

Owner of Gene Brown Road bust cries foul

Daniel J. Mancuso
IVN staff

According to a press release from Oregon State Police, July 6, the Southwest Region Drug Enforcement Section team served an illegal marijuana search warrant in the 300 block of Gene Brown Road in O'Brien.

The Gene Brown Rd property is owned by 450 Brown Road LLC whose registered agent is Reginald James Boltz, the owner and operator of Rock'N R Ranch and Augustino Estate with a vineyard and tasting room in O'Brien.

The press release also stated that 3,547 illegal marijuana plants were located in five large greenhouses,

which were seized, and ultimately destroyed. Additionally, the property is subject to multiple code violations through Josephine County Code Enforcement, for unpermitted structures (greenhouses), unpermitted water tanks, unpermitted electrical installations, and illegal water diversion from a nearby waterway.

But Boltz claims it's not so. In a telephone conversation Boltz denied the structures and tanks were unpermitted.

"We have too much to lose if we don't do things right," he said.

Boltz said he leased the land to a group out of Jackson County and they were the ones that grew marijuana and not the hemp that they were licensed to. "The greenhouses

were not torn down, they only took the illegal plants, and I have water rights" Boltz added.

According to Josephine County property assessment & tax data the more than 29-acre property was acquired by Boltz in 2021 when he purchased it from John Hancock Life Insurance for \$37,000. Hancock acquired the land from Indian Hill LLC in 2017 as part of a deal for \$46,996,530 for its timber resources.

As a result, Josephine County will move forward with enforcement action against the property owner which could result in closure of the property for one calendar year (illegal drug cultivation) and possible civil forfeiture.

The investigation is on-going

and no further information is available at this time.

Browntown shooting and seizure.

This comes on the heels of a June 30 shooting the Josephine County Sheriff deputies responded to the 100 block of Browntown Road in Holland for a report of a person shot. Upon arrival it was learned the victim was deceased and the reporting person was the shooter. The Oregon State Police Major Crime Team was requested by the sheriff's office to assume lead on the investigation.

Preliminary investigation

revealed, William Illingworth, 47, of Cave Junction, shot and killed a Jacob Benson, 42, who had entered his home after an escalating verbal argument. The incident is still under investigation, but is currently being investigated as a self-defense shooting. Illingworth has been cooperating with Detectives throughout the investigation.

Additionally in the 100 block of Browntown Rd. Law enforcement located an unlicensed cannabis operation.

The Josephine Marijuana Enforcement Team (JMET) executed a search warrant in the 100 block of Browntown Road seizing and destroyed 419 illegal cannabis plants located in three greenhouses.



(Photo by Daniel J. Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

The Gene Brown Road property where a large grow was destroyed Wednesday, July 6. Law enforcement allege illegal water usage, illegal marajuana grow and lack of permitted electrical, water tanks and greenhouses.

Parks board makes decision on splash pad color scheme

Gwen Barringer
IVN Contributing Writer

The Parks and Recreation board members met on Thursday, July 7th, to discuss specifics around the color scheme for the new renovations that are scheduled for development at Jubilee Park. Although they were down a member and the meeting itself was somewhat informal, important decisions were still discussed and made.

Those present included board chair leader John Miles, city council member Tina Casey Jones, public works director Alex Ponder, and city recorder Rebecca Patton. Given the hoops that the

board has needed to jump through since 2008 when the idea was initially drafted, members were in high spirits about the task at hand- selecting a new color palette for the coming splash pad and new playground equipment.

After some mild technical difficulties, John Miles got his laptop running and presented the rest of the board with a plethora of color options in variations such as primary colors, earth tones, and pastels. It was quickly determined that since the new playground equipment is set to be painted in vivid primary colors, a selection of tones in "different but complementary colors" would work best for the

nearby splash pad. With that in mind, the pastel palette was selected, and all that was left was figuring out the specific colors of the attached spray fixtures.

The spray fixtures include a multitude of adorable creatures and concepts, meaning that the splash pad will have many eye-catching designs for the community to enjoy. A frog-shaped-slide, aptly named "Slide the Frog" on the designer's website, was heatedly discussed when board members decided that it's original earth-tone color scheme was not going to work.

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County ready for fight to fund patrols

CJ Schatza
IVN copy editor

With an absence of administrative actions, the Board of Josephine County Commissioners moved quickly to public comments at its July 6 weekly business session, held at the Anne G. Basker Auditorium in Grants Pass.

First, though, the commissioners honored some long-time employees for their years of service.

These employees were: David King - Community Corrections, 20 years; Chris Watson - Sheriff's Office, 20 years; and Tina Nielens - Surveyor's Office, five years.

"We'd like to thank all those dedicated employees and servants of the Josephine County citizens for their years of service," said Board Chair Herman Baertschiger.

"Moving right along at the speed of whatever, we will take comments from the citizens." Baertschiger then addressed a member of the audience that was surprised the board had already arrived at the public testimony portion, given that it usually takes

place late in a meeting: "Yeah, we're already there!"

Meeting frequenter Judy Ahrens approached the podium to thank the commissioners for allowing their auditorium to be used for the reading of the Declaration of Independence, an event Ahrens said had been held for a fifth consecutive year.

"It's our fifth year and it's so pronounced," Ahrens said. "Such a short document, but yet such a meaningful document... so meaningful for our freedom."

Ahrens went on to thank Josephine County Liberty Watch for providing security during the event, Josephine County Republican Women for bringing food, and Bill Meyer for acting as the event's emcee. She looks forward to the sixth annual reading next year.

"Once again, the community knows now why we have our barbecues."

During the remainder of her testimony, Ahrens talked about her efforts to clean up trash in the community and commended herself for setting a good example.

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