

from the editor

This is the time of year when we start to reflect and look back on the past year. This last year has certainly been difficult here in Vernonia. At the City level we have suffered through the recall and replacement of three City Councilors, the firing and then rehiring of a City Administrator, and the termination of a police officer. On a personal level several long-time families have suffered tragedy or received extremely bad news, notably and recently the Baska and Titus families.

It has been a trying and often difficult year—and yet, as we start to heal from the political upheaval we went through and continue to support families in need, I am also reminded that, as we have suffered through these hardships and sadness's, we continue to be a community that cares. Time and time again we have seen that Vernonia is a community that will rally around itself and try to make a bad situation better. Whether its choosing sides in a political or city personnel matter or showing support for a family or friend in need, the citizens of this community care, and they show it with their energy, their actions and their spirit. They show up when they are needed and step up, sometimes even when they are not asked.

The people in this community really and truly care, and that caring makes a difference. And for me, that caring is worth celebrating. As I look over the last year I see much that is worthy of our praise, I see much worth being thankful for and much that we should celebrate.

This is a community that cares about its children. Whether we do as

much as is needed or as much as we can, we have made our children a priority. We voted to tax ourselves to fund new schools. We have groups and organizations that focus on children—like the coaches, volunteers and other supporters of the Vernonia Boosters who make sure our youth have structured activities to engage in. The Vernonia Kiwanis have children as their focus and the Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters provide gifts for children in need. The Vernonia Prevention Coalition has also focused on children and helps provide the tools to so they have the opportunity to grow up and be healthy and productive citizens and adults.

Vernonia Cares Food Bank Director Sandy Welch, along with her Board of Directors and volunteers continue to provide support for families in our community with food and other necessities. Their holiday food boxes bring joy at the time of year when everyone should be able to celebrate.

The Vernonia Lions Club just donated \$2,000 to help Vernonia Cares fill those holiday boxes; that is just one example of the huge amount of support the Lions Club provides throughout our community.

The friends of Kari Titus organized and held a fundraising dinner a few weeks ago to help the Titus family with medical expenses as Kari battles cancer. Employees at the Vernonia Schools are supporting their co-worker Roxanna Heath-Sherman as she also battles cancer. Friends of the Baska family have worked to raise funds to honor Scott Baska after his tragic death and help support his family. Dean Schaumburg,

injured in a logging accident four years ago just moved into a home specially designed and built for his wheelchair--built in a large part with donations of funds, labor and materials.

Members of the Pioneer Baptist Church and the Vernonia Community Church are hosting a Community Thanksgiving Dinner on November 24th—what a great collaboration! and certainly worth celebrating. The local Downtown Association, along with other business owners, organizations and citizens have also come together to organize the second “Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia” on December 3rd. Last year the event was a great success—this year looks like it will again be a great way to celebrate the holidays and small town life.

Apparently we are setting a good example for our youth—at Vernonia High School, students in the Leadership Class produced a video that they took to a leadership conference and showed to other student leaders from around the state of Oregon. The video was for a fundraising campaign to raise money for the new Vernonia School. In the video students encourage other students to “donate a dollar, build a school, save a town.” The seniors who worked on this project won't even get to spend a day of class in the new school, yet they cared enough to put time and energy into improving this community.

I could continue to talk about the people and organizations worth celebrating in Vernonia, but hopefully you understand my point. As Vernonians we care about our community and about what happens here. We care about each

VERNONIA'S
voice
reflecting the spirit of our community

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other and we take it seriously when we see a need. And that is worth celebrating.

Scott Laird
Editor and Publisher

Building Buyers Beware

The City of Vernonia provides this WARNING to people making a decision to purchase a home or commercial building within the city limits:

PLEASE! Physically inspect the building yourself or hire a professional to assess whether the building was flooded AND meet with City staff to make sure that the building is not subject to floodplain management rules.

These rules may restrict a purchaser's ability to modify the building if it is located in the floodway. In some cases where the

building was flooded, the building may be required to be elevated at the owner's expense within a certain time period. If you purchase a building that has this requirement associated with it you will be required to fill out a flood plain development permit prior to having the city utilities turned on at the subject building. And if you fail to elevate the house in that time period, local Ordinance No. 851 allows for a daily fine of up to \$500 per day to be levied. If you have any questions, please contact the City staff at (503) 429-5291.



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