

Oregon Canine University Coming Soon to Vernonia

By Scott Laird

After numerous setbacks and delays, a group of animal welfare activists have acquired a sixteen-acre property on Airport Way near the Vernonia Airport. They are hard at work renovating the property and creating a place where both dogs and humans can go to play and learn.

The Oregon Canine University – a project developed by Indigo Rescue based in Beaverton – will provide boarding for dogs, have a twenty-four hour resident staff certified trainer, and offer training for dogs and their owners. Types of training and activities that will be offered include obedience, canine good citizenship, search and rescue, agility, and dog sporting games and events (such as Flyball, and Earthdog). There are also plans to hold other events throughout the year that cater to dogs and their families.



ditional use permit from Columbia County which allowed them to go forward with the purchase of the property. The group must meet certain requirements established in the conditional use agreement which includes

shop building, which will be converted over the next few months to a training room and boarding area, and a large barn which in the future will be converted to possibly include space for seminars, housing for overnight guests, or additional boarding space for groups of dogs. There are four large outdoor fenced play areas for the dogs. The property will board a maximum of twenty dogs at one time.

“Vernonia is just such a beautiful place, and this property is great,” said Mills. “We hope that people will come out here from all over the area to participate in our activities and seminars, or even leave their dogs here while they go do something else around the area, like golfing or shopping in town.”

Oregon Canine University will be a business venture that provides fund raising for Indigo Rescue, and will not be a rescue operation in Vernonia. Under the direction of Heather Hines, Indigo Rescue helps save the lives of hundreds of dogs and cats each year who have run out of time in Washington County animal shelters. Indigo takes these animals, places them in foster

“We’re excited about the potential for Vernonia and for this property,” said resident trainer Trish Mills. “Initially we will focus on boarding, but there are a lot of things that we hope to accomplish through the training aspect of the facility. There are lots of dogs that need a job, or need something constructive to do. We hope to be able to provide that for them and their people.”

adequate parking facilities and structural requirements. During the hearing process, the group addressed concerns that were raised by the Vernonia Parks committee including noise from barking dogs that might affect campers at Airport Park and odor from waste removal.

homes until permanent homes can be identified for them while taking care of medical expenses, vaccinations and spaying and neutering that may be needed. Since 1998 Indigo has helped save the lives of over 1,000 cats and 600 dogs. Indigo Rescue has also been responsible for starting a program in the Portland area that assists with spaying/neutering for cats in low income areas.

The property consists of three primary buildings: the main house, where the resident trainer lives which includes a living room area where the dogs have a variety of couches and dog beds on which to lounge, a

The group was recently awarded a con-

Puppies and Parvo

By Lisa Edgar

Many of us have heard of Parvo but do not know the cause, prevention or treatment, or more importantly, the signs or symptoms.

In 2001 Ben and I opened “Creatures,” a pet store in downtown Vernonia, with great dreams and goals; we knew we’d be learning a lot, but just how quickly came as a surprise to us. Shortly after we opened the store, a person brought in a box of puppies and asked us if we would like to sell them. We didn’t have the heart to say no because the puppies were filthy, smelly and in need of care. We did our best to clean them up and soon found they were more than just dirty. Parvo was part of the equation. The puppies had come from a home where the parents of the pups were not properly vaccinated. This caused the disease to be in the ground or living area, thus passing the disease on to the puppies.

Parvo is a virus that attacks the lining digestive system, keeping canines from being able to absorb nutrients from their food. It can have very severe consequences for your pet especially in younger dogs. It can often lead to sudden death in puppies.

Our vet was notified when the puppies refused to eat and were vomiting. We quickly learned how hard Parvo is on a puppy. Other signs that puppies might have Parvo include diarrhea, lethargy and a definite odor. Even after a lot of care with IV Fluids, antibiotics and attention, we lost two of the five within a couple of days.

With help and study we learned that with proper vaccinations to the parents first, then making sure puppies get at least a series of three vaccinations over a period of weeks (contact your local vet for more accurate information), can help in preventing the pain and discomfort these poor puppies went through.

We have seen a number of cases in the past years. Unfortunately it has not been determined how long Parvo can live in the ground, and taking puppies outdoors where other dogs could possibly have roamed carrying the disease is taking a big risk. Beaches, parks and even city sidewalks are not necessarily safe until your puppy has had its first series of immunizations.

Vernonia Rural Fire District Needs You!

The Vernonia Rural Fire District is gearing up for its yearly entry-level training and is seeking out new volunteers for training this spring. If you are interested, applications are available at the Vernonia Fire Protection District Fire Station or a current volunteer member can assist you.

The Vernonia Firefighters recently held their annual picnic at Cedar Ridge. Eighteen volunteers brought family and friends totaling fifty-eight people who enjoyed a Prime Rib and Salmon cookout followed by swimming and, of course, the “slip and slide.”

The highlight of the evening was the presentation to the District of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) from the District’s Physician Advisors, Donald Wiens and Jennifer Aponte. “This is a much needed piece of equipment that will be on Rescue Unit 457 immediately, allowing us to better serve our community,” said Fire Chief Paul Epler.

The annual picnic is held on the second Sunday of September each year. All current and past volunteers, employees, and board members are invited to attend.

Members of the Vernonia Rural Fire district took part in a march through town to commemorate September 11th. The District takes part in this memorial each year and encourages the citizens of Vernonia to turn out to honor those who lost their lives during this tragic event.