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"Complementary currency"
keeps more money in
local businesses.
backpage



LAND TIDINGS

WEDNESDAY | February 8, 2012

Serving southern Jackson County since 1876

An edition of the Mail Tribune 75 cents

on will stop in Ashland

Sept. 12-13

on Tuesday
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d to welcoming
ne cyclists," said

Katharine Flanagan, Visitor and Convention Bureau and Marketing Director for the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. "For some, it may be their first time to Ashland. We are excited to build upon our cultural amenities and continue to put Ashland on the map for outdoor adventures."

Registration was scheduled to

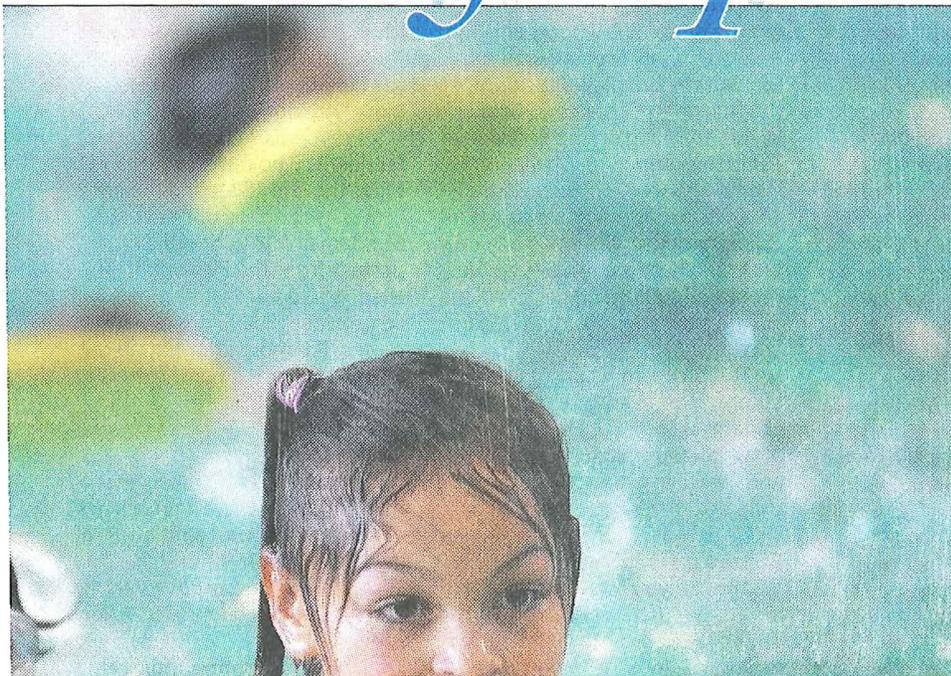
open at 9 p.m. on Tuesday for Cycle Oregon. The first 2,200 cyclists to sign up will be able to join the tour. Last year, the Cycle Oregon ride sold out, according to officials with the event.

When cyclists arrive in Ashland, they will stay on the Southern Oregon University campus, Chamber of Commerce officials said.

The cyclists traditionally have a tent city, although some choose to have more leisurely stays in hotels and bed and breakfast inns. In past years when Cycle Oregon has stopped at universities, some cyclists have also spent nights in dormitory rooms.

SEE CYCLE ON PAGE A5

sh safely



Rekindled burn sends smoke into Ashland

High winds helped bring controlled fire back to life

Sam Wheeler
Ashland Daily Tidings

Smoke rising from Ashland's watershed early this week was the result of a rekindled prescribed pile-burn on the western flanks of Winburn Ridge.

A cloud of smoke likely will continue rising from the 94-acre unit today, but far less than the amount that billowed from the area on Monday and Tuesday, said Chris Chambers, Ashland Fire & Rescue's forest resource specialist.

...ing from the mother and uncle of her accused killer, William Frank Simmons.

The 15-year-old Ruch teen disappeared on a moonless night on Nov. 6, 1996. Her bleached skull and one tennis shoe were discovered sticking out of the soil when a neighbor of Simmons' was mowing his field in April 2008.

Oregon State Police Criminalist Jeffrey Dovci testified in Jackson County Circuit Court that he and others carefully teased away a dozen years of grasses and weeds that had woven their way around Kaelin's bones as she lay in the pasture.

"As we were pulling the grass away, the bones were sitting right there," Dovci said. "This was a surface skeleton, rather than a buried body."

Also recovered were fragments of

The position of her body and clothing suggested Kaelin had been dragged by her feet, he said.

Simmons is the last known person to see Kaelin alive. The night she disappeared, the two had watched a video together in his camp trailer that sat about 80 feet from where the body was found off Haven Road.

Heather Fearman, an Oregon State police forensic scientist, said the DNA on the tape was badly degraded. But the samples she was able to extract excluded Simmons; his uncle, Don Cheadle; Kaelin's teen boyfriend, Cliff Ruhland; and a friend of Simmons', Ben Sapper.

Jennifer Riedel, another OSP forensic scientist, said marks on the underwire of Kaelin's bra might have been made from a knife or some other

time of the murder.

"I was born and raised on that property," Cheadle said.

Both had trouble remembering the events of the night Kaelin went missing. They also had trouble remembering what they told police in multiple interviews and faltered when answering questions about William Simmons and his knives.

Jackson County District Attorney Mark Huddleston asked Cheadle whether Simmons had knives, and in particular whether he had a "long folding knife."

Cheadle first said he didn't remember, then changed his answer.

"All kids have knives," Cheadle said. "I know he had some kind of a knife."

Huddleston pressed Cheadle about

Smoke

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

South and southeasterly winds topping out at 40 mph re-ignited brush piles initially lit by U.S. Forest Service and Grayback Forestry crews on Jan. 27. As intended, the piles were reduced to a smolder by rain and snow during the week after the burn, but the unexpected winds were enough to fan lasting embers buried inside remaining heavy fuel.

"It's no real threat to anything, just burning up some of the excess fuel that needed to be burning anyway," said Chambers. "But we're concerned about the smoke. ... We'll definitely be reducing the amount of smoke."

Downed logs ignited by nearby piles are also contributing to the smoke, said Virginia Gibbons, Forest Services spokesperson, but they are well within the perimeter of a hand-scratched "checkline" surrounding the unit.

About 50 workers Tuesday mopped up most of what was burning, and will continue working to reduce the amount of smoke coming off the unit today, she said.

"They'll mostly be working to mitigate the smoke," said Gibbons. "The objective isn't to put it completely out."

The burning is part of the

Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project, a partnership among the city of Ashland, the Forest Service, Lomakatsi Restoration Project and The Nature Conservancy. This year, because of stagnant air in December and much of January, AFR is behind on its scheduled amount of acreage to burn, said Chambers.

"We're looking towards more prescribed burning to be going on in the watershed this year," he said. "We just have to wait for that window, where the weather permits it."

The plan is to conduct controlled pile burning on 400 acres in the watershed before next summer, he said. So far, crews have completed about 150 acres, he said.

And burning will continue for the next few years, as Grayback recently was awarded a \$50,000 contract from Lomakatsi to complete up to 1,500 acres of burning in the watershed.

During 2010, Lomakatsi workers thinned and piled many of the units scheduled to be burned.

The objective of the project is to help reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire and improve the overall health of the forest, Chambers said.

Reach reporter Sam Wheeler at 541-499-1470 or email swheeler@dailytidings.com.



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