

Congressman Wu Visits Vernonia



Congressman David Wu of Oregon's 1st Congressional District visited Vernonia on May 27th and spent time taking questions from Vernonia Middle and High School Students, followed by a meeting with local officials, and ended his visit by attending the Oregon Solutions Vernonia Schools Project regular monthly meeting.

Congressman Wu has expressed his continued concern and support for the Vernonia community, particularly its schools.

Congressman Wu flew to Oregon to visit Vernonia days after the December storm and flooding, and has returned to Vernonia a total of five times to meet with residents and city officials.

Wanting to hear what was on the minds of local school students, Congressman Wu took questions from the audience about numerous subjects including: the war in Iraq ["This is the most unnecessary war in American History." and "It's a travesty we are in this war."], national natural disaster preparedness ["FEMA did a better job here than in Hurricane Katrina." and "Oregonians are pretty hardy, we do a good job taking care of ourselves and our neighbors."], global warming ["...the greatest uncontrolled experiment in history." and "We need to work to reduce emission levels."], our dependence on oil ["We need to work on the demand side and get away from oil."], and George W. Bush ["I like him as a person, but he may go down as our worst president in history." and "He's shown a dramatic lack of curiosity and is unwilling to look deep and work hard to find solutions."]

The Congressman closed his visit with the students by encouraging them to get as much education as possible.

During his visit with city officials, Congressman Wu discussed the lack of federal funding available to assist in Vernonia's recovery, noting that "...the economy looks like it is going to be tough for a while." He discussed the policies he has worked on in Washington DC, and the requests he has made in an effort to help the local economy and flood recovery efforts, but noted the difficult political climate, and the challenge of getting earmarks (funds provided by the Congress as discretionary spending for

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Vernonia Youth Baseball Wins Big

By Scott Laird



Vernonia's Little League Baseball teams are having a successful start to their season, with both junior national boys and the senior national boys doing very well.

The junior boys (aged 11-12) recently won a tournament in Banks, defeating the Banks #1 team, the Reedville team, and then the Banks #2 team (final score 11-4) in the championship game. Coach Tim Jennings said that this group of boys has been playing together since T-Ball, and are really learning to play together as a team.

The senior boys (aged 13-14), coached by Aaron Miller and Jerry Butcher, are 5-0-1 in league play and took second place in a recent tournament. "We lost to an American League Team, which is an older team than ours," said Coach Butcher. "But we were awarded the Sportsmanship Trophy, which is an even greater honor than winning the tournament. It's something we have been working towards for five years." The Sportsmanship Trophy is given to the team that shows the best positive attitude on and off the field, the most courtesy toward other teams, and acts the most respectful. "It's the best trophy we can get," said Coach Butcher.

The Junior Team plays its games on Thursdays, the seniors play on Wednesdays. Both teams hope to make a run at a State Championship this year.

Vernonia Schools Oregon Solutions Team Moves Forward

By Scott Laird

The Vernonia Schools Oregon Solutions Team met on May 27th to hear a progress report from the Siting Committee on possible locations for a new school campus, and to begin planning Budgeting and Funding. Congressman David Wu was in attendance for part of the Oregon Solutions meeting.

The Siting Committee met twice during the month of May, doing a group tour of all five identified possible sites for the campus at the first meeting and then identifying a list of fifteen criteria by which to rate the site locations. The committee decided to narrow the site choices to three locations, focusing on a site at the top of Bridge Street, a site on OA Hill, and continuing to explore rebuilding on the current site. At the second meeting, members were given a matrix designed to evaluate the sites based on the criteria. The results of that evaluation were reported at the full team meeting on May 27th.

At the May 27th meeting the team discussed exploring "green building" options for design and construction and appointed team co-convenor Tom Kelley of Neil Kelley Company to work on this issue. The Site Committee was also tasked to work with school district superintendent Ken Cox to verify availability of property at the top two identified sites.

The group also heard from representatives from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) about a Transportation and Growth Management Grant that could be available as a joint project with the Oregon Department of Transportation to develop infrastructure plans and engineering for site development.

State Senator Betsy Johnson, a member of the team, suggested a master timetable be developed to help guide the planning process that would set a time line with benchmarks for moving forward.

The group also discussed and accepted the Project Description that was presented by Wendy Willis, the Oregon Solutions staff member assigned to the project. The Project Description established goals that include: locate and site schools in a safe location within the Vernonia School district; minimize costs to the citizens of Vernonia; maximize financial opportunities from outside sources; develop multiple partners for the project; maximize the educational benefits from this opportunity; and develop a strategic communications policy.

Senator Betsy Johnson was named chair of the newly established Funding Committee. A Budget Committee was also established. Dr. Phylis Gilmore was named as chair of a committee to explore possible complementary use partners for the site.

Next meetings are set for June 23, and July 21.

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KUPL
event



barlow
bikes



worth the
trip