

Flood Relief Ready to Begin Twilight Comes to Vernonia

By Scott Laird

Columbia County Flood Relief (CCFR) has two important announcements for the public. First, on April 24th, they received their first public grant award. The Oregon Housing and Community Services Department announced an award of \$500,000 from its HOME Program that will be used to help repair and elevate homes or build replacement homes. In addition to the HOME program award, CCFR expects to have an additional \$1 million in Community Development Block Grant funding to repair and lift flooded homes by early summer. To complement these sources, CCFR has made preliminary applications for funding to elevate or purchase more than thirty homes. The CCFR staff needs to re-connect with many of the flooded Columbia County homeowners to determine if their homes are eligible for these flood recovery programs. Please contact them at 503-429-4948.

The Columbia County Flood Unmet Needs Committee has voted to set aside \$6,000 as a final contribution to help pay for the disposal of residential flood and flood-related construction debris. The funds will be awarded as reimbursements based on fifty percent of disposal receipts. Contact a CCFR case manager to obtain instructions and a disposal voucher at 503-429-4948.

To date, the CCFR staff has helped secure over \$500,000 in cash and donated resources to help flood victims. They have directed over 55,000 volunteer hours to flooded families and businesses. The CCFR records have been sufficient to allow the city and county to claim over \$1 million of in-kind labor as match for up to \$3 million in FEMA Public Assistance grants. CCFR case managers have arranged grants of nearly \$60,000. CCFR's volunteer coordinators and case managers have worked to direct three missionary groups who have repaired forty homes.

About fifty percent of CCFR staff are being paid through a job training grant, the rest of the staff continue to be volunteers.

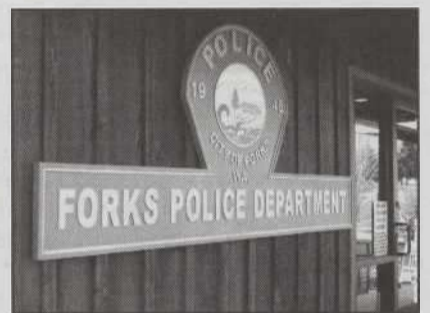


The city of Vernonia became Forks, Washington for a day as Summitt Entertainment and Maverick Films moved in and filmed scenes from their upcoming film, *Twilight*. The film is based on the best selling book series by Stephanie Meyer, is being directed by Catherine Hardwicke (Thirteen, Lords of Dogtown) and stars Kristen Stewart (Panic Room) and Robert Pattinson (Cedric Diggorry in the Harry Potter Films). The film is a love story: a teenage girl risks everything when she falls in love with a vampire.

Filming took place in St. Helens for about ten days before moving to Vernonia, bringing about 150 crew members for a day and night of shooting.

The Wauna Federal Credit Union building was turned into the Forks Police Station, and numerous other signs around town reminded residents that at least for a day, "We aren't in Vernonia anymore."

The film's expected release date is December 12.



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Local Women Win Contest

Vernonia, Oregon- April 15, 2008- The winners of the "Who are you most grateful for" contest, sponsored by local businesses Buckleberry Cottage & Out on a Limb, are Donna Webb & Tobie Finzel. The contest was done in conjunction with the recent "An Attitude of Gratitude" event featuring Sue Kirby. This was the second year that Out on a Limb & Buckleberry Cottage have hosted the sold out event. Contest entrants were asked to write a short essay naming the person they are most grateful for and why. Following is the winning entry by Donna Webb about Tobie Finzel.

The wonderful person that I am most grateful for is Tobie Finzel because she has a true caring for her community and her friends and acquaintances. She is a relative new-comer to Vernonia and has truly dug in and gotten involved. She is a woman of many talents...objective...professional...and has multiple skill sets. She especially does things because she cares and not for personal gain or self satisfaction. She is a wonderful asset for the community of Vernonia and we are fortunate to have her.

Donna and Tobie will receive a \$50.00 gift certificate at the Vernonia restaurant of their choice. Sharon and Rietta (owners of Buckleberry Cottage and Out on a Limb) want to thank them both and all of the people who participated. Gratitude is what the contest and event were all about, gratitude for Vernonia and all their wonderful customers.

For more info:
Rietta 503.803.4366
Sharon 503.819.7924

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