

# What's Happening at the Vernonia Airport

Very few Vernonia citizens know a lot about what happens at the Vernonia Airport. It is the old idiom, "Out of sight, out of mind." Most of us don't see it or drive past it each day; in fact, the Vernonia Airport isn't even located in the city limits. You have to go looking for it to find it, (it's just off Timber Road, a few miles south of town) and few of us have a reason to do that.

And yet, it is still a functioning part of our city infrastructure. It may not be vital, but it is still a property that is owned by the city and provides some benefit for at least some of our citizens and can draw visitors.

The citizens that use the Vernonia Airport are very engaged in the upkeep of the facility, volunteering time, labor and materials to help keep it functioning. With hangers that are leased, the Vernonia Airport generates a small income and basically pays for its own operation.

Currently, there is a lot of activity at the Vernonia Airport, with a new hanger and the possibility of more to come, a possible extension of the runway, and possible development of light industrial space on private property adjacent to the airfield.

Mike Seager, a pilot, flight instructor, and member of the Airport Committee, recently finished

construction on a new hanger for his plane. Seager recently gave Vernonia's Voice a tour of the facility and showed off some of the work that has recently been completed.

Seager has his office and ground school located at the airport. He runs his flight instruction business from that location, although he actually conducts

from Germany, and a family from Switzerland.

There have been several small construction projects that have taken place recently. Last year, a culvert that runs directly under the runway was replaced and a drainage ditch was cleared out. Bud Dow of Dow Brothers Construction, and a frequent user of the airport, donated the pipe and time to install it. Gwin Logging donated the equipment for the installation, and Seager donated two loads of gravel. The culvert drains the entire area above the runway; the day we visited, a large amount of water was flowing away from and under the runway. Seager says the screen that covers the mouth of the culvert requires daily cleaning to keep the water

flowing, as beavers are constantly active and at work in the area. "This is a major thing we have to do every day in winter," explains Seager.

The City is currently working to extend the runway onto private

property owned by Tim Bero. Bero and Dow have roughly carved in the extension, although, because of zoning technicalities, it is only in use as a taxiway for now. Currently, the runway is approximately 3000 feet long; the extension would add about 1200 more feet.

Bero also has plans to construct a number of flex buildings on his property that could house light industry; the hope is to create new jobs that would be close to the community. There is also a proposal currently being developed by Dow to construct a set of new hangers on city property. Dow would lease the land from the city and build and rent the hangers himself.

"If we can put up more hangers, it will attract some new individuals out here and would be really good for the overall structure of the airport," says Seager.

With a long history dating back to the 1930's, the Vernonia Airport remains a functional part of the city infrastructure. It is an attraction that has the ability to draw outside visitors as well as local users and be an economic driver for the community.



Mike Seager in front of his new hanger at the Vernonia Airport.

his flying lessons from the Scappoose Airport; he needs a hard surface landing strip and the Vernonia runway is grass.

Seager regularly brings clients to Vernonia for his flight instruction business. His clients, and often their families, stay in local lodging establishments for several days, eating at local restaurants and patronizing local businesses.

"We get some pretty interesting people that come here to train with us," says Seager. Recently, he had a student

## Vernonia Grange News

The Vernonia Grange will hold a one day rummage sale on Saturday, April 16, from 9 to 4 pm, at the Grange Hall, 375 North Street. All proceeds will go to the Grange for building improvements. If you have items to donate, please bring them to the Grange between 7 and 9 pm on Friday, April 15.

Bingo Nights at the Grange will be offered on Saturday, April 23, at 6:30 PM. Come on out for a night of fun, food and friendship. Youth under 18 may play if accompanied by a parent.

Does your organization or church need a regular meeting place? The Vernonia Grange is seeking additional tenants to keep this charming old building actively occupied. Short term rental rates are \$10 per hour; longer term rental rates are negotiable. With high ceilings, wood floor, seating for 75 or more, new folding tables, limited kitchen facilities, and a stage, the space is suitable for a variety of activities. Grange membership is required for at least one member of your group. At \$35 per year, the Grange offers you membership in a 143 year old organization that promotes community service, sustainable agriculture and healthy rural living. Contact any of the following Grange officers for more information: Robb Wilson, [sweedster@hotmail.com](mailto:sweedster@hotmail.com), 503.704.2973, Dr. Carol MacIntyre, [cccmnd@yahoo.com](mailto:cccmnd@yahoo.com), 503.481.4096, Maggie Peyton, [maggie@nehalem.org](mailto:maggie@nehalem.org), 503.429.0869, or Tobie Finzel, [tobief@aol.com](mailto:tobief@aol.com), 503.705.2173.

**Good Friday Service**

957 State Avenue  
Vernonia Community Church



April 22nd at 7:30 PM

All Are Welcome!

**Local Properties For Rent**



**406 A Street**  
5 bedroom, 3 bath, family room, laundry room. Updated vinyl windows throughout. Formerly a 3-plex converted into a home. For faster reply contact Ted at 503-799-0999 or leave msg at 503-255-2959 \$975/mo.

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