

Grants Pass

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JULIE ANDERSON / Daily Courier

The future of Josephine County Commissioner Chris Barnett (left) as a member of the Board of Commissioners is now in the hands of county voters, who are deciding on whether or not to recall Barnett in a Jan. 6 election. Commissioner Ron Smith (right) is currently clashing with Barnett over the process of replacing former Commissioner Andreas Blech, who resigned instead of proceeding to a recall election.

Barnett's fate in hands of voters

He could be 2nd commissioner ousted in 13 months

By Chrissy Ewald
of the Daily Courier

For the second time in a little over a year, Josephine County voters are being asked to recall a county commissioner from office. A year ago, Commissioner John West was in the spotlight. Voters who were fed up with culture-war attacks on the Josephine Community Library and the OSU Extension Service decisively ousted West from office, 62% to 37%. Now voters are once again being asked to give the hook to a member of the county Board of Commissioners, this time Chris Barnett. Ballots are arriving in the mail and must be deposited in an election drop box by 8 p.m. Jan. 6 or postmarked by the same date. A colleague on the board, appointed Commissioner Andreas Blech, resigned Dec. 5 rather than fight recall. Barnett said in a phone call Thursday he is more optimistic about his chances.

"I'm very confident that the people who voted me in not even a year ago are going to understand that this is baseless and not what the term 'recall' should be," he said. "A recall is for offenses that really mean you're not doing your job. And I've done the total opposite of that." A real estate agent and military veteran known for his use of the moniker "Commander" during his years as a local radio personality, Barnett was supported by West and the Josephine County Republican Party, which splintered apart in November amid complaints about the performance of its candidates who were elected to county office and the Grants Pass City Council. Barnett said he is the victim of "politics" and that he's worked throughout the year to build relationships, bring back programs, manage and balance the county budget and improve management of county departments.

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Oregon DOJ investigation is scrutinizing firings at Rogue Workforce

By Emma Maple
of the Daily Courier

MEDFORD — Several months after the Rogue Workforce Partnership ended the employment of two of its top-ranking executives, the reason for the decision is becoming clear. The organization's former CEO Heather Stafford is tied to a state Department of Justice inquiry that is ongoing into a separate nonprofit that the Rogue Workforce Partnership has worked with, according to board chair Brent Kell. The Department of Justice is looking into EncodeXP, a technology nonprofit, regarding its potentially fraudulent use of a person's identity while requesting a grant and how the grant funds were used by the organization, Kell said. EncodeXP has never filed a Form 990, an IRS form that lays out a nonprofit's activities, finances, governance and tax compliance. A public records request filed by the Daily Courier asking for information related to the Department of Justice's inquiry associated with Stafford was denied as being exempt from disclosure. Grounds for nondisclosure included pending litigation and attorney-client privilege.

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Gate is closing Monday for Bear Camp Road's winter hibernation

Daily Courier

The Bureau of Land Management announced Friday it is closing the gate located on Bear Camp Road on Monday. Due to safety issues caused annually by winter weather, the gate will remain closed until the snow clears up in spring. The gate is located on Galice Access Road about 3 miles up from Galice Road. Bear Camp Road is a winding, mountainous road that connects the middle Rogue River to the lower Rogue near Agness. It is a remote but important recreation route. Two people have died on or near the road in recent decades, one man in 1994 and another in 2006. Both died after being stranded in snowy conditions. At its highest point near milepost 18, Bear Camp Road reaches 5,000 feet in elevation, well above the snow line. It is annually cleared of snow before Memorial Day to accommodate rafters and other recreationists. Redwood Highway, also known as Highway 199, is the recommended alternate route for travel to Gold Beach and the coast. Travelers can take the Peavine-Serpentine Springs route to connect to Bear Camp Road, but the BLM and U.S. Forest Service strongly advise against it.

IV Hope Village transitional housing site is filling tiny homes with grateful residents



Photos by JULIE ANDERSON / Daily Courier

Laura Mancuso, executive director of I.V. Living Solutions, stands near the tiny homes inside I.V. Hope Village, a transitional housing community located in Cave Junction. Sixteen residents currently live at the village.

By Chrissy Ewald
of the Daily Courier

CAVE JUNCTION — Four months into his time at I.V. Hope Village in Cave Junction, Jeff Dickerson doesn't have any complaints. "It's like the Hilton," he said of the tiny house village, located at the intersection of Schumacher Street and Kerby Avenue. "I was the third one in. And by chance I got in — I mean, it was unexpected. I was on the street for a long time." Dickerson is one of 16 residents of the village, a transitional housing project that is designed to help people exit homelessness. Eight brightly colored duplexes, each containing two units that measure 10 feet by 10 feet, were constructed on-site by All Construction Elements, based in Cave Junction. A shared-use building, built on-site by the same company, features a living room, dining room, kitchen, two bathrooms, a laundry room with coin-operated machines, a walk-in fridge, and two offices for a case manager and program assistants. Staff from other organizations and agencies that help people exit homelessness also use those offices when they visit the site. The community is fenced and always closed to outsiders. For residents,



I.V. Hope Village resident Jeff Dickerson says he is very happy to be off the streets and in the transitional housing community located in Cave Junction. "I was the third one in," Dickerson says. "And by chance I got in — I mean, it was unexpected. I was on the street for a long time."

dents, the gates are locked from curfew at 10 p.m. until 6 a.m., and quiet hours are observed from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. A staffer stays in the village at night to protect the residents, make sure the gate is closed, and also provide support and put on events like movie nights. Dickerson said Hope Village staff helped him complete the paperwork to apply for permanent housing, which he hopes to enter soon. "I think I'm real close," he said. "I'm on the list for a forever home."

The places he is looking at are friendly for people with disabilities; Dickerson has neuropathy and had a brain aneurysm in 2006 that ended his career in construction and landscaping. The effects it has had on him are "weird," he said, "but I've learned to live with it." Dickerson, who has lived around the Illinois Valley and Grants Pass since he was 1, spent time living in the tent encampments in downtown Grants Pass, which he said weren't a great situation. "I don't like drugs, and they're just filled with drugs," he said. I.V. Hope Village is what's called a "low-barrier" shelter, but residents are not allowed to use drugs or alcohol on the site, and they are encouraged to participate in substance abuse treatment if needed. Dickerson was given a referral to I.V. Hope Village by MINT, a social services provider in Grants Pass. "They helped me a lot," he said. "They're good people." One I.V. Hope Village resident has already been able to find a job and stable housing in California, said Laura Mancuso, executive director of I.V. Living Solutions, the nonprofit organization behind I.V. Hope Village.

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