



# The Ripple Effects of Design Standards

By Evangeline Doyle

History and architecture possess great value and Vernonia has both. It would be a tremendous loss to our community if we do not protect these assets. The City of Vernonia and its residents have gone to considerable effort, time and expense, to market Vernonia's charm and rich history. One way to ensure our community holds its value is through adoption of design and development standards, such as Ordinance 711 that recently passed at City Council on February 19 (see article page 10).



Classic mill-house architecture found on OA Hill.

If there's any question about the value of older architecture and the benefit to neighborhoods and communities chocked full of these gems, we need only to look 40 miles east of us for confirmation. Neighborhoods in Portland like NW 23rd, was the first to undergo rejuvenation, followed by Hawthorne and more recently Mississippi, Alberta, and Albina. While we are not Portland, and will never be due to our size and location, we do have rich history, we do have a variety of architecture in Vernonia, it is appealing... and it is valuable.

Further support of this can be seen in our own backyard. Many new homes being built in Vernonia, like the ones on 4th and 5th Streets, and Rose Hedge off Rose Avenue, have adopted this cottage/bungalow style. Why? Builders know the architecture has appeal and will blend with the existing area homes. They know the style will hold its value.



Without design and development standards the impact one person can have on a neighborhood, and to the value of their neighbor's homes, can be huge. One person's actions can impact the tax base and market value for many.



who said, "the city was going to a lot of trouble to develop design standards, so why aren't we taking care of the obvious eye-sores too?"

Most of you know what this resident is talking about; this is a common occurrence in many communities. While our own Peter O'Leary could put a colorful spin on this, it is real, and most of us have either seen it or are experiencing it today with a neighbor: The old pickup full of garbage that's been parked across from your house for six months or the neighbor that is using car carcasses to decorate their lawn.

Maintaining/increasing our tax base, making smart decisions – Ordinance 711, enforcing nuisance abatements – all of these are interrelated. When we don't maintain our standards, when we aren't diligent about maintaining our tax base, we don't have the funds to hire officials to enforce things like nuisance abatements. While nuisances can be a bother by definition, they are nothing compared to the other critical services our community needs to maintain its livability, such as emergency services, sewer, water and other key services. Maintaining our tax-base should be something we all strive to understand and support.

The City Planning Commission welcomes public attendance and participation at their meetings. Currently the City Planning Commission meets every Thursday at the Vernonia City Hall.

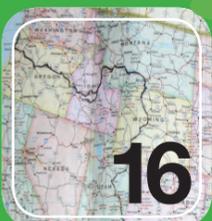
**Shown here: new construction and newly built homes in Rose Hedge development and on 4th and 5th Streets on Corey Hill.**

Recently I talked to a Vernonia resident

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## Schaumburg House Moves Forward

Plans to build a new home for injured logger and Vernonia resident Dean Schaumburg and his family are moving along as planned. Mike Pihl Logging turned over the deed for a lot in city limits near the corner of Rose and Columbia Avenues in February, thus paving the way for new construction to begin this spring.

"Everything is moving forward," said Casey Mitchell who has been helping secure donations and building supplies for the project. Mitchell says he has received pledges for almost everything they need; the project is still in need of windows, decking, gravel, and flooring.

Mitchell is planning to kick off the project with a BBQ/ Planning Session on March 29 at the Anderson Park covered picnic area. He is planning to invite all those who have pledged and anyone else interested in getting involved and helping. "This will be a chance for everyone to meet each other, and to develop a plan on how to start moving forward," said Mitchell.

*Donations to the Schaumburg Building Fund can be sent to PO Box 174, Vernonia, OR 97064. For more information on getting actively involved in the project call Casey Mitchell at 503-369-3133.*

## Mist and Birkenfeld – Isolated During Flood

By Scott Laird

Although much of the media coverage of the Flood of 2007 has focused on the City of Vernonia, our neighbors in the communities of Mist, Birkenfeld and at Fishhawk Lake were severely affected as well.

I recently took the opportunity to contact officials in those areas and talk to them about their experiences during and after the recent disaster.

Mary Lou Busch, the Assistant Fire Chief, talked about the stress and difficulty of living in such a rural area during the recovery period that remains ongoing. Local residents are waiting for information so they can rebuild and make repairs. "People are living in camp trailers or with relatives. They are waiting to hear from the county about building permits and for decisions to be made. They are hearing different information from insurance companies. It's been tough on people."

"The Fire Department is all we have out here," said Busch. "There is nothing else, no public works, no city hall. People come to us looking for information and answers. We help with what we can."

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