

FAQ's about the VCLC

Your questions answered...

Why was the learning center built, and what are our contractual agreements?

Twenty years ago, thoughtful members of this rural community envisioned a center for learning and technology that would enable the citizens of Vernonia to better themselves through education and/or gain skills for new jobs. City managers and administrators worked for years, in a sort of tag team style to acquire funding for this center through state and/or federal grants. In 2003-4, momentum picked up with one \$150,000 grant. This rather large amount was enough to win over the state, and in 2005, an additional grant, a block grant, was awarded in the amount of \$500,000. The funds were restricted to building a learning center, replete with classrooms and a computer lab and required that the city maintain the operations of the building for five years, running programs that were identified in the grant such as computer classes, community education and the like. The City of Vernonia signed a contract with the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department, and the Community Incentive Fund, the two granting agencies promising to build and run a learning center for five years.

Why wasn't an existing building used?

Originally, an existing building was planned to be used but was found by engineers to be structurally unfit for the purposes of a learning center. Because of the high cost of remodeling the building, a decision was made that a new building would better suit the project, and be an asset to both potential users of the building and to the community of Vernonia as a whole.

Why were there cost overruns?

There are a few reasons for this. A portion of the original grant money went into pre-construction costs for the existing building. This resulted in a reduction in funds available for construction. There were problems in the management of both grants, resulting from

a lack of communication, organization and oversight. When a project has management problems, it becomes more costly. Construction projects often cost more than original estimates due to unexpected situations.

Why is it not run by volunteers?

Since the Learning Center takes in revenue and operates like a business, a skilled director is essential to planning, oversight and accountability. The first years of a project of this type are critical in establishing a sound foundation. This requires the attention of a dedicated director who can analyze the cost benefits of the programs while giving attention to the budget and operations when it is needed. An enterprise like our community learning center needs someone to develop programs, make connections in the community, recruit volunteers and instructors, fund raise, and manage day to day operations. While it is ideal that volunteers operate the center, it is unrealistic to expect them to work full time, without pay, to operate a venture such as a community learning center.

What does the learning center do and why does Vernonia need it?

The learning center has been open since September of 2006 and has provided educational programs in the form of credit and non-credit classes through Portland Community College. Community education for all ages takes place year-round with classes such as self-defense, photography, and theater for children. The center provides meeting space for all types of groups and has a full service computer lab open to the public. It provides excellent volunteer opportunities and partners with groups and businesses in Vernonia to create innovative programs that match the needs and desires of Vernonia citizens. The learning center has provided three Vernonia citizens with jobs and many others with additional income from teaching classes. The Vernonia Community Learning Center brings service, opportunity, hope, education and jobs to a rural community that is in need of these things.

Why then, is the learning center so controversial?

The learning center is controversial because the general public

Services the VCLC provides

Offering assistance with walk-in help for...

- Writing affidavits
- Writing resumes & cover letters
- Proctoring for student testing
- Finding employment
- Finding daycare
- Hiring teachers from the area
- Telephone and internet use
- Quiet area for studying
- Young adults seeking college counseling, GED, jobs, hope

Holding a diverse array of events and classes, sensitive to the entire community's needs...

- VHS PSAT testing
- Computer classes
- A meeting of Columbia County Sheriffs
- Free meeting space for civic groups such as Vernonia Pride
- Self Defense Class (filled to capacity!)
- GED study course
- Geographical Information Systems course
- Knee Deep in Salmon Meet the Artists viewing
- Financial seminar
- Hunter Safety
- OSHA classes
- PCC credit classes Writing 115, Writing 121 and more
- Art classes

Other Accomplishments...

- Courtyard Project/Ford Institute Leadership Program class
- GED class/volunteer teacher Wolfgang Forge has joined us
- Landowner Coop Class/VHS partnership
- Experience Works-hired two senior citizens part-time
- Management Training Corporation-hiring one youth for summer employment
- Business Class Grant-USDA
- Nutrition Class/Sentry Partnership/Recipe of the Week
- Gallery VCLC

If you would like to volunteer, teach a class, take a class, or get more information about the Vernonia Community Learning Center (VCLC), please call 503-429-1030. The VCLC is located at 939 Bridge Street, Vernonia.

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it's the center to build your community.

summer schedule

Kidz Camp

Ages 8-12
10-noon, Mondays and Wednesdays
July 9-August 22

Join the fun with a new theme each week...crafts, science, theatre, book making, cooking, exploring Vernonia and more.
\$12 per session or \$120 for 6 weeks. Scholarships available.

Vernonia's Past and Future on Film

6:30-9:30 Mondays
June 18-August 6
This class will use films, discussions and readings to examine the history and future of Vernonia.
\$60 or \$8 drop in

Computers Made Simple

6:30-8 Tuesdays
June 19 -July 17
This popular course is ideal for those who have a computer, but lack the skills to navigate it. Learn everything from what your desktop is to how to attach a file and much more.
\$10 per class

Summer Nutrition

6:30-8 Tuesdays
June 19 & 26
Continue or join this thought provoking class replete with field trips, in-class cooking demos and invaluable information.
\$10 drop in

Sunrise Nature Photography

June 22-June 24
Class will meet on June 22 at 7pm and receive an itinerary for the weekend.
\$25, bring your own camera

Vernonia Craft Fair

June 23, noon - 5 pm
Come check out local crafts for view and for sale. Still seeking crafters/vendors. \$5 a table, call to register. Items must be handmade.

How and Why to Juggle

June 23, Hawkins Park
Time TBA
Back by popular demand, Kid Justice will enlighten you and you will surprise yourself. Juggling supplies included. \$10

Business Planning for Small Business

August/September 2007
Time/Date TBA
Professional business counseling and expert assistance with creating a business plan. Send brief statement or call-limited space! Taught by PCC Small Business Development Center Associate \$50

Portrait Drawing

6:30-8 pm \$60
6 weeks starting July 10
Taught by local artist, Diane Coughlin. Check out her web site at www.therookerycaws.com

Computer lab is open to the public 12-3,

Mon-Thurs, and some Saturdays. Please call for times and dates. You may call ahead to reserve, first come, first serve. \$1 an hour

GED Study Course

Mondays from 4-6 pm \$50

Health Insurance Informational session
July 23rd for **Healthnet** 10am - noon,
Medicare 1-2. Free

Please call with interest about the following courses. They are not yet scheduled but we are looking for interest...

- Automatic Drawing
- Group Guitar
- Hip Hop
- Criminal Justice
- Belly Dancing
- Cartooning

local education

vernonia
community learning center
939 bridge street
vernonia, 97064
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vclc@vernonia-or.gov

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