



Mist-Birkenfeld Fire District Celebrates 30 Years of Service

By Scott Laird

Mist-Birkenfeld Fire Chief David Crawford and Assistant Chief Mary Lou Busch are proud of their district's accomplishments. And they have every right to be.

The Mist-Birkenfeld Rural Fire Protection District is celebrating its thirty-year anniversary this September since reorganizing in 1979. The tiny,



Mist-Birkenfeld RFPD officers: (from L to R) Chief David Crawford, Search and Rescue Division Chief Nick Berg, Assistant Fire Chief Mary Lou Busch, and EMS Division Chief Ann Berg.

yet mighty district, which protects over 135 square miles of rural Oregon countryside in Columbia and Clatsop Counties and serves about 1400 citizens, boasts a dedicated volunteer base, and an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) team of volunteers that any community would be proud of.

The communities

will celebrate their success along with the thirtieth anniversary at a community picnic on September 12, starting at 12:30 PM.

Located five miles apart, the little towns of Mist and Birkenfeld are about

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Vernonia School Board Approves Bond

The Vernonia School District 47J Board of Directors has approved Resolution 09-06 setting a bond amount of \$13 million for construction of a new school campus in Vernonia. The bond is set to appear on the November 3 election ballot. If approved by voters, the bond will be payable from property taxes and will mature over a period of not more than twenty-six years. The bond amount equates to approximately \$1.90 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The bond language specifically states that funds could be used to "Construct, furnish and equip elementary, middle and high school facilities on an insurable site above the flood plain;" be used to "Purchase property and pay any related demolition and site improvement costs;" and "Pay fees associated with issuing the bonds."

The \$13 million dollar bond is expected to provide about one-third of the total cost of about \$37 million for the project. The balance of the funds are expected to be raised through a capital campaign that will target federal, state and private philanthropic sources.

Vernonia True Value Celebrates Forty Years In Business

By Scott Laird

Forty years ago! 1969. Woodstock, the Moon Walk, Vietnam. Richard Nixon is President, the Brady Bunch premiers on ABC, and Mary and Arnie Tolonen move to Vernonia and take over the Western Auto Store.

The rest are all distant memories and the name has changed, but Mary and Arnie Tolonen, and, now, son Craig are still in Vernonia, running the True Value Hardware Store. And they are still answering the question, "I know you probably don't have this, but I'm going to ask anyway..." with what is usually their standard answer, "Yep, we've got one of those!"

The Tolonens will celebrate their fortieth anniversary this September, and they have seen a lot of changes in those forty years. And a lot has stayed the same. In fact, they are still at the same location after all those years.

Mary and Arnie Tolonen moved to Vernonia from Astoria in the late sixties. They saw an ad for a Western Auto franchise to make the

that was available and decided move. Arnie had been working in the woods in logging; Mary had some retail experience and had worked in a bank. "We really had no background in any of this when we started," said Mary. "Even in '69, Arnie felt like the woods was not going to last forever." "And my Dad was always a Western Auto customer," said Arnie, as a way of explaining how they ended up as shopkeepers.

The Tolonens rented a home in Vernonia and paid \$90 a month. They rented the store building for \$125 a month and eventually bought the building for \$11,000. They paid around \$20,000 for the inventory

of the store. They had to borrow \$750 from Ar-

nie's parents to buy a truck to haul their freight. "It was tough making it," said Arnie. But they did and the rest is history.

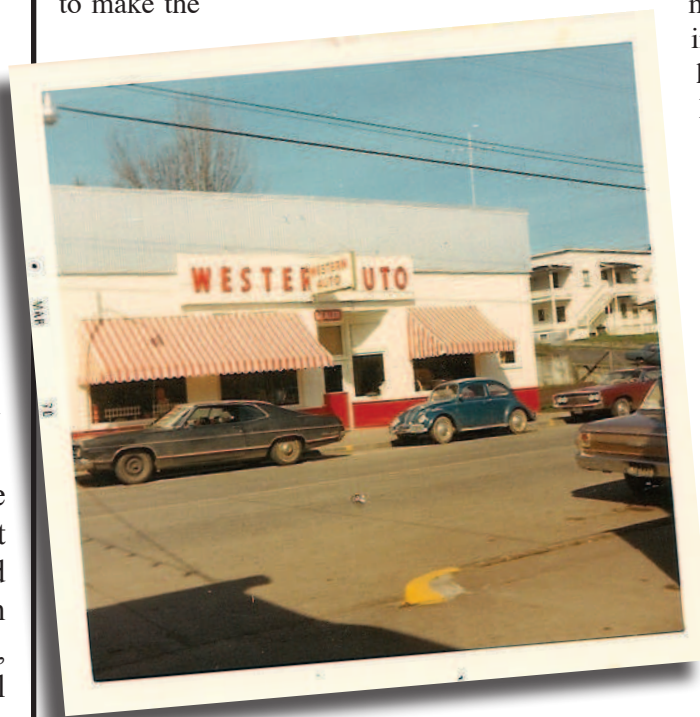
They made additions to the space over the years, including the auto bay and storeroom in the back.

Craig started working in the store when he was eight. "He used to come in and assemble bicycles and things," said Arnie. "I remember putting lots of Hot Wheels together," said Craig. When he graduated from high school, Craig left Vernonia to attend Oregon Institute of Technology and spent a few years after that working in the woods. But he came back and joined the family business in 1996. "I already knew the ins and outs of this place," said Craig.

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Mary and Arnie Tolonen in 1970.



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