

An Opinion

By Scott Laird

What a great couple of days for Vernonia!

First, on December 2nd, federal, state, county and local dignitaries, joined Vernonia School District 47J Superintendent Ken Cox and the School Board in a ground breaking ceremony for the new K-12 school campus. Almost three years to the day after the December 3, 2007 Flood, Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski was on hand to take the controls of the backhoe and grab the first scoop of dirt. Following numerous speeches and the announcement of a \$3.8 million dollar grant from ODOT to help widen Highway 47, everyone moved inside where it was warm. The Governor presented Cox and the Vernonia student body with an Oregon flag to fly over the new school building when it is complete, and then an appreciation lunch was held.

The School District and Oregon Solutions Team did a fantastic job of planning and carrying out the day. Vernonia was able to show its appreciation for the help we have received and celebrate a huge landmark in the progress of this very important project. Momentum is being achieved, more contributions of funds are being announced-- with some big

news expected any day from FEMA concerning the purchase of the old school site-- and the project is moving forward.

Kulongoski, who last visited Vernonia on December 4, 2007, arriving by helicopter to survey the damage from the flood, thanked the Vernonia community for stepping up with a \$13 million dollar bond to get construction started and continually mentioned the determination of our residents to recover from "Oregon's Katrina." "You are the best of Oregon," said Kulongoski.

Certainly this community's willingness to tax itself was key to moving this project forward. But we also owe a deep sense of gratitude to a large number of people who have worked incredibly hard on our behalf. People who represent us have worked hard, but so have many people who had no real connection to Vernonia. We could go on and on talking about who helped get us get to the day when we broke ground on a new school campus-- Betsy Johnson, Mark Ellsworth, Tony Hyde, Jim Johnson, Dennis Segrist, and Gordon Smith come to mind immediately. But surely, without the support and leadership of Governor Kulongoski, we would not be anywhere near to building new schools.

It was a great day in

Vernonia and it was wonderful to be able to welcome our Governor to town to celebrate with us.

On December 4th, sandwiching the third anniversary of the 2007 Flood, Vernonians came together to celebrate "The Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia," a grassroots collaboration of the entire community. This first-year event was very well received and enjoyed by many people. Although it competed with the Oregon-Oregon State Civil War Game, the turnout was still good and many new ideas have surfaced about how to make the event even more successful next year.

A big thank you to everyone who worked so hard to put this together-- the carolers in their fantastic costumes, the Community Choir, the folks from St. Mary's Church who put together the live Nativity Scene, and everyone else who participated and helped organize the day. All of your hard work, practice, and energy is greatly appreciated. It was great to see our community come together in celebration and collaboration in this way.

A special thank you to Marilyn Nicks for all her hard work in coordination of this event. It was a huge success!

Weed Management Shortcourse

The OSU Extension office in St. Helens will be offering the 2010 Weed Management Shortcourse on Thursday, December 16th from 9:00 a.m. to Noon p.m. at the Extension office. The shortcourse has been approved by ODA for 3 hours of "other" credits. Cost of the class is \$15 and pre-registration is

required. Topics will include: Weed Biology on Farms and Managed Landscapes, Weed Mapping and Weed ID resources, 25 Weeds You Need to Know Something About, and Herbicide Damage Symptoms. For more information or to pre-register, contact the Extension office at 503 397-3462.

Senior Center Activities

Connie's Fabulous Breakfasts: Fabulous breakfasts are available to the public on Fridays for a cost of only \$3.50. The event happens at the Senior Center (446 Bridge Street) from 7:30 to 9:00 AM each Friday. Meal price includes a beverage, too. Enter through the side, parking lot door. What a deal!

Week Day Lunches: The Vernonia Senior Center offers nutritious and tasty lunches each weekday for only \$4. These are available to the public, not just Senior Citizens. (Mealtime is noon; late arrivals may not be served.) You can reserve your lunch by calling by 11:15 AM, or further in advance if possible, to assist the cooks as they prepare the day's meals.

Maple Bars available locally! Connie King, the cook at the Senior Center, is making maple bars each day. The maple bars are available to the public, too, and only cost \$1 each. Availability is subject to quantity on hand. You can assure yourself of a good supply by pre-ordering them directly from Connie by calling the Senior Center (503-429-3912) any week day, from 7:00 AM-3:00 PM. Please allow one day lead time for larger orders. The Center's front door opens at 9:00, but the side parking lot door opens at 7:00. Ah, sweet treats!

Thrift Store: Bargain prices can be found in Vernonia's Senior Center in their Thrift Store. The retail store is open Monday through Friday, from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM. The Thrift Store provides funds for the Senior Center's facility and its many activities. Donations can also be dropped off during those same hours, and donated clothes need to be clean and in good condition so they are "sales ready". We are offering half off during the first week of each month. Buy locally and support your local Senior Center. **For after hours drop-offs please contact Pauline 503-429-5810.**

Special Days: On the last Wednesday of the month Wauna Credit Union will be serving ice cream. On the last Friday of the month we will serve birthday cake and ice cream to celebrate that month's birthdays.

Membership Dues: Another way to support Vernonia's Senior Center is to pay the \$15 annual membership dues. Checks may be mailed or dropped off at the Senior Center. Anyone 50 and older may join.

Questions? Call: (503) 429-3912

Vernonia's Voice is published
twice each month on the
2nd and 4th Tuesday.

Look for our next issue December 28th.

VERNONIA'S
voice
reflecting the spirit of our community

Publisher and Managing Editor
Scott Laird
503-367-0098
scott@vernoniasvoice.com

Photography

Scott Laird
Rick Wagner

Copy Editor

Dennis Nicks

Contributors

Lynn Berry
Timothy Kieran
Shannon Romtvedt

Want to advertise?

Contact: ads@vernoniasvoice.com

Have an article?

Contact: news@vernoniasvoice.com

One year subscriptions

(24 issues) \$35

PO Box 55

Vernonia, OR 97064

503-367-0098

www.VernoniasVoice.com

3.95%^{apr*}

**Vehicle
Financing
or
Home Equity
Line of Credit**

Our loans can help save you money — whether your heart is set on driving a new vehicle or making improvements to your home. Contact Wauna Federal Credit Union and tell us you want a loan that's **easier than 1-2-3!**



Wauna Federal Credit Union

Own the Difference

800-773-3236 / waunafcu.org

Astoria Clatskanie St. Helens Scappoose (Nov. 2010) Vernonia Warrenton

*APR=Annual Percentage Rate. APR is subject to change; rates & financing are offered based on applicant's credit worthiness and term of the loan. Financing available to members only. Contact waunafcu.org for membership details. Special Promotional Terms: Vehicle Financing—financing for new or used cars, trucks, SUVs, vans; includes up to 100% financing and up to 84 months to repay; Home Equity Line of Credit—3.95%^{apr} applies to first 6-months for new balances only, and then all normal terms and conditions apply. The 1-2-3 Loan Special offer ends December 31, 2010.

