



# Illinois Valley News

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The paper of record for Josephine County

## Law enforcement situation 'dangerous'

**Siege Schatza**

*IVN Contributing Writer*

It has been abnormal as of late for Board of Josephine County Commissioners' meetings to be brief, with such critical matters as deciding on a newspaper of record, drastic budget cuts and defunding the Oregon State University Extension Service drawing large crowds and lengthy debates in recent months.

However, the June 14 BCC weekly business session was indeed concise and featured an abbreviated agenda, running just over half an hour.

The primary topic of discussion was the upcoming vote on a new service district to fund the

JoCo Sheriff's Office and why it has become necessary to put it on the November ballot.

Merlin resident Bill Hunker kicked off the debate during requests and comments from citizens, downplaying what he called the county's insistence that "we must act immediately or the sky will fall."

"There used to be a sign in my grandfather's print shop that read, 'Failure to plan on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part,'" Hunker quipped. "With the current push for an additional funding stream of 99 cents per thousand the sheriff is attempting to more than double his general funding to \$1.92 per thousand. I followed the budgeting process with the sheriff's office since 2012: never once has there been a clearly

delineated plan for what the public will be getting for their money. The latest 99 cents per thousand pitch is not predicated on any actual plan but rather on the fear that the public never votes yes on anything over a dollar."

Commissioner Dan DeYoung pushed back on Hunker's assertion that Sheriff Dave Daniel has not clearly communicated how taxpayers' money is spent: "There's a little bit more to it than just stepping up to the microphone and saying, 'I don't understand what it goes for,' because I think you really do: It all goes to patrol," remarked DeYoung.

"The reason we have a jail levy and we have to come up every few years is because the people won't pass solid funding and stable

funding," DeYoung added. "I hear it all the time: 'I pay my taxes; I should have full police protection.' Well, guess what? Your taxes don't pay for full police protection."

DeYoung mourned what could have been when he recounted the "remarkably shot down" seasonal sales tax that was defeated by voters last November, with over 80% voting against it.

"Now we're back to the table again with just the taxpayers and just the people and landowners in Josephine County covering the bill while people traveling in and out of here with California plates, Washington plates and Arizona plates aren't paying a dime, although they're using those facilities and they expect those facilities when they come here.

They expect law enforcement; they expect to be protected while they're visiting our county. And I think it's our obligation to try to meet that for them."

DeYoung also reminded the audience that the reason "the sky didn't fall" as it pertains to law enforcement after the sales tax failed was because an American Rescue Plan Act grant of \$5.8 million was discovered that bought another year of law enforcement services before drastic cuts would be required.

"I think it's high time we bail ourselves out," DeYoung concluded. "We're behind our sheriff 100% of the way and that's why we've referred it to the voter."

SEE LE ON A-9

## Gateway project is back!



(Top photos by Shannon Beach and bottom by Linda Corey for the Illinois Valley News)

The Illinois River Valley Arts Council reported having a terrific event at Siskiyou Field Institute Saturday, June 10. It was a good turnout and folks enjoyed dancing to Danielle Kelly's band and Broadway Phil and The Shouters. The Arts Council displayed art gates from the 2023 Gateway Project and folks were wowed by the imaginative gates. From left top clockwise gate artists - Alan Laurie, Amy Lusson, Jessica Courts, Deborah Dawson, Mya Hiler, 12, and Jennifer Folkert & her daughter Olivia Howard.

## Condor enthusiasts can get update at Hathkapasuta

**Annette McGee Rasch**

*IVN Senior Contributing Writer*

Those following the progress of the eight California condors released by the Yurok Tribe in the Redwood National and State Park last year can talk to a condor expert at the annual Hathkapasuta River Celebration. The event will be held - rain or shine - at the Illinois River Forks State Park from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. this Saturday, June 24.

Hathkapasuta, a free family-friendly festival, offers arts and crafts activities for children, the All Species Parade, the crowd-pleasing Recycled-Raft Race and a wide array of nature and natural history displays, as well as vendors offering their wares..

Live music by the Frankie Hernandez Band and Sunrise

and the Starseed Experience promise to get people dancing; and several food vendors will be on site. The Illinois Valley Arts Council craft booth and the Wildlife Images Bus with live animals are just two of many popular attractions for kids.

"Each booth has a conservation and education theme related to the river, fish, animals, the forest, or will have a Native American focus," said co-organizer Suzanne Vautier. "We're all about helping people explore our region's interconnected natural resources and inspiring them to care for the environment that we share with so many unique lifeforms."

One highlight will be the Yurok Tribe's California condor booth where Chris West, the senior wildlife biologist who oversees the Yurok's condor program, and some of his staff, will be on hand to talk about

the tribe's ongoing efforts to repopulate the region with the critically endangered birds - who with a nearly ten-foot wingspan, are the largest flighted land birds in North America.

With only a few dozen condors hanging onto survival in the 1980s, a highly-cooperative breeding program was launched that brought zoos, government agencies, universities, tribes and nonprofit organizations together to save the species from extinction. Now, there are over 500 condors alive - with more than 300 flying free in western United States and Mexico!

But the birds still face major challenges. Condors were recently in the national news because 21 birds from the Arizona-Utah condor population died from the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus.

"HPAI is definitely in our region as well. It has shown up in turkey vultures and common ravens and there have been confirmed deaths," West said.

Spearheading the Northern California Condor Restoration Program, the Yurok Tribe released eight condors in 2022 and these birds were all recently captured for their annual health checks. Thankfully they're all healthy.

However as HPAI is "highly contagious" the Yurok Tribe has been fundraising to facilitate construction of isolation pens "in case any of our birds catch it. We need a safe space to quarantine the birds and provide good medical care and we just don't have the space for that right now."

SEE CONDOR ON A-9

## Council green lights library

**Gwen Barringer**

*IVN Contributing Writer*

The Cave Junction City Council held their monthly meeting June 12 at City Hall. While the majority of the meeting consisted of general community updates, the public hearing surrounding the ongoing library renovation project led to a decision that may complicate the renovation process.

Mayor Meadow Martell and Councilors Ethan Lane, Tina Casey Jones, Jean Ann Miles, and Jesse Dugas were all in attendance along with city recorder Rebecca Patton. Joining them were city planner Lisa Richardson and contract planner Rowan Fairfield. Public Works Director Alex Ponder was unable to attend this month's meeting, which meant that his department's usual update was missed.

Council liaison updates were brief but informative. Councilor Jones gave an update on the Parks and Recreation board meeting, announcing that the expected date for the long-awaited spray pad to go to bid was June 19. The board's eventual goal is to have the spray pad up and running by Labor Day weekend. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints she explained that the ADA-approved portion of the playground would be filled in with the foam flooring they had been interested in using, while the areas beneath the swings and other areas will continue to be filled with standard bark chips.

Councilor Miles informed attendees that she had recently attended a Broadband Listening Session meant to call attention to the internet needs of rural communities. Miles noted that she and her husband were the only individuals from Josephine County in attendance, but mentioned that several residents of the Applegate area had attended to voice their concerns.

When the time came for the public hearing regarding the library renovation, contract planner Rowan Fairfield began by giving a brief presentation that served to reassure the council that the renovations fell well within the parameters of all relevant city codes. With that said, there was a small hitch in the plans related to trash and parking.

SEE COUNCIL ON A-9