

## Readers lend their voices...

To the Editor-

I am putting together a video of the 2007 flood to be used as a fund raiser for the Vernonia Pioneer museum. If you have any video footage or other photographs you could like to share with me, it would be greatly appreciated. You can contact me at 503-429-4062 or email me at blueshoes88@msn.com.

Donna Webb  
Vernonia

To the Editor

I read all the articles about unleashed dogs. The concern is basically around the lake- wrong! If we have a leash law in Vernonia it's at my home and yours. The law covers every area of our town.

I have a dog. I love my dog. But I respect my neighbor and the law (it is there for a reason). I don't want my dog in your yard and I don't want your dog in my yard.

It's the law- is that so hard to understand? There is no compromise in that area. Buy a leash, train your dog, and use it. Or get the law changed- and wouldn't that be nice.

-- Bob Bertonneau  
Vernonia

To the community,

Our pancake feed held May 18th was a huge success thanks to the Oregon Trail Rally, local business', and a hand full of community members. Those who attended enjoyed homemade biscuits and gravy, pancakes, eggs, and ham all put together by our volunteer fire fighters and family. Fire fighter Luke Ellis headed up this event and did a tremendous job preparing, organizing and cooking from scratch. We received unbelievable amounts of support and donations from those that were able to come enjoy breakfast with us! We are able to purchase a stair chair which is a big necessity for our community now that houses are being lifted in the air. We were already able to put it to use on a call, where the volunteer fire fighters were very impressed by how easy and safe it was to get a patient down a lengthy set of stairs. We would like to thank Sentry and Black Bear Coffee for their bountiful food and drink donations. To Vernonia Hardware and Supply, Vernonia Realty, Mike Pihl Logging and Wauna FCU thank you for your big-hearted donations! Without your support we wouldn't be able to do what we

do, thank you! We look forward to seeing all of you and more at our next event!

-- With gratitude, Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters

A public discussion of the plan for the development of the Vernonia airport business park is scheduled for July 8, 2008 at 6:30 PM

With the local economy faltering it has never been so imperative to plan for the future. Energy costs are soaring and wages are not keeping pace with inflation; it is time to diversify our local economy. We need to focus on building local employment opportunities. The plan for the Vernonia Airport development is a good way to encourage small manufacturing companies to locate in Vernonia. As a long time local employer, I feel that the work force of Vernonia has a lot to offer small manufacturing companies. The question we should be asking ourselves is: Why have manufacturing companies never come to Vernonia? The answer: They have never been welcome. As a community we have never zoned industrial land out of a flood plane and built the structures needed in order to persuade them. There are many local people that are unemployed or under employed due to the lack of opportunities. Every year we graduate another class of bright minded young people and every year they have little to no opportunity to stay in the community and make a living. It's a shame! We need to diversify our economy with a complement of Timber production, seasonal tourism, local commerce and manufacturing.

The community of Vernonia is very lucky to have an airport. This airport could become a gateway to travel and manufacturing jobs. We need to utilize this asset. Across our nation, local business development has always taken place around the local airports and ours is no different. An increase in the length of our runway and utilization of some of the surrounding land would help support small aircraft and light manufacturing. As with all small communities we are fighting job losses to foreign competition and a drain of local dollars to outside counties. At the last county planning commission meeting many of those who spoke out in opposition to Vernonia jobs did not live in our city or county! To make a difference we need your support. I invite all Vernonians who have a vested interest in our future to attend the CPAC meeting on July 8, 2008 at 6:30PM.

-- Tim Bero, Chairman CPAC  
Vernonia

## An Opinion: The Times, They are a Changin'

By Scott Laird

Things just don't seem to stand still in Vernonia these days. Some major changes have taken place among our city leaders which I feel deserve our recognition.

Mayor Sally Harrison recently accepted the resignation of Vernonia Councilwoman Shirlee Daughtry. Ms. Daughtry is the woman we all affectionately refer to as "...the lady who's lived here all her life." Which she has. And she has served this community for many years with dignity and effectiveness. Shirlee has been instrumental in helping accomplish so much here, I could probably devote an entire issue of Vernonia's Voice to praising all she has done for this town. She was the person most responsible for the rebuilding of the Scout Cabin, almost single-handedly finding funding, donations and volunteer labor. She was a founding member of Vernonia Pride, a group still influencing how we feel about living here. She has served on the City Council through both good times and bad. She continues to volunteer, making sure our city parks are maintained and cared for. She turns up at almost every community function. She often does the little things, the things no one notices until they are left undone.

Shirlee Daughtry has been our biggest cheerleader, and she has done it without ever asking to be recognized. In fact, this past year, when the city tried to re-name Park Drive in her honor as "Shirlee's Way" ("It's Shirlee's way, or the highway," she joked at the time), she graciously turned it down.

So here's to a true Vernonian- Shirlee Daughtry. May we all follow her example and give as selflessly to our community as she has.

This year's proposed city budget did not include funding for the position of Vernonia Community Learning Center (VCLC) Director, a position that has been filled for the last two years by Jesse Jones. Ms. Jones' contract was not renewed, and the VCLC will have to use volunteers to continue with its programming. Jesse Jones, who grew up in Vernonia, has been an advocate for alternative education, the arts, low income residents, public transportation, Vernonia youth, watershed issues, community and economic development - the list goes on and on. She worked exhaustively during the initial flood recovery days and weeks, helping develop the response to citizens with unmet needs. She was working hard to develop meaningful programs for the Learning Center, and unfortunately budget constraints have short circuited the progress she was making. She has cared deeply for the people of this town and been a champion for those who needed a voice. Her energy, vision and passion for this community will be missed.

Another major change is the hiring of Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson who has replaced another Interim, Aldie Howard. Howard had been serving last year as the City Planning Director on a contract basis, working 8-10 hours a week. When the flood hit Vernonia in December, Howard stepped up and assumed the City Administrator's position, a thankless job in most respects under normal circumstances, but an almost impossible task in a natural disaster recovery process. Howard initially proved to be the right man for the job, assuming leadership and establishing a commanding presence at City Hall. Howard worked hard to find

solutions to some long term and short term problems. He was tireless, looking for answers, finding solutions, and getting help. He looked to protect his overworked staff at City Hall. He took a pay cut and worked two jobs (City Planner and City Administrator). He wasn't everyone's cup of tea, but one thing was sure- you always knew where you stood with Aldie Howard. He wore his feelings and his emotions on his sleeve, showing Vernonia he really, really cared. Eventually his shoot-from-the-hip style started to wear a little thin, and City Council chose to replace him, retaining him as City Planner.

Whether you liked him or not, our citizens owe Aldie Howard a debt of gratitude; he stepped up in our time of greatest need and helped us get through a critical time. I for one would like to say "Thank you, Aldie Howard."

### HOW TO SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Vernonia's Voice welcomes and requests your thoughts, opinions, and ideas. Please include your name, address, and phone number; limit your letters to 300 words or less. Vernonia's Voice reserves the right to edit, omit, respond, or ask for a response to letters submitted. We will print letters, space permitting. Deadline is the 15th of the month. **Email to: news@vernoniasvoice.com or mail to: Letters, PO Box 55, Vernonia 97064.**

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