pass Fire & Rescue for hosting the week-long event. “One shot down. In 28 days we’ll be back for our second vaccine,” said Holmes.