

Investigation of Kay Concluded City Funds Expended to Investigate Accusations

The City of Vernonia has received written notification from the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) that Vernonia Police Captain Mike Kay is no longer under investigation.

At the December 21, 2009, City Council Meeting, Vernonia Police Chief Frank Grace informed the council that he had received a letter from DPPST on Saturday, December 19th that cleared Kay of any further investigation by DPSST. Grace read from the letter he received from Teresa King, Professional Standards Coordinator at DPSST. The letter stated: "Based on the totality of the circumstances, I do not believe Mr. Kay's conduct rises to the level of violation of the established moral fitness standards as defined in ORA2590080070, nor do I believe that the department would prevail in a contested case hearing. I recommend we close this matter administratively."

Grace continued on with his own comments on the matter. "My conclusion is that the written and verbal allegations witnessed by members of the public and city council and the direct impact it has had on Captain Kay cannot be erased. However, based on the outcomes supported by several sources, I find the complaints unfounded, and Captain Mike Kay is exonerated in my opinion."

City Administrator Bob Young added that he was glad that Kay had been exonerated. "This has gone all the way to the top and they have agreed all the way with what we found out," said Young.

Officer Kay has been the subject of repeated questions by a handful of personal detractors in relation to a case against him when he worked at the Toledo Police Department over ten years ago. Kay

was accused of Domestic Assault, but was found not guilty of those charges. He was later sued in Federal Civil Court, where charges against him were also dismissed. An appeal to that decision was thrown out before it was heard in court. He was later found guilty of Civil Contempt of Court for violating a restraining order, a complaint that was made against him while he was performing regular duties associated with his job as a police officer. Members of the Vernonia community have questioned Kay's fitness to serve as a Police officer based on this case and have questioned whether Kay was truthful in his job application concerning the matter when he was hired in Vernonia.

An investigation in the fall of 2009 by the City of Vernonia found that Kay had done nothing wrong during the hiring process, and City Administrator Young declared the case closed during the November 2, 2009, city council meeting. Continued insistence by Kay's detractors led to DPSST opening an investigation into Kay's conduct, which has now been concluded.

During the December 21st City Council meeting, City Administrator Young also clarified statements he made during the previous council session on December 7, 2009, concerning costs accrued by the city were in relation to the investigation of claims against Kay. "I want to make it perfectly clear. The subject (of those costs) was about the accusations against Officer Kay," said Young. "That is what the attorney's fees have been for. I would imagine the costs are over \$6,000 that we have incurred, just on attorney's fees, not counting staff time working on this."

Stolen Property Recovered

The Vernonia Police Department has recovered sixteen laptop computers which had been stolen from the Vernonia Middle School in December.

According to Vernonia Police Chief Frank Grace, there is an ongoing investigation, and the case has been turned over to the Columbia County District Attorney's office. Vernonia police were awaiting more information from the D.A.'s office at press time.

Chief Grace reported that Vernonia police officers worked extensive hours, talking with residents and following leads and were able to solve the case in less than three days. He stated that four adults and six juveniles were possibly involved.

Vernonia Bicycle Skills Park Reaches Milepost

The City Of Vernonia received construction development drawings for the planned Vernonia Bicycle Skills Park.

According to Bill Haack, Economic Recovery Manager, Columbia Pacific Economic Development District, serving as the City's project manager, we are at 50% drawings.

The proposed plan has been reviewed by the community last month when Bryan Cole, Mackay & Sposito Inc. made a presentation to the City Council.

According to Bob Young, City Administrator, City of Vernonia, the City Public Works Director is reviewing the plans for the park improvement and will hand the plans over to Carole Connell, the City of Vernonia planning consultant when he is through.

Haack will prepare an agenda item to the Planning Commission by early February 2010.

Be a Piece of the Puzzle: Do You Speak Teen or Pre-Teen?

By DeAnna Pearl, Director of the Vernonia Prevention Coalition



Do your New Year resolutions include having better communication with your teen or tween (youth between the ages of 9-12). If not, it still could be! According to the Oregon Research

Institute, the majority of teens still report that their parents—not their peers or the media—have the biggest influence on their decision to stay away from alcohol or drugs.

Some tips for parents who want to learn more about what their teen or tween is listening or being exposed to. The following tasks can take parents a step closer to bridging the generation gap with your teen.

- Pick up your teens MP3 or iPod and go the "Top 25 Most Played" section. Listen for references to alcohol, drugs or other risky behavior. Then talk to your teen about what you heard.
- Visit social networking sites like Myspace.com or Facebook.com, and browse the profiles of teens in your child's age-group to see what

they say, what their interests are and what they are doing online. *Fact-- most kids don't report their actual ages on the social networks, leaving them vulnerable to predators.

- Can you name your teen's favorite TV show? Watch it with him or her and discuss story lines.
- Go to a video-sharing website and type in "smoking weed." Watch some videos. Did you know your teen might be exposed to these images?
- Go to www.TheAntiDrug.com/ParentChronicles for more tips from other parents just like you.

Now you have the information, but you're still not sure how to approach your teen or tween? Starting on January 11, parenting classes focusing on families with kids between the ages of 10-14 are being offered in Vernonia.

The Strengthening Families Project offers

communication-building exercises for both the youth and parents separately and then create an opportunity in which they practice the new skills together. The series of classes starts Monday, January 11th, and runs for seven fun-filled weeks. If you would like more information on classes in Vernonia, contact Sonia Spackman, SFP Trainer, at (503) 429-6540 or David Spackman at the Washington Elementary School.

This is one of the many programs that is supported by the Vernonia Prevention Coalition. Our mission is to develop safe and healthy neighborhoods through collaborative planning, community action, policy advocacy and enforcement.

With programs like this, we are making a difference in our community. For meeting times and programming scheduling, contact DeAnna Pearl, VPC Director at (503) 369-7370, or stop by her office at the Vernonia Community Learning Center weekdays, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM.

THIS WINTER IF YOU NEED LOCAL TOWING SERVICE IN THE VERNONIA AREA

Make sure you request service from a local provider!

Police and County personnel are required to use a rotation of available providers, **UNLESS YOU SPECIFICALLY ASK** for a service by name.

For towing emergencies this winter in and around the Vernonia area

REQUEST TOWING SERVICE FROM



Annoying the Upper Nahalem Valley since 1982

(503) 429-9797

NEW YEAR START OFF WITH A BANG?

CALL:

Meyer's Auto Body
493 Bridge St.
Vernonia
503-429-0248

StPierreGraphics@aol.com