

# Toy guns become safety issue

*Police dealing with increase in replicas of some firearms*

**By Emily Mentzer**  
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — More and more law officers are encountering people armed with replica guns.

Toy guns don't always look like the Daisy Red Ryder BB guns of old these days.

It used to be standard for toy guns to have an orange tip, making them easily identifiable as fake. But people are removing that tip, or buying replicas never made with the identifier, said Dallas Police Department Lt. Jerry Mott.

"The replicas we're seeing are not manufactured with the (orange) tip," Mott said. "We're not seeing it."

While the toys fire a BB or pellet and not a bullet, officers won't know that until someone shoots him or her with it. Many of the replicas have the same weight and feel of a real gun, too.

"It's horrible because we can't tell the difference, usually," Mott said.

Dallas Police encounter people of all ages carrying these fake guns, from children playing games to adults who are prohibited from carrying real firearms, Mott said.

"We're finding them on people doing criminal acts, or we're finding them on children who are playing," he said.

Some adults carry them for intimidation, he added.

"It's very common to see



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

**Lt. Jerry Mott holds two weapons — one real, one fake. The one in his right hand is real. The replica gun in his left hand was confiscated as evidence in a crime.**

these with drug dealers," Mott said.

In Monmouth, officers had an incident involving a fake gun a few months ago, Sgt. Isaiah Haines said.

"How we handle these incidents varies based on the situation," Haines said. "The issue with 'fake' guns is the fact that we generally do not know they are fake until the situation has de-escalated. With that said, the individual deploying the 'fake' gun could expect to be met by the same level of force to what the officer perceives they are facing."

In other words, fake or real, if someone pulls out a weapon and points it at an officer or another person, an officer will prepare to shoot.

"If an adult reaches for it (a replica firearm), they're usually challenged at gunpoint," Mott said. "We usually get compliance. They know they're not going to win a gunfight with a police officer (using a fake gun)."

Independence Police Lt. Rick Igou said it is difficult to distinguish real versus fake even when looking at these guns in normal lighting and under non-threatening circumstances.

"Once you compound the problem in darkness or with a person who is being uncooperative, it becomes more challenging," he said.

Independence Police Chief Bob Mason recalled an occasion he had many years ago with a fake gun.

"I came close to shooting a young man who was reported as being armed," he said. "He chose to draw that replica weapon out of his waist when confronted by police. It was impactful enough on me that it stays with me today."

Unless the replica is used to commit a crime, it cannot be confiscated, Mott said. In fact, it is not illegal to carry a real firearm openly in Oregon. Cities may have ordinances regarding carrying of weapons in parks and other government buildings, such as the courthouse.

"We have a city ordinance against discharging them in the city, but to just carry them, there's no violation of the law there," Mott said.

# Independence fee debate continuing

**By Emily Mentzer**  
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — More citizens attended the Jan. 13 Independence City Council meeting with water complaints, ranging from rates to base fees to stormwater fees.

Water and sewer rates had been on the tentative agenda for this meeting, but City Manager David Clyne said he had to move the topic to the 7:30 a.m. Tuesday meeting.

Clyne said key people were on vacation or had medical emergencies and weren't available to compile the answers requested on time for the Jan. 13 meeting.

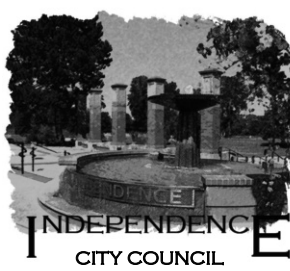
The issue first came up during a December council meeting, when Victoria Kruljac said she didn't think it was fair to pay nearly \$85 a month in base charges for sewer and water on an empty house.

At the Jan. 13 meeting, she said moving the water topic to the morning meeting at the last minute — she said she wasn't notified of the change until Jan. 7 — was a ploy to lower attendance.

"It's inconsiderate and it feels like game playing for you to make this a 7:30 a.m. meeting that most people can't or won't attend," she said.

Gary Brown said he leases property at the Independence Airport and hasn't been charged any stormwater fees until now. He received a bill for \$200 from the Oregon Department of Aviation for his two buildings located at the airport.

"The city of Independence is charging them, and now they are charging us



for surface water dispersment," Brown said.

Brown said the property he leases floods frequently, so doesn't feel storm drainage services are being provided.

"What gives me heartburn is if this is a service, and the service is not being provided, that doesn't seem fair."

Community Development Director Mike Danko said stormwater fees are used to maintain open ditches, culverts, catch basins and underground pipes. The fees also pay for street sweeping.

"We consider the impervious areas at the airport to be similar to Central Plaza or any of the large apartment complexes," he said. "During heavy storm events, water runs away from these sites via city-maintained conveyance systems."

He said every homeowner pays a stormwater fee each month as part of his or her utility bill.

"The fee has been in place for a decade or so," Danko said. "We are only now catching up to areas that were not paying their share, like the hangers at the airport."

Clyne said he will have the city's rate consultant from Economic and Financial Analysis present at the Jan. 27 meeting to help address any further questions on the rates and fee structure.

# Community outreach event slated

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The fourth Polk Community Connect, an outreach event assisting those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, will take place in Dallas on Jan. 28.

The free annual event is being held at a new location this year, Valley Life Center, 1795 SE Miller Ave. It will run from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Coordinated through a

## Need Assistance?

**What:** Polk Community Connect.  
**When:** Wednesday, Jan. 28, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
**Where:** Valley Life Center, 1795 SE Miller Ave., Dallas.  
**Of note:** Those interested in serving as a provider should contact Michelle Bornfleth at 503-623-9664, ext. 2457. Volunteers are always welcome and can call 971-599-3845 or send an email to polkconnectvolunteers@gmail.com.  
**For more information:** Herm Boes, 503-569-9364; www.co.polk.or.us/fco/si/pol-k-community-connect-0.

partnership between Polk County Family & Community Outreach and the Salem Leadership Foundation, Polk Community Connect will offer dental care, basic

health screenings, pet care, bike repair, haircuts, clothing and, to those who arrive early, backpacks and camping items.

Resource agencies, including those providing children and youth services, job assistance, housing, veterans' services, education information, mental health, and information about other potential benefits, also will be on hand to offer assistance.

Co-coordinator Michelle Bornfleth said approximately 300 people were served through last year's event. This year, organizers have been focusing more on getting the word out about the resources and services available at the event.

"We are hoping for more (people to attend) because we have been doing more outreach this year," Bornfleth said.

Free hot meals provided by James2 Community Kitchen and free transportation to and from Valley Life Center is available.

Free bus passes through Cherriots and CARTS are available before and at the event. For those communities not served by Cherriots, free shuttles will offer rides every hour starting with pickup times at 7:30 a.m. and the last departure from the event at 4 p.m. Pickup locations are: Independence — Roth's, 1401 Monmouth St.; Falls City — Falls City Community Center, 320 N. Main St.; and West Salem — United Methodist Church, 1219 Third St. NW.

**West Valley Housing Authority** will hold their **Work Session Meeting on Wednesday January 28, 2015 beginning at 11:30 a.m. at 204 SW Walnut in Dallas, Oregon. The Regular Meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 28, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at 204 SW Walnut in Dallas, Oregon. An Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660 will be held immediately following the Regular Meeting.**

**Agenda** for the meeting is posted on the Housing Authority website at [www.wvpha.org](http://www.wvpha.org). The location for the meeting is handicapped accessible. Please advise the West Valley Housing Authority if you need any special accommodations to attend the meeting. **For information, please call 503-623-8387, TDD 1-800-735-2900.**



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**Sudoku**  
Difficulty: ★★★★★

5								2
	7		6	5				8
					3	7	6	
		8		2			1	
			7				4	
			3			1		8
	6	2	4					
8				2	6			3
7								6

**How to do Sudoku**  
Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row, and three-by-three square. See example above.

4	3	2	8	1	6	7	5	9
5	6	9	7	3	4	8	1	2
1	7	8	9	5	2	4	6	3
3	4	7	2	8	5	6	9	1
2	1	6	7	4	9	3	8	5
9	8	5	1	6	3	2	7	4
7	9	1	4	3	8	5	2	6
8	5	3	6	2	1	7	4	9
6	2	4	5	9	7	1	3	8

Row →  
Three-by-three square →  
Column ↑

The Christian Science Monitor

**MONEY TALKS**

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