

Vernonia City News...

At the April 18, 2011, Vernonia City Council Meeting:

Council Hears Presentation About Rave Parties— DeAnna Pearl, Director of the Vernonia Prevention Coalition, gave a presentation about the impact of recent Rave parties that have been held outside the city limits of Vernonia on Keasey Road. Pearl explained that the most recent party, held during the weekend of April 8-10, drew as many as 850 people and was the second such party this year. According to Pearl, complaints received and action taken by the Columbia County Sheriff's office led to the cancellation of another party planned in May on the private property site, although Pearl noted that the Sheriff's Department was unable to break up the party this month because of a lack of resources and manpower. Pearl reported that the organizers of the party had not obtained proper permits to host this type of event.

Columbia County Sheriff Deputy Troy Caldwell, who had been investigating the event, was in attendance at the Vernonia City Council Meeting on April 18. According to Caldwell, the organizer of the event, who lives on the property, was charged afterward with nine counts of disorderly conduct, threatening neighbors, furnishing alcohol to a minor, and endangering the welfare of a minor. According to Caldwell, the property owner has begun proceedings to evict the event organizer.

Pearl asked Council to consider if they have clear expectations for their

Police Department to continue with self-compliance of established ordinances for community safety and to prioritize and support expectations through the city budget. She also suggested a Social Hosting Ordinance to hold property owners responsible for unlawful activities, a Citizens Patrol to create a presence in the community, and signage in City parks as prevention measures that involve little cost.

Council Moves Forward With Water Rate Study— At the request of the Public Works Committee, Council authorized the City Administrator to draft a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Oregon Association of Water Utilities to assist with the completion of a water rate study. According to information provided, the cost of this service to the city is estimated to be between \$14,000 and not to exceed \$17,000. The study is expected to be completed by August 2011 and it is anticipated that there will be at least one public hearing to review and comment on adjustments to the water rate that will be developed.

Council Schedules Work Session To Review Applications— Council scheduled a Work Session for Monday, May 9, 2011, at 6:00 P.M. to meet with League of Oregon City representative Jenny Messmer to begin reviewing applications for the Vernonia City Administrator position. The application process closed on April 15th.

Council Approves Expansion of Open Air Market— Council approved a proposal from the Vernonia Community Learning Center Committee for operation of the Open Air Market for the 2011 season. The proposal included a change in market day to Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.; change of location to Madison Avenue, south of Bridge Street; and Kathy Larsen to serve as Open Air Market Manager with compensation of 15% of profit. The market is scheduled to begin on June 4th and will run through October 1st.

Council Approves Flood Mitigation Projects— Council approved two resolutions regarding two properties for flood mitigation: 661 Jefferson Avenue and 176 A Street. The resolutions included required consultation with USACE and ODOT to ensure there are no other planned uses for those properties and the authorization for use of CDBG and HMGP funds for the buyout of the properties.

Mayor Appoints Economic Development Committee Member— Mayor Josette Mitchell, with approval from Council, appointed Mitch Seibert to the Vernonia Economic Development Committee.

Council Approves Funds— Council approved the payment of two sewer bond payments: 92-03 for \$18,537 and 92-02 for \$79,419. Council also approved payment of water bond payment 91-04 for \$119,949.

Council approved the purchase of a used 6" trash pump with intake and discharge hoses to be used by the water and sewer departments. The asking price is \$12,500.

Council Approves Agreement for Maintenance of Radio Tower Site— Council approved a lease agreement with Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District for the lease, operation and maintenance of a radio tower site on city property.

Geography Matters: GIS Products

By Sean Pickner

Vernonia GIS has been developing a variety of datasets that represents both features within the community, and the information that is related to those features. When you look at the database of information that the city has compiled, there has been a significant improvement in access to this information-- but without a purpose, it is difficult to actually utilize this information. A GIS professional can analyze and manage information to an astonishing level, but if the concept of having a purpose is overlooked, then the products that are produced become limited.

When reviewing the successes of Vernonia GIS, the concept of having a purpose becomes a major focus in its development. One example of Vernonia GIS successes is the development of information related to the Public Utility Systems. Since the beginning of Vernonia GIS, there has been an established purpose to provide a more comprehensive view of the utility systems. The purpose came from the need to identify and improve upon missing and outdated reference

materials.

The development of this project took time, and consisted of reviewing maps, consulting professionals, and verifying through field reconnaissance. As a result of the time spent developing and storing this information within a GIS, it will allow for future analysis on the product, but the initial purpose of the project is a key element in the successful use of this product.

GIS has produced a great foundation to help the city better manage information about place, and the ability to recognize purpose has provided usable tools that the city can benefit from. I have watched many governing agencies begin to adopt GIS as an essential part of how they function, and, like many investments, the amount that is put in greatly affects the degree of reward.

The future of Vernonia GIS has identified many products that can be developed, but like any visionary's perspective, a usable purpose for these products will be the determining factor on the amount of benefits GIS can provide the city.

DEQ Approves Vernonia Tank Farm Site For Redevelopment City of Vernonia Will Relocate Senior Center and Food Pantry to the Site

DEQ has determined that current environmental conditions at the former Vernonia Tank Farm & Warehouse site will allow for future use as a non-residential senior center and food pantry. The City of Vernonia and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are working together to relocate facilities like Vernonia's senior center damaged by the devastating 2007 floods.

After reviewing the results of environmental investigations at the site in 2009 and 2010, DEQ concluded that the property does not pose a risk to human health and the environment and that no environmental cleanup is needed.

The Vernonia Tank Farm & Warehouse site is located south of Vernonia City Hall and northwest of the intersection of Umatilla Street and Weed Avenue.

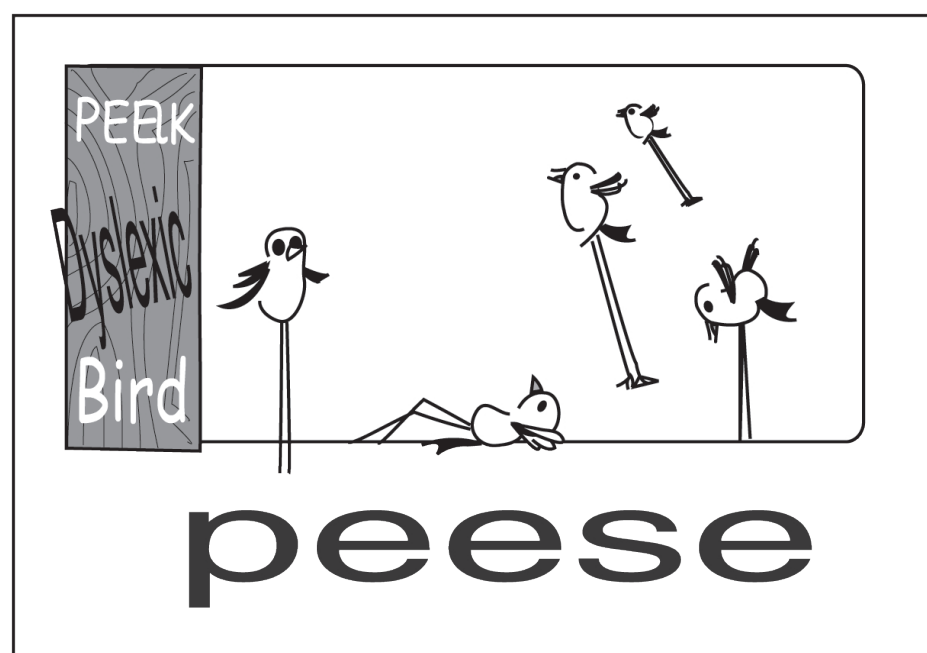
From 1931 to 1960, Shell Oil Company owned the site and operated it as a small bulk oil storage facility also called a tank farm. The property was reportedly vacant when the Oregon Department of Transportation purchased the property in 1974.

Since that time, the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation purchased the property and is transferring it to the City of Vernonia for future use as a senior center and food pantry. That facility was damaged by previous flooding events in 2007. This relocation is part of a joint effort by the city and the

Federal Emergency Management Agency to relocate residences, schools, businesses, and community services impacted by the devastating floods.

DEQ recommends that the city develop a health and safety plan before site redevelopment activities. If during site redevelopment the city encounters contamination, it should handle the materials according to all applicable regulations.

DEQ recommends the three off-site monitoring wells on Weed Avenue be kept in place to monitor if there is any pollution in the soil around the property.



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