

Readers lend their voices...

To the Editor:

Let's not make the same mistakes in Columbia County that other communities have made.

This isn't the first time this approach "claiming" to address immigration problems has been tried. Other communities have already tried it—and it has failed to provide a workable solution every single time. Communities around the country are losing businesses and wasting taxpayer dollars because of measures like this one. It failed to work in Oklahoma.

Oklahoma passed a sweeping statewide law in 2007 that put immigration enforcement in the hands of employers, the local police and businesses. Since then, job growth and their economy have suffered.

Let's not waste our tax dollars. Columbia County can't afford to repeat these mistakes. Please join me in voting No on 5-190 and 5-191 and talk your family, neighbors, friends and co-workers on why this would be a bad idea. Thank you.

Marjorie Kundiger
Yankton

To the Editor:

I live near Vernonia in a rural residential area. Our neighborhood was recently threatened by a proposed industrial development on prime forest land next to us. When this started last spring, someone mentioned that Pat Zimmerman has helped other neighborhoods understand what they were facing and how to deal with the complex land use process.

We called Pat and she agreed to volunteer her help. She drove to Vernonia many times for meetings with the neighbors, educated us on how to testify at Planning Commission hearings, helped us to organize our testimony, gave testimony on arcane legal issues, and supported as well as encouraged us in many ways.

She has been unfairly labeled "anti-growth" when all she wants is for industrial development to happen on land appropriately zoned and with adequate services.

Thanks in no small part to Pat, the county Planning Commission recommended that the industrial park not be built in our residential neighborhood.

Pat Zimmerman is running for County Commissioner. Her commitment to good land use planning, her concern for and support of ordinary citizens caught up in a baffling system, and her honest and intelligent advice have convinced me who to vote for. She will make a wonderful Commissioner by bringing new ideas and energy to the County Commission. Most of all Pat was respectful to my neighbors and me and listened to our concerns even though we were just ordinary citizens with no political or monetary clout—she empathized with our concerns. Pat possesses the character necessary to help and genuinely understand everyday peoples' needs and concerns.

Please join me in voting for Pat Zimmerman.

Donna Hepler
Vernonia

Letter to Editor:

Jerry Keenon wrote a thoughtful pro-logging letter in the September Voice. As someone who is disappointed with many aspects of local forest management, I'd like to reply.

We may be able to log for several more generations, but long-term sustainability is unknown. Short logging cycles lead to soil loss and the need for fertilizer and pesticides. Rainwater rushes off the hills—not good. I wonder if flooding in Vernonia is worse because of it. Companies also spray to kill native trees they don't want, and kill wildlife that damage desired trees.

Most people familiar with local corporate woodlands never see once-abundant tiger lilies and lady slipper orchids, plus hundreds of other wild plants that can't survive on tree farms. Many wildlife species are dwindling, including bats, pollinators, birds, fur-bearers, amphibians, fish, etc. Companies don't mention these when extolling sustainability. Only lumber is considered—not ecosystems.

Clearcuts do offer wildlife habitat for a while, and some plants grow well there (many are nonnative pests these days). Deer are a species that can thrive or even increase with intense human activity, including logging. Hundreds of others can't.

Migrating birds are also losing prime resting areas as they fly through, such as thrushes. We no longer have awe-inspiring forests in the county. I know hunters who always head elsewhere because it's so boring here, especially in third-growth trees which cover the hills like artificial turf. Would it be so terrible to reserve a couple of older BLM sections so we know what a forest is supposed to look like?

I have heard people say that logging is like harvesting corn: plant, grow, cut, repeat. Cultivated farmland eliminates native plants and animals, and too often water and soil quality suffers. If our forests are managed like a farm crop, expect the same thing to happen.

Lona Pierce
Warren, Oregon

Fellow Columbia County Voters:

Monday morning I spoke with Tony Hyde briefly in the hall of the County Courthouse. I walked away thinking once again about the Counties good fortune to have such a representative. His dedication, energy, and the depth of his concern for our County are seen regularly by those that work near him. His efforts to improve the services provided, current budget issues, personnel under his lead, and his focus on the public in general are unusual qualities. He continues to work tirelessly for us, well beyond the work day.

I can not be sure how much help it will be, but I concluded that a

letter of support may reach a few voters, so it is my intent to offer these observations.

It was in the Fall, 2005 we lost Phil Dewey to a lengthy illness, and I became County Surveyor. My career to that point was always in the private sector, employed with a large corporate land owner or my Land Surveying practice, based here in Columbia Co. As County Surveyor I began to see our County Government in action, and as always Tony Hyde is at the forefront. He is the 'go to guy' with the rest of the County Department heads, Tony impresses everyone and is constantly in the depths of problem solving. To the County benefit, he is on a first name basis with State and Federal officials, including our U. S. Congressmen and Senators and able to call upon those relationships in times of county need.

I would hope to offer details of his value, his deep concern, and commitment but his involvement goes well beyond what is noticeable to any of us. As with other leaders, his effectiveness has increased with his time on the job.

His attention, experience, and unrelenting efforts gained for us the unheard of 'quick' response to Columbia County from FEMA during the 2007 flooding. Columbia County received continual compliments from the Feds and State about gaining this effort from higher Government, for which we owe thanks to many, most of all Tony Hyde. He has a lead role in the Statewide Oregon Economic Commission, which manages a very large effort to obtain funding for Oregon's Statewide project needs, a huge benefit to us.

He continues to work around the state on committees and in special sessions to keep you and the needs of Columbia County as a priority issue always.

Fellow Voters, the choice is clear, Tony is much too valuable a resource. We need to keep him on our side. A vote for Tony Hyde is a vote for a better Columbia County future.

L Jerry Keenon, County Surveyor
Vernonia

To the Editor:

Anyone who participated in the recent 2020 workshops presented by Portland State after the flood and who had the opportunity to see the results of that study, know that some kind, any kind of economic development was the overriding concern of citizenry. Family wage, jobs produced by small environmentally companies that are close to home.

Even before the 2020 report was finalized, a group of prominent business owners and concerned citizens formed a new City Economic Development Committee.

I find it invigorating and so very hopeful to sit with such an enthusiastic group who believe in the future of Vernonia and aren't afraid to put their own money, time and energy toward getting things done for the betterment of us all.

One of the projects in the works is being promoted and paid for by Tim and Michelle Bero. They bought the property adjoining the Vernonia Airport from Mel and Margarite Nice. They are attempting to rezone 27 acres next to the property they have offered to the City to extend the Airport Runway. This extension will make the Airport safer and offer opportunities for development on the airport proper. The planned light industrial development will be businesses that include airplane mechanic, metal workshop, avionics, engine repair or electronic engine control systems. The kind and amount of businesses will be wholly contingent on the space available. The building will resemble the red barn of old so it will nestle comfortably into the country landscape. It will be a wonderful start to diversified job opportunities in the Vernonia area.

Tim and Michelle Bero to so many are the couple who "build guns" out Timber. Well, yes, they do that, but they also have a business that dismantles and destroys guns, too. They are a young couple raising a family and running a successful business and have found time to give back to their community. Michelle was the catalyst in getting soccer in Vernonia. She and Tim have an actual fund raiser for "Toys for Joy" that garners half of the group's annual revenues. Tim has been a considerable financial supporter of the 4th of July fireworks display for years and after the flood they offered their home at the airport to a flood ravaged family. The list goes on

The Beros are just two of the Economic Development committee that is just getting started. They have many ideas percolating.

Yes, we want to be a destination for tourists and yes, we want to protect our natural beauty and resources and yes, we want to continue to the business we already have, but at the same time we need to grow in an orderly and responsible manner. Business brings in needed tax relief for the overburdened homeowners of our town.

Some one smarter than I pointed out that during the Great Depression, CCC Camps and the like, the State and Federal Governments invested in some wondrous Oregon infrastructure that endures today. All the beautiful bridges up and down Highway 101, Timberline Lodge, Portland Forestry Center and the State Capital Building to name a few.

We are in hard times now that some are characterizing as a recession, depression. Maybe now is the time to invest in our infrastructure albeit on a smaller scale.

Maybe, just maybe we can produce something beautiful that will be enjoyed and endure for generations too.

Sally Harrison
Vernonia

Dear Columbia County Voters:

As many Voters will recall, early last year, long time Columbia County Circuit Judge Hon. Berkley Smith announced his retirement,

effective June 1, 2007. To fill the Circuit Court vacancy, under Oregon law, Governor Kulongoski sought candidates for judicial appointment. Those candidates included St. Helens attorneys Jenefer S. Grant and David B. Herr, among others. I also submitted my name to the Governor for consideration.

Candidates were required to submit an eight-page "Interest Form for Judicial Appointments," detailing each person's experience, skills and qualifications. The applications and support documents were submitted to Mr. David Reese, the Governor's General Counsel.

Certain candidates were subsequently interviewed by an esteemed panel of legal professionals and other officials, including Columbia County Commissioner Tony Hyde. My interview took place on about April 12, 2007. During my interview, the panel posed difficult questions designed to test the applicant's abilities.

After closing the application process, the Governor's Office took several weeks deliberating before announcing the appointment of Jenefer S. Grant as Columbia County Circuit Judge, position 3. Now, more than one-year later, I am convinced that the Governor's Office made the correct selection in appointing our Circuit Judge.

I am writing this letter because voters in the upcoming election need to understand the qualifications of each candidate. The fact that Mrs. Grant's qualifications were chosen above all others for judicial appointment should instill a measure of confidence in voters choosing Judge Grant. Whether competing against one opponent or several, the Hon. Jenefer S. Grant is still our best choice for Circuit Judge, position 3.

Thanks for your consideration.

Lee Carter
Attorney at Law
St. Helens, Oregon

Dear Editor:

As your elected representatives to the Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District, we represent every community within our county. We rely on expert advice from the 9-1-1 Advisory Board, made up of the chiefs of every law enforcement agency, every fire district and every emergency medical service, as well as the sheriff and county emergency manager. Together, we are working every day to improve 9-1-1 emergency response. We always focus on our main goal: to provide the best, most efficient and effective 9-1-1 emergency response possible.

We're very proud of our District's award winning 9-1-1 staff. They are truly professional and operate very efficiently — keeping a priority on efficiency without sacrificing any 9-1-1 call service, dispatch or emergency service coordination.

They also help us keep our promises. For example, our 9-1-1 Call Center was built for about 1/3 the cost for other call centers, which allowed the district to implement Enhanced 9-1-1 technology — that is the equipment that tells the 9-1-1 call taker the location of you, the caller. The bottom line is even faster dispatching once your call is received.

Another important promise we've been able to keep to the voters is securing funding and installation of a countywide microwave "backbone" voice and data radio system— through other funding sources, not District tax revenues. From day one, that system has meant safer, more reliable public safety communications for every part of the county. We are able to do much more with less, even though the activity levels have quadrupled since the District was formed by voters in 1989.

As a result of this effective management, the request for renewal of the district's Five-Year Operating Funds will actually be at a slightly lower rate than voters approved in 1998, and at the same rate over 70% of voters approved in 2004. That means that the tax rate will stay the same as it has been for the past five years, even while our 9-1-1 emergency dispatch reliability and service continues to increase and improve.

Our 9-1-1 District is not requesting new taxes, simply a renewal of the Operating Funds to maintain our essential and reliable 9-1-1 service at the same level it is now.

This is a team effort. We take our responsibility very seriously because we know you depend on 9-1-1 as a vital service for your children, parents, grandparents, friends and co-workers. We all count on 9-1-1.

Likewise, we all count on you to vote on November 4th, and especially to vote YES to Renew Columbia 9-1-1 Operating Funds. Please remember to check both sides of your ballot and return your ballot on time to count! And please vote YES.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you through Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District.

Sincerely,
Columbia 9-1-1 Board of Directors
Dee Wooley, Clatskanie
Wes McMahan, Rainier, Prescott, Columbia City
Henry Heimuller, St. Helens
Rob Anderson, Scappoose
Kathy Denckla, Vernonia, Mist, McNulty, Warren

To those 2 & 4-legged friends who make the 1st Annual Dog Parade such a success!

I can't remember seeing so many smiles and hearing such laughter as I did while parading up Bridge Street in the 1st Annual Dog Parade! It was so much fun. All of us parading were so proud of our dogs, while those watching were laughing and probably secretly wishing they'd done it too!

A special thank you to those sponsors who helped make it possible: Creatures Pet Store, Pet Smart, Midway Vet, Valley Vet, Rock Creek Kennels, the First Friday Group, Chailey's Choice and US Bank. The judges did a great job! Thank you Shirlee Daughtry, Rebecca McGaugh and Isabelle McDaniel.

A special thank you to Donna "Clifford the Big Red Dog" Webb, Erika and Kate for boosting my sagging spirits and a huge thank you to all who participated!
Next year will be even bigger and better!

Carol Davis
Vernonia

HOW TO SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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 20th of the month. **Email to: news@vernoniasvoice.com or mail to: Letters, PO Box 55, Vernonia 97064.**