

To All Vernonians: Let's pass the bond not the buck!

Just 18 months after the worst natural disaster most of us have experienced, Vernonia is being given one of its biggest opportunities to:

- Replace our three damaged schools with new school buildings;
- Increase Vernonia's viability and livability;
- Earn as much as 300% on our community investment.

To take advantage of this opportunity we must pass a bond levy in November to show our community's commitment to paying our small share of the total cost for rebuilding our schools. Passing the bond also will put Vernonia in line for even more government stimulus money and other grant funding the city needs to upgrade our sewer and water systems.

The following Questions and Answers (Qs & As) are the first in a series of articles being produced by the Vernonia School Bond Committee -- a group of your neighbors and friends working to make sure you have all the information you need to vote YES in November -- YES for our children and grandchildren and YES for the future and prosperity of our entire community.

Qs & As

Why do we need a bond if we are getting stimulus money?

The two main reasons we need to pass a bond are:

- Insurance and FEMA funds are not enough to pay the total cost of repairing, replacing and bringing everything up to code that was destroyed in the flood.
- By passing a bond, Vernonians will show the government we are willing to invest in our community. And, that investment will make Vernonia eligible for more stimulus money that is awarded in the form of matching grants.

How does stimulus money come to Vernonia?

It doesn't come in one big check. Stimulus money is paid as each project is approved. The Governor has identified Vernonia as one of three major projects statewide for stimulus funding. He will act as our "sponsor" when the city or school district

applies for the funds. These stimulus grants will be aimed at specific projects for city and school renewal and energy saving opportunities.

How does stimulus money help the city and the schools?

Stimulus money means Vernonians will only pay a fraction of the cost for city infrastructure improvements and new schools to replace facilities and systems that were damaged by the flood and are unhealthy and outdated. Without stimulus funds this community could not afford to pay that total cost. Taking advantage of the opportunity now, when the funds are available, will also make our town an example of how rural communities can not only survive but also get ahead of the curve and thrive.

How much is the bond and what will it cost me?

The Vernonia School Board is considering a \$13 million bond that will pay the district's portion of the \$45 million needed to purchase property in a safe, convenient location and build our new schools. The new schools would be designed to house up to 1,000 students and last for 100 years. They also would be designed to save thousands of dollars annually in operating costs and would be in a location that would allow the district to buy insurance at an affordable rate.

The cost to property taxpayers for a \$13 million bond is currently estimated at approximately \$1.90 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The tax rate in the first year may be higher to cover up front costs that are similar to closing costs on a home mortgage. This means for every \$100,000 of your property's assessed value, the bond would cost you approximately \$190 more on your tax bill.

Why should I pass a school bond? What's in it for me?

Passing a school bond will:

- Assure we get stimulus funds. For every dollar in tax funds we invest in school or city rebuilding projects, we will get

\$2 to \$3 in stimulus funds. But stimulus funds are a one-shot deal and we have to act now to get them.

- Keep Vernonia alive. Families with children are moving away. Unless the schools are rebuilt this exodus will continue.
- Protect property values. New schools in Vernonia will help us maintain our town and increase our property values.
- Maintain our economic base. The school district is our largest employer and many of the dollars earned by school employees stay in our community supporting our local businesses.
- Maintain our community and quality of life. By passing the bond and making sure we get maximum stimulus dollars, we can revitalize Vernonia and make improvements that will attract and keep our families and the business and services we all want and need.
- City rebuilding projects through stimulus funds include a new sewer system and bio electric fuel which will have a positive impact on all of us

We understand the site for the new schools is the "boot site" which includes Spencer Park. What happens to the ball fields we currently use at Spencer Park?

Some of the current Bridge Street site will be made into community ball fields

Where can I get more information? How can I help?

Visit the School district website at www.vernonia.k12.or.us, keep watching for articles in your local papers, or call the Vernonia School Bond Committee Chairperson Sharon Bernal @ 503-819-7924

Brought to you by the "Vote Yes For Schools Measure" Vernonia School Bond Committee

VHS Students Discover Possibilities During Career Day

Vernonia high school students spent a whole day meeting and talking with a wide range of professionals at the school's first "Career Day" on May 15.

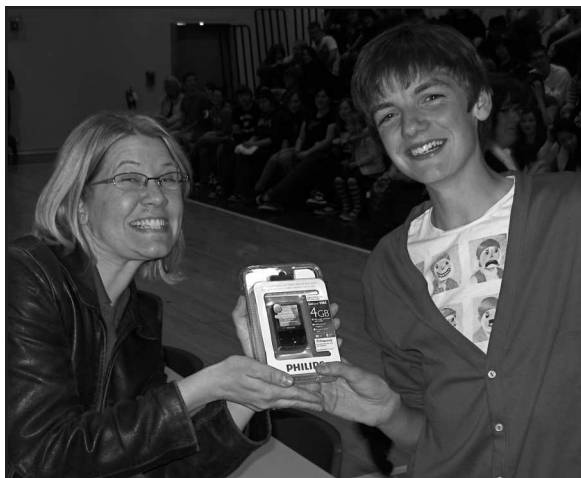
Students were given the opportunity to choose six professions they would like to learn about, then spent thirty-five minutes with different professional presenters. Students learned what it takes to get into a field, what classes they should consider taking in high school and college, pay and perks of certain careers, and what a "day in the life" is like.

Organizers arranged for over forty professionals to talk with students about their work lives, including such varied professions as: Architect, Coast Guard, Culinary, Dentist, Diesel Mechanic, Fashion Designer, Firefighter,

Fishing Guide, Hairstylist, Logger, Massage Therapist, News Reporter, Nursing, Plumbing Taxidermist, Veterinarian, and Welding. Many of the presenters traveled from outside Vernonia to participate in the event.

School organizer Beth Kintz was very pleased with the results of the day. "It was awesome. We have gotten a lot of positive feedback from students, presenters and staff." Students' comments included requests to hold the event again next year.

The day ended with an assembly where students' names were drawn and prizes that were supplied by presenters were given out.



A lucky prize winner at VHS Career Day (far left). One of the over forty professional presenters at the VHS Career Day (left) included VHS graduate Greg Schmidlin (above), who talked with students about his career in Sales.

WGS Picks Mascot

Washington Grade School students have chosen a mascot and are now calling themselves, "The Timberwolves." Students have also chosen school colors of Black and Red.

The name was officially announced during an assembly to kick off Spirit Week at the school in mid-May. Students held a howling contest, and were treated to a visit by a real Timberwolf, as well as the mascot from country music radio station KWJJ-- "The Wolf."

Students chose the name through a contest. Each class submitted their top choice-- a number of classes chose the same entry, "Wolves." The entire WGS student body then voted. "Wolves was the clear favorite," said Principal Aaron Miller. "As a way of staying with the logging and timber theme in our community, we asked the students if they would be OK with modifying it to 'Timberwolves.' The students agreed to that change."

The students celebrated the rest of Spirit Week by enjoying "Crazy Hat Day," "Crazy Hair Day," "Hippie Day" and "Pajama Day."



A New Mascot and new School colors, red and black, for WGS!



Showing off a Timberwolf Howl!



A real Timberwolf visits Washington Grade School to help celebrate the school new mascot name, "The Timberwolves"