

Kerby to get 199 pedestrian bridge

KERBY -- Construction began April 10 on a \$700,000 project that builds a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge across Holton Creek in Kerby.

Several people have been severely injured or killed while walking along this segment of Redwood Highway and this bridge is one piece in the safety puzzle for the corridor.

Most of the work will be off U.S. 199, although there will be some traffic delays in the final days of the project to install the pre-built structure.

The 70-foot long, 11-foot wide prefabricated structure will span Holton Creek parallel to the west side of the highway. It will allow people walking and biking to avoid the pinch point at the bridge where there are narrow shoulders adjacent to guardrail.

"Many residents in the Illinois Valley areas of Kerby and Cave Junction have limited transportation options and walk or bike to access their daily needs," said Region Active Transportation Liaison Jenna Marmon. "Rural, high-speed highways with no separation between the road and the walkway, no lighting, and limited crossing opportunities make doing so dangerous."

"Our hope for the future is this is the first step to improve safety between the two communities," said Marmon.

The project is scheduled for completion in early June.



Hwy. 199 at Holton Creek where the bridge will be built starting Tuesday, April 12.

County looks to give away park

CJ Schatza
IVN copy editor

The Josephine County Board of Commissioners considered the transfer of a park that has been county-owned since 1968 at the board's April 6 weekly business session.

All three commissioners gathered at the Anne G. Basker Auditorium in Grants Pass to conduct a public hearing regarding Sportsman Park's potential transfer to the Josephine County Sportsman Association, a domestic

nonprofit corporation that has managed the park throughout its history. The 39.77 acre parcel of land in Merlin is a segment of the Manzanita Recreation Area, and is home to a shooting range. The rest of Manzanita Recreation Area will be retained by the county.

Board Chair Herman Baertschiger provided some background details regarding the county's decision to look into parting with Sportsman Park. "What started this conversation was our risk manager came to us and said, 'I'm not sure we have insurance on this piece of property.'

"After discussions with the insurance company, I'm gonna say we do have insurance on it, but it's limited... It doesn't cover certain things out there, and so in investigating this issue a little further, it was proposed by our legal counsel and risk manager that since the county has not participated in managing this property for over 50 years, that we would have a conversation about transferring said property to the association."

SEE PARK ON A-9



(Photo by Laura M. Mancuso of the Illinois Valley News)

The Kerbyville Museum and History Center volunteers dressed like pioneers for opening day Saturday, April 9. If you would like to check out the museum changes, they are open Thursday through Sunday from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. at 24195 Redwood Hwy. in Kerby.

Post Offices in I.V. switch to competitive category

Iris Chinook
IVN Contributing Writer

The stunning increase in fees for a post office box in the Illinois Valley has been on the minds of many residents. The fees doubled in price!

According to the U.S. Postal Service website, the cost of a P.O. box can vary widely across the U.S. but the location of the box and the designation of the post office branch itself both significantly affect how much your box is going to cost. The post office has two categories for P.O. box locations: market-dominant and competitive.

The new Illinois Valley Postmaster Joseph Warren commented on the price increases: "The post office regularly raises its rates, but this time around

there were two increases. The first increase was a normal annual type of increase, and then a couple weeks later we had a change in the office to make us competitive, and this caused a second increase in a short period of time.

"Being competitive allows us to now take all UPS, FEDEX, and DHL parcels in to be delivered to our PO box customers, which in the past would be returned to the sender or would be charged postage due to the customers for not having a postal barcode on them. The change in status is that the office is now a 'move to competitive office.'"

Why did this happen?

In March 2021, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's 10-year plan for making the U.S. Postal Service profitable was unveiled. While controversial, the plan makes a few

things clear: although little beyond regularly scheduled price increases will change for around 75% of the nation, if you live in certain areas—located primarily west of the Rocky Mountains—your mail is going to both slow down and cost more.

Americans are sending less first-class mail than they used to, with overall volume falling 43% since 2001. This has resulted in a big financial loss of around \$2.7 billion in 2017, according to the USPS website. This also explains why the 10-year plan focuses on parcel delivery improvement.

A March 24, 2021 article by Jacob Bogage and Kevin Schaul in the Washington Post reported, "General Louis DeJoy released his strategic vision for the U.S. Postal Service on Tuesday, an austerity plan designed to save the agency

\$160 billion over the next decade and position the agency more squarely in the package business. The blueprint would cut post office hours, lengthen delivery timetables and raise prices, among other measures..."

USPS is one of the largest shipping distributors in the country, but many retailers do not offer shipping through the USPS. In the past, if you didn't receive mail at your address but relied on a PO box, that posed a problem.

The branches' change from market-dominant to competitive solves this problem and increases the level of service for package delivery throughout the Illinois Valley in addition to offering additional services like longer hours of access and electronic notifications when you have mail.

Arts school presents to school board

CJ Schatza
IVN copy editor

The Three Rivers School District board held a special session Wednesday, April 6 at Illinois Valley High School to conduct a public hearing on the charter proposal for Kalmiopsis Community Arts High School.

KCA's co-founders are Sara Kinstler, Ryan Forsythe, Kimiko Maglio, Kaci Elder and Melissa DeNardo.

Kristen Miles, TRSD's liaison from the Oregon School Boards Association, joined the meeting over Zoom to kick the hearing off. She said a public hearing is required by law

before a school's charter can be approved, and that no decisions would be made that evening. A vote on the charter is scheduled for May 18.

"My final report and recommendation will be more narrative in nature than what you have in front of you, and it will be aligned with the criteria and reflect this hearing," Miles said. "If the board chooses to approve, there would be 90 days to negotiate the contract. So just so you know, this is informational only tonight."

The KCA co-founders began their PowerPoint presentation with the school's mission statement: "Where it's okay to be who

you are while discovering your place in the world."

They said KCA was named in honor of the "biological and geological wonderland" that is the Kalmiopsis Wilderness, adding, "We live in the best community imaginable."

"The five of us who are co-creating this high school are so excited to raise up kids who are as proud as we are to come from this place."

The co-founders stated they want to help foster "vision, creativity and skills" in Valley youths that can be shared by local artists, joking that many of said artists were in the audience in support of KCA.

Stressing the thought that has gone into the charter

school, it was stated that KCA has been in the works since 2014.

"We did not want to rush the process, but instead decided to be extremely thoughtful and thorough in our approach, to engage in dozens upon dozens of informal conversations over the years with friends and strangers and local students and their families. With artists, fellow teachers, community leaders and other folks... We decided to take it as slow as it needed to go, and we're glad we did."

After delving into the academic backgrounds and experience designing and orchestrating educational programs, it was stated that the five KCA co-founders

would hold administrative positions at the school, positions they will refer to as "teacher leaders", each holding both a teaching

license and charter registry license.

SEE KCA ON A-9



(Courtesy photo for the Illinois Valley News)

KCA's co-founders, Ryan Forsythe (left), Kaci Elder, Sara Kinstler, Melissa DeNardo and Kimiko Maglio.