

VERNONIA'S voice

reflecting the spirit of our community

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Smith Family Gets a Home First Flood Buyout Completed

By Scott Laird

After thirty-one months of waiting, the Smith family finally has a new home.

On June 27, 2010, Ernie and Robin Smith, along with their children, twins Sara and Paige, and Taylor received the keys to their new house on Fourth Street in Vernonia-- a property

the last thirty-one months than we had in twenty-eight years of marriage," laughed Ernie Smith with relief, looking back on his family's ordeal.

The Smiths arrived on June 27th in three separate vehicles at their new home, all loaded with their belongings, ready to start moving in. They gratefully accepted the keys from previous owner Angie Rhodes and her

property that was flooded.

"I wrote a letter to State Senator Betsy Johnson explaining our situation and heard back from her on Tuesday [June 22]," said Ernie Smith. "Senator Johnson said she had read my letter and was moved by what we have been through. She said she was making some phone calls to see if she could help and promised to get back to us that afternoon. She called back and said that everything was taken care of and the papers would be ready to sign on Wednesday."

Realtor Sharon Bernal, who has been working with the Smiths throughout their whole ordeal, had to quickly get the banks to prepare paperwork so the closing on the new property could take place as swiftly as possible. By Sunday, the family was moving in.

"I've tried to have a positive attitude about the whole thing," said Ernie. "The people down at the Flood Relief Center have been phenomenal--they've worked non-stop. They were learning as they were going [through this] and there has been bureaucracy all over the place that they have had to fight with. But they never gave up and I give them a lot of kudos. We have all our friends to thank who have helped us out so much. And Sharon [Bernal] has been great working with us for the last year and a half, trying to find a house for us and helping us work through the red tape, whether it had to do with the

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Ernie, Sara, Robin, and Paige Smith on the day they moved into their new home.

that is on high ground and out of the flood plain.

The Smiths are the first family to complete a FEMA buyout and close on a new property after being flooded in December of 2007. The Smiths have spent the last two-and-a-half years living with friends, in travel trailers, in a FEMA-provided manufactured home, in a couple of different rental homes, and in an RV at Vernonia's Anderson Park campground. June 27th provided the final stop in their long journey.

"We've moved more times in

two girls, Sara and Carly. The Rhodes girls had made a sign welcoming the Smith family to their new house.

There were tears of joy all around as the Smiths stood in their new front yard and then entered the new house that was finally theirs.

"This is great," said Ernie. "It's like a million pounds have been lifted off our backs."

The closing on the house came as a surprise, as the family had recently been told there was going to be another delay in the proceedings to finalize the details on the buyout of their

Jamboree Logging Show May Be Postponed

The Vernonia Logging Show, usually held on the Sunday of Jamboree weekend, has been postponed for one year.

At press time a group of citizens had scheduled a meeting to try to plan a way to save the Logging Show this year. The Jamboree Committee is also currently looking into options for alternative events to help fill this year's schedule.

Members of the City Economic Development Committee and other concerned citizens were scheduled to meet on Monday July 12 at Lincoln grade School to organize a plan to salvage the show.

According to Jamboree Committee President, Joann Glass, due to the usual organizers of the events having unforeseen personal conflicts and other obligations, the Logging Show will not be held this year, but the intention is to hold it again next year.

"This has nothing to do with the Jamboree Committee or the city not wanting to have it," explained Glass.

According to Glass, the City of Vernonia doesn't have anything to do with the actual planning of events for Jamboree. Glass, who is a city employee, is volunteering her time as a citizen to act as Jamboree Committee President, and doesn't represent the city in any way in her duties.

Please check www.vernoniachamber.org/community/events for up to date information concerning the schedule for this year's Jamboree.

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wheels
park



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2011 miss
rodeo oregon



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4th
of july

School Town Hall July 28th
at 7PM Vernonia School Cafeteria

It's Columbia County Fair and Rodeo Time Again! Let's Play!-- The Fair Starts July 14th!

It's time once again to bake that apple pie, pack up the kids and the chickens and head over to the Columbia County Fair and Rodeo! And this year, don't forget your running shoes!

This year's Columbia County Fair and Rodeo runs from Wednesday, July 14th through Sunday, July 18th. The theme of the Fair this year is "Get Your Game On...Let's Play!," and this year's festival features many new activities as well as many old favorites. "We've got a pretty full week planned," says Ronda Courtney, Columbia County Event Complex Manager.

"Opening Ceremonies" will take place on Wednesday at noon, with all five Columbia County



Nicole Glass of Vernonia, was Grand Champion Jr. Showman in 2009.

communities bringing torches and together lighting the Fair Flame. "It will symbolize the County coming together," says Courtney.

According to Courtney, the "Get Your Game On..." theme means lots of fun activities. There will be a huge checkers game in the grass that everyone can play. There will also be computer games and board games with areas for families to relax and play together. There will be a Footbag Club that will be doing demonstrations on Saturday. Also on Saturday, there will be a "Fairly Fun Run and Walk"-- a 5K run and 1.5 mile walk that will raise money for the Huntington Disease Society of America.

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