

# Ukiah Community Newsletter

November 2011 Volume 1, Issue 3

## Ukiah Sounds Off on Post Office



Postal Service Manager Mike McGuire encouraged Ukiah residents to keep writing letters in support of the Post Office.

More than 50 Ukiah residents packed the Senior Center on October 26 to voice concerns about possible closure of the Ukiah Post Office.

Mike McGuire from the Postal Service's Portland office said that the decision will be made in Washington, D.C.

Mail would still be delivered in Ukiah at cluster mailboxes, but other services would be moved to Pilot Rock.

The Postal Service considers four criteria when deciding to close a Post Office: the effect on the community, the effect on the facility employees, laws requiring the Postal Service to provide effective and regular services to rural areas and economic savings. McGuire encouraged residents to address these criteria in their letters.

"Be fair, be logical and take the emotion out of it. Tell them, don't close our post office because this is what will happen, this is how it will af-

fect me," McGuire said.

Many of the comments concerned the 35 miles to Pilot Rock and the dangers of winter driving.

Could a letter-writing campaign could really keep the Ukiah Post Office open?

"All I know is, if you don't do anything your chances are a lot less. Everything you've said is exactly what we need to hear," McGuire said.

### Where to Write

United States Postal Service  
Attn: Stephanie Wood  
PO Box 4829  
Portland, OR 97208

Senator Jeff Merkley  
310 SE Second Street, Suite 105  
Pendleton, OR 97802

Senator Ron Wyden  
Sac Annex Building  
105 Fir Street  
La Grande, OR 97850

Comment forms are available at the Ukiah Post Office.

## Ukiah Fire Burns 97 Acres

On Oct. 8 a debris fire near Ron Fagg's house outside the city limits escaped and burned 97 acres north of Ukiah.

Bonnie and Walt Buhl saw the smoke heading toward their property. Walt and Ron set out with shovels while Bonnie drove into town to round up help, especially anyone with an ATV.

Dozens responded. Rick Ice-nogle put in fireline on his property with his backhoe, while Butch Fritz and his family set up sprinklers at the Buhls' house. A group of international students from the school dorm worked at the Christian ranch. Both 1-A Construction and Phil Hofbauer brought bulldozers.

Others who responded include Jim, Brian and Brandon Gill, Chris and Larry Helberg, Ed Farren, Greg Popescu, Walt and Danny Pettigrew, Pat Picard, Kenny Gilliland, Wyatt Alford, Casey Levi, Kevin Burr, Tyler Lynch, Terrence Kindness and Tiffany Edmonds.

"They did a good job of helping corral the fire and limit it's spread until firefighting resources could arrive," said Dennis Perilli, ODF Pendleton Unit Forester.

With the Ukiah ODF crew off that day it took an hour for engines to arrive from Pendleton and La Grande. The Pilot Rock Rural Fire Protection District sent an engine and water tender.

The fire burned through pasture and an open pine stand. "It stayed on the ground, more like an underburn," Perilli said.

**Meetings and Events**

Ukiah City Council meets in the Senior Center at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month.  
 Ukiah School Board meets in the school at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday or Thursday of the month.  
 Stitch and Chatter Quilters meet in the Presbyterian Church on Wednesdays and Saturdays.  
 Lunch is served at the Senior Center every Friday at 11:30 a.m.  
 The Ukiah Food Pantry is open at the Presbyterian Church from 12:20 to 2 p.m. on the Friday following the fourth Tuesday of the month.

**November Senior Lunch Menu**

Nov. 4--Oven fried chicken, scalloped potatoes, green beans, fruit mix, coconut cream pie.  
 Nov. 11--Sausage links, gravy over biscuits, hash browns, stewed tomatoes, cake.  
 Nov. 18--Turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, jello, cranberries, olives, rolls, pumpkin pie.  
 Nov. 25--No dinner.

Suggested donation - Seniors \$3.00  
 all others must pay \$6.00

**Numbers to Know**

Ukiah Library 541-427-3735  
 Ukiah Post Office 541-427-3332  
 Ukiah School 541-427-3731  
 Ukiah Senior Center 541-427-3012  
 North Fork John Day Ranger Station 541-427-3231  
 Oregon State Police 541-276-2121  
 Umatilla County Sheriff's Office 541-966-3650  
 To report a wildfire 911



Ukiah elementary students joined the Inland Northwest Chorale in singing "All Through the Night" at the concert on October 13. Photo by Laura Orr.

**School Board News**

Ukiah students traveled to Long Creek for that school's homecoming game and dance on October 14. The high school biology class joined the Forest Service for a field trip to plant and fence native shrubs in riparian areas on October 25.

The North Fork John Day Watershed Council and Ukiah School plan to work together on an aspen management project on private land near town. Students will collect data and learn about GPS during field trips funded by the council.

T.C. Conner will coach both girls' and boys' basketball again this year.

**City Council Notes**

The City of Ukiah charges residential customers \$18 per month for sewer, but business charges are all over the map. During its October meeting the city council reviewed the rates and decided a change is needed.

New rates will be proposed and possibly adopted at the November meeting.

In other business, the council accepted a plaque from City/ County Insurance noting 30 years of membership and \$400 for the Senior Center in memory of Donald Shanafelt.

**City of Ukiah**

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Carol Picard, Mayor, and Council Members Clint Barber, Rose Gatens, Linda Kerr and Randy Scarlett.

The Ukiah Community Newsletter is published monthly by the City of Ukiah. Suggestions, comments, complaints, upcoming events? Contact Lee Farren at 541-427-3047 or [leefarren@centurytel.net](mailto:leefarren@centurytel.net). Ads are \$30 and \$15. To place an ad--or receive a paper copy of the newsletter-- contact Linda Kerr at 541-427-3109 or [happyplane22@hotmail.com](mailto:happyplane22@hotmail.com).

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For more information call  
 Pastor Ray Contreras  
 541-427-3720





"It's so cool to me as the operator to finally see some success, says Public Works Director Rick Icenogle

In 2006, after years of hunting in the Ukiah area, Rick Icenogle bought a place north of town. In 2009 he retired as a building official in Hillsboro and split his time between the valley and Ukiah.

In 2010 he moved here full time. But he knew retirement wasn't in the cards quite yet.

In February 2010 the Ukiah City Council asked him to serve as backup for Clint Barber, the

## Fixing Things for the City

city's Public Works Director. Rick took the job when Clint retired.

Rick earned an A.S. in Civil Engineers from Mt. Hood Community College in 1972 and went right to work as a building inspector in the Portland area. Last year he attended the Eastern Oregon Short School for water and wastewater operators.

"With 36 years in charge of plumbing, building, mechanical, plan review, zoning and engineering issues, I had an overview, just not with the hands on," Rick says.

He's been busy every since.

"I found a failed infrastructure that needed immediate attention. I snapped into action with the aid of the council. We started with an engineering summary, I worked off the cheat sheet they gave me, and I started in fixing."

The sewer system has been Rick's main focus. He repaired the wheel line that uses treated lagoon water for irrigation and lowered the water level in the finishing pond to 1 foot 6 inches. Winter inflow brought it back up, but still below the system's seven foot maximum.

"Our design manual says to empty it every year to make room for winter and spring inflow," Rick says. "We're on target now with the new pumps and the rebuilt wheel line."

Massive inflows during high runoff are still a major problem.

"We go from 50,000 gallons of effluent a day to a flow of 500,000 gallons," Rick says. The high volume overworks the pumps at the sewer lift station and threatens to overflow the treatment lagoons, which could lead to a DEQ violation.

"That's why it's so important to stop the inflow," Rick says.

"We need to clean and camera the pipes so we can see where these holes are."

The city's insurance, he adds, is based in part on maintaining the sewer and water systems.

Why would someone retire, move to a new place and start another career?

"I like helping people," Rick says. "It's a challenge. I came from a population of 100,000 and a staff of 25, and now I'm a crew of one. I'd like to think I'm making some progress on fixing things."

## School Supplies Donated

For the past two years state employee Paula Taylor and her co-workers at the Department of Revenue have donated school supplies to Ukiah School, giving everything from backpacks to calculators to copy paper and markers.

The Taylors own a cabin near Ukiah where they spend their

free time. "I love it, and the little community," Paula says.

During the employee Back to School drive Paula's unit donated supplies to schools in Falls City and Ukiah.

Money is raised by bake sales, hot dog feeds and donation boxes. No state money is used.

"The smaller schools sometimes are left out of the loop," Paula says. "The employees have a heart for sharing and children are our target."



Elementary students Alea Douglas, Tesla Crown and Elisabeth Gulden with some of the supplies donated to Ukiah School by employees at the Oregon Department of Revenue.



While the late spring was hard on elk in the Blue Mountains, the reward was excellent summering conditions with healthy animals. Photo by Sheryl Doss.

**Elk Season Starts Oct. 26**

Elk numbers have been down in the Ukiah and Heppner units, says ODFW Wildlife Biologist Mark Kirsch, and research shows cougars are the cause.

"Calf ratios are really low. Half those calves are this year's spikes," Kirsch said.

ODFW removed cougars from the Heppner Unit in 2006-2009 and the calf ratio doubled. The agency started the same process in the Ukiah Unit in 2009, removing 89 cats so far out of an estimated resident popula-

tion of 105. However, Kirsch guesses that an additional 65 cougars follow wintering elk into the area.

"As of today we have not yet seen a jump in the calf ratio. It's a bit tough in Ukiah when it comes to spike hunting, and that's what most of the tags are," Kirsch says.

Spike hunters can expect a 10 to 15 percent success rate. Branch bulls hunters may do better because mature bull elk are less vulnerable to predation and "certainly not something a lion will pick on," Kirsch said.

**City May Challenge 2011  
Census Results**

The 2010 census counted 185 people in Ukiah, down 70 from the census in 2000. The city auditor estimates the lower count will cost the city \$4500 a year in decreased State of Oregon shared revenue.

The city is challenging the population number by conducting its own survey. In November City Recorder Donna Neumann and city council member Linda Kerr will go door-to-door asking how many people live in each house. They will ask only for the number of residents.

The information will be sent to Portland State University Population Research Center for verification. If the new count is higher, the city will then appeal to the U.S. Census Bureau.



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