

## from the editor

In the next week election ballots will begin to arrive by mail and Vernonian's have some big decisions ahead of them. Two positions are open on the Vernonia City Council and Mayor Sally Harrison is also running for re-election. In all, three of positions are up for grabs at City Hall. With a lot of important businesses on the horizon this is a very important time for Vernonia and its citizens.

Eight candidates have entered the race for those two council positions--the top two receiving the most votes will fill those positions. Four candidates, including incumbent Harrison, are running for Mayor.

To help better inform the voting public, *Vernonia's Voice* has done two things. Early in September we sent out questionnaires to all the candidates asking for responses to five questions concerning the candidates qualifications and current Vernonia city government issues. The candidate

responses to those questionnaires are printed in this issue, in their entirety, in a four page pullout section, beginning on page 11.

We also hosted a political forum on October 5th at the Vernonia Scout Cabin. Called "Meet the Candidates," it offered citizens an opportunity to see and hear the candidates answer questions about themselves and the City of Vernonia. A report from that evening is also contained in this issue beginning on page 7.

Remember, Election Day is November 2nd. Please take time to read through the enclosed information and educate yourself about the candidates you are electing to represent you to conduct city business.

*Scott Laird*  
Editor and Publisher

VERNONIA'S  
*voice*  
reflecting the spirit of our community

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## An Opinion: A Reason to Stay

By Miles Wikstrom

I can hardly wait until the new school is completed, the ribbon is cut, and the first students walk through the door. That will be more than just a proud moment for Vernonians everywhere. It will also be an unmistakable statement of survival. There are simply no examples of towns that have let their schools close and still managed to be viable communities in the years that follow.

Yet there is something else we should consider: where will the graduates go? We've all watched the best and the brightest from past graduating classes pack up their diplomas-- and their bags-- and head for the greener pastures of the I-5 corridor. The reason for that is obvious. If no career opportunities are present in their own home town, they'll leave. After all, many of them are already thinking about having families of their own and supporting one's family requires a job that pays a decent wage and offers good benefits. Ultimately, watching our best young talent leave is not good for families and it's certainly not good for the community.

The health of a community is directly related to the health of the industry in that community. Consider the sad fact that 85% of working adults in Vernonia drive to jobs in the valley. Where do the employers in the valley spend their profits? In the valley. Where do the wage earners spend their paychecks? Too often, in the valley. Now, let's flip that around. How different would Vernonia be if 85% of its workforce had jobs right here? Employers would spend their profits and employees would spend their paychecks in the one place where it would be most beneficial-- in Vernonia.

I had the good fortune to tour the vocational education centers in two high schools this month. Canby High School has made national headlines with its support of the trades and agriculture. Its tech labs look much more like community college settings than high school. In fact, the center is open roughly


18 hours a day-- half for high school students and half for continuing adult education. Central to their success is a philosophical approach that focuses on preparing kids for life, not just graduation.

My second tour was at Tillamook High School, which has partnered with Tillamook Bay Community College, three large Tillamook employers and others to form a consortium to develop a vocational ed center cloned from the Canby model. Labs are being built where students will learn about electronics, pneumatics, hydraulics, computers, and refrigeration, both from professional teachers and from journey-level tradesmen. All those skills are transferable to a variety of industries: farming, manufacturing, construction, wood products-- all of which are currently done here in town.

At the risk of dating myself, I graduated from high school in the late 60's. We had wood shop, metal shop, and auto shop. It breaks my heart to look at high schools today that still offer wood shop, metal shop, and auto shop-- and, too often, not even that much. This is not the world our parents grew up in and we need to reboot our thinking to get in line with the employment needs of the 21st century. More importantly, we need to give our young people a reason to stay instead of an excuse to leave.

Leadership.  
Values.  
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Results.

# Betsy Johnson



I have known Betsy Johnson for many years and have come to know her as a successful businessperson, an active member of our community and as a generous and caring person. It is in her current role as our State Senator, however, that I have come to respect and admire her even more!

As our Senator, Betsy has demonstrated an uncanny ability to not only pay attention to details but also to understand and communicate the big picture regarding the difficult issues we are all facing. She listens carefully to the concerns of everyday citizens as well as those of local city and county leaders and she works tirelessly to reach common sense solutions – and she follows through!

Over the years, I've known many political figures but Betsy stands out. She works harder, cares more and is always there when we need a strong and effective voice in Salem. I am proud to call Betsy my friend and our State Senator.

**Chip Bubl**  
St. Helens

Re-Elect  
**Betsy Johnson**  
Our State Senator!  
P.O. Box R • Scappoose, Oregon 97056

In Memory of:

# All Love

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