

900 COURT ST NE STE H372 SALEM OR 97301-4054

75 cents

Weather



It could get wet

Rain is in Sunday's forecast, but things should dry out in the next day or two. Page 2A.

Sunday's high 58 Monday's high 65

What's inside

Colon care

Monday's colon health awareness fair is aimed to help people feel more at ease and informed about colonoscopies.



Page 7A

Empty-handed



The North Valley High boys' basketball team's season ended without a state trophy on Friday as the Knights were eliminated from the Class 4A state tournament.

SPORTS / Page 1B



Ultimate herbs

An herb specialist says it's not hard to fill your own medicine chest for most common problems — not to mention a kitchen spice rack — from your garden.

Page 4B



Staying 'True'

Barnstormers' new production of Sam Shepard's modern hit 'True West' provides an intense show that highlights a dynamic duo of actors.

ENTERTAINMENT / Page 6B

What's online

Web highlights

Videos, photo galleries, even a Fun Finder. There's always plenty going on at ...

thedailycourier.com

A look ahead

Tasty events

Spring is the season for special events that center on Rogue Valley wines, brews and food. Several are coming up soon.



TIMOTHY BULLARD/Daily Courier

Grants Pass Public Safety Chief Bill Landis stands in front a cell in the now defunct city jail. The city has rented jail beds from the county the past two years and may be faced with a shortage of county jail beds again if a levy in May fails. City officials say renovating the old jail would be too expensive. Council President Dan DeYoung said all other options are on the table if the levy fails, but finding money will be a challenge.

Oregon cities deal with jail bed shortage

Some places, tired of repeat offenders, have built new jails to address the problem while local officials cross their fingers that May's safety levy will pass

By Jim Moore of the Daily Courier

City officials, fed up with repeat offenders committing the same crimes with impunity because they know they won't go to jail due to budget cuts, decide to take action.

Sound familiar? That certainly describes Grants Pass in 2013 and 2014, when the City Council voted to spend roughly \$1 million each fiscal year to lease beds from financially-challenged Josephine County Jail.

But it also describes the situations in the Oregon cities of Springfield, Lebanon and Florence, which in recent years took more permanent steps to address similar problems.

In January 2010, Springfield opened a sparkling new facility with 100 beds, the state's largest municipal jail. The jail is part of a center that houses the police department, a municipal court and a city prosecutor.

It was financed by a \$28.65 million bond approved by voters in 2004.

Meanwhile, voters in Lebanon approved a bond measure in November 2006 that provided \$19.97 million for new police and library facilities. A 25,000-square-foot public safety facility opened in 2009. It houses the police department, communications, a court and a 12-bed jail. And in 2008, the Florence City Council



According to the DCI engineers website, the Springfield Justice Center is 104,578 square feet, has room for 100 jail beds, a police station, municipal court and is designed for 1.5 times the seismic forces associated with normal buildings to reflect the need for continued operation after a major earthquake. Detention cells were pre-fabricated units that were installed on-site. The building and related improvements was paid for with \$28.65 million of general obligation bonds.

voted to convert an existing 18-bed temporary lockup facility into a full-fledged jail.

Most cities in Oregon do not have municipal jails, preferring instead to rely on county lockups. So what compelled voters in Springfield and Lebanon to increase

their taxes?

Niel Laudati, a spokesman for the city of Springfield, said there were two influential factors.

Turn to JAIL BEDS, Page 6A

Special health care enrollment period begins Sunday

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Several million people hit with new federal fines for going without health insurance will get a second chance to sign up starting Sunday, and that could ease the sting of rising penalties for being uninsured.

But as the enrollment window reopens, it's unclear how many know about the time-limited opportunity, let alone will

take advantage of it.

Fines payable to the IRS are the stick behind the offer of taxpayer-subsidized private insurance under President Barack Obama's health care law. Virtually everyone in the country is now required to have coverage through an employer or a government program, or by buying individual policies. This is the first year fines are being collected from uninsured people the government deems able to afford coverage. Tax preparation company H&R Block

says the penalty averages about \$170 among its affected customers. It usually is deducted from a person's tax refund.

Roughly 4 million people are expected to pay fines. Many more will qualify for exemptions.

Penalties for being uninsured are going up this year, to a minimum of \$325 for the full 12 months. That's a significant increase from the \$95 minimum in 2014.

The new sign-up opportunity runs through April 30. To qualify, individuals

have to certify to the state that they meet certain conditions.

• They did not know they were legally required to have coverage until after open enrollment ended Feb. 15.

• They owed a penalty for being uninsured in 2014.

Those requirements apply to states served by HealthCare.gov website. Other states are not refundable.

Sheriff's Office Man who tire irons a car from s vehicle st

CAVE JUNCT iron that came stolen vehicle be officers on Friday the windshield of police car, acc Josephine Cou Office.

As deputies pu believed to be driv man, he threw t other items. One struck patrol car's the driver's side, news release from Office. The impac ball-sized marks o the windshield.

The fleeing dr drove into a rest a south of the Cal and bailed out, r woods and down ment. He wasn't located.

The Sheriff's Office said he was Mitchell Wayne Thorn-ton, 28.

According to the news release, the chase began around 6:25 p.m. Watkins Street Avenue in Cave ing a tip from watch member. arrived, Thorn eventually head Redwood Highw

During the p nearly crashed according to e transmissions d Oregon State P nia Highway Pa en route when into the rest an lawn in the pro into a ravine.

According t statement, it w deputies to purs

A helicopter r sent to the sce celled. Del Nort Office assisted v

Thornton is c tall and weighi has brown hair A photograph o ed by the Sheri now appears c nian than he lo which was take

In the last se ton has been c three felony ca in a fourth, a County. In 2011, of vehicle theft 2012 he was co sion of metha also fled from p lessly and resi 2012 case. He is possession case

Anyone w asked to call th at 541-474-5123.

Budget cuts hurting domestic violence vic

Oil is on its way down, but will gasoline prices follow?

By Jonathan Fahey
AP Energy Writer

NEW YORK — The price of oil is tumbling again, rattling an already-shaken oil industry and heralding lower prices for consumers.

The price of oil fell 10 percent this week, approaching its lowest price in six years. Many expect it to fall further in the coming weeks because supplies are rising and the summer driving season is still months away.

The lower crude prices will mean gasoline prices will slide lower in the coming weeks, and many drivers will likely pay under \$2 a gallon in the summertime for the first time since 2004.

Oil prices had appeared to stabilize in a range nearly 15 percent higher than the depths they had reached in late January. But on Friday the International Energy Agency called a recent rise in oil prices a “head fake” and a “facade of stability.”

“The rebalancing (of supply and demand) triggered by the price collapse has yet to run its course,” the agency wrote in its monthly oil market report.

On Friday, oil fell \$2.21, or 5 percent, to \$44.84 a barrel, within 40 cents of its low for the year of \$44.45. Here’s what’s behind the recent drop, and what else to look out for in the coming months.

• **FLOOD OF OIL.** Oil has collapsed from over \$100 because rising global

supplies — especially in the U.S. — outpaced weak demand. The increase in U.S. production last year was the third-biggest one-year increase in the history of the global oil industry, according to BP.

That has pushed oil levels in storage to their highest ever in the U.S. and far higher than normal around the world. Analysts expect supplies to continue to build, forcing prices gradually lower, until refiners ramp up to make gasoline for the summer driving season.

• **WHAT ABOUT MY GAS PRICE?** Gasoline prices rise nearly every year around this time. This year has been no different. After reaching a low of \$2.03 a gallon in late January, the national

average retail price rose every day for more than a month, reaching \$2.46 on March 7, according to AAA.

But the spring surge is likely over, according to Tom Kloza, chief oil analyst at the Oil Price Information Service. The national average has slipped lower every day for the past week, falling to \$2.44 on Friday, and Kloza expects it to fall the rest of March and April.

The national average won’t fall all the way to its January low, Kloza said, in part because refiners must still switch to more expensive summer blends of gasoline to meet clean air standards. But he expects drivers in much of the nation, especially in the

South, to be paying less than \$2 a gallon at times this spring and summer.

• **WHAT WILL PRODUCERS DO?** Low prices have forced oil companies to slash spending on new exploration and production, and forced oil service companies facing a slowdown in drilling to lay off thousands of workers.

When drillers stop sinking new wells into the ground, production begins to fall and prices rise. The number of rigs operating in the U.S. fell for the 14th straight week to their lowest since March of 2011, the oil services company Baker Hughes reported Friday.

But it is still unclear whether producers in the U.S. have cut back enough to help rebalance supply and demand.

Jail beds From Page 1A



LAUDATI

One was a lack of space at the Lane County Jail, which led to continual arrests and releases. “That happened over and over again,” Laudati said.

And the second reason? “We also saw a lot of crime downtown. People got tired of it,” Laudati added.

Charlie Conrad, a research coordinator for the League of Oregon Cities, is a former Springfield police officer who worked there before and after the jail was built.

“Lane County was kicking everybody out (of jail),” Conrad said.

Even though Lane County voters passed a public safety levy in 2013 for about \$67 million that included money for more beds at the county jail, Conrad believes Springfield residents would have approved the bond measure even if the countywide levy had already passed.



CONRAD

“The public does not trust the county at all,” Conrad said.

The fact that Lane County can now house more of Springfield’s criminals, thus meaning more empty beds in Springfield, is not a negative, according to Laudati.

“The plan was always to have more space than we needed so we could have space to rent to bring in revenue,” Laudati said. In fact, Springfield rents jail space to the city of Eugene, he said.

Springfield voters renewed the jail’s operating levy in 2008 and 2012 and Laudati expects that trend to continue.

“We found the percentage it has passed by has increased each year,” Laudati said.

The jail in Linn County, where Lebanon is located, faced the budget shortfalls similar to Josephine and Lane counties. Not surprisingly, city residents also wearied of repeat offenders.

“Misdemeanor crimes were being cited and released,” Lebanon Police Chief Frank Stevenson. “When they’re committing crimes in your town, it’s nice to be able to hold them.”

To solve the problem, frustrated city voters approved a bond measure for the library and police facilities.

“ Misdemeanor crimes were being cited and released. When they’re committing crimes in your town, it’s nice to be able to hold them.”

Frank Stevenson
Lebanon police chief



FOWLER

Suffice it to say, city officials are keeping a close eye on the May election.

“There’s a lot hinging on this thing,” City Council President Dan DeYoung said.

The proposed levy would increase jail capacity, increase sheriff’s patrols and reopen the Juvenile Justice Center. Voters will be asked to approve a five-year property tax of \$1.40 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

City officials aren’t discussing any strategy until after the election.

“We are in a holding pattern until after May,” Mayor Darin Fowler said.

DeYoung said that when a dialogue is opened “all things are on the table.”

What about dusting off a decommissioned jail that is in the county-owned building that houses the Grants Pass Public Safety administration offices?

“The old one isn’t adequate,” City Manager Aaron Cubic said. “It can’t meet today’s requirements. It’s amazing what kind of rights people in jail have now.”

Cubic also said that any attempt to utilize the old facility is fraught with liabilities and risk. His comments were echoed by Public Safety Director Bill Landis, who said potential financial perils like those can lead to collateral costs.

“Our insurance carrier really looks at things like that and I don’t think it’s interested in us doing that,” Landis said.

If the city can’t use the old jail, what about building its own?

Cubic said he doesn’t see any scenario for Grants Pass to build a jail without passing a levy of its own.

Even if the city passed its own levy, it would be years, based on the experiences of Springfield and Lebanon, before a new facility could be built.

Life will be a lot easier for the Grants Pass City Council if the levy passes.

“The levy, as it’s being proposed, would provide us with the jail services we’re receiving today,” Cubic said.

Reach reporter Jim Moore at 541-474-3721 or jmoore@thedailycourier.com

Iowa woman: Stomach pains led to surprise birth in shower

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — A Des Moines woman stepped into the shower this week to help ease the discomfort of stomach pains. She emerged holding a newborn.

Brittany Young, 24, told the Des Moines Register that she knew she was pregnant and had recurring stomach pains on Wednesday. Turns out, Young may have misunderstood a hospital worker in December. Instead of being 12 weeks pregnant then as Young believed, she had 12 weeks left.

“I got in the shower, not even five minutes after that, I was like, my stomach is still hurting. Not even five seconds (later), I had to push,” Young said. Soon after, her daughter, Miracle, arrived, weighing 6 pounds, 8 ounces.

“This baby’s eyes were open; she was just sitting there staring at me,” Young said. “She didn’t cry or anything. I was in shock. I was like, there’s a baby here.”

Dr. Michael Cardwell at Mercy Medical Center said women with a medical condition called precipitous labor means contractions can start a couple hours before delivery. Cardwell didn’t personally treat Young, who has had three other children, but said that women who are already mothers can go into labor quickly.

Victims From Page 1A