

Vernonia City News...

At the September 17, 2012 City Council Meeting:

Council Hears Planning Updates—City Planner Carole Connell gave Council updates on several issues the Planning Commission is currently working on. Connell gave brief updates on proposed amendments to city parking regulations, changes to RV Habitation rules, and a Safe Routes to School grant which has been funded to provide outreach to research how the new city transportation plan is working in regards to students getting to the new school. Connell also introduced a thirty-five

page draft of an Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA) report which city staff created as a requirement when changes are made to the city Comprehensive Plan. The City is currently considering rezoning over 130 properties within city limits. Many of the zoning designations are being changed to a new designation called Public Institution because they sit in the flood zone. The City is also considering changing the zoning from Residential to Downtown for properties along parts of Rose and Weed Avenues. A hearing before Council has been scheduled for October 1, 2012. The draft of the EOA includes sections on

economic development objectives, population and demographic trends, information about the current Vernonia land inventory, future housing needs and an employment forecast.

Mayor Makes Appointment to Airport Committee—Based on a recommendation from the Airport Committee and with approval from Council, Mayor Josette Mitchell appointed Dennis Peters to the Airport Committee.

City Administrator Gives Council Report—City Administrator Bill Haack

updated Council on several items he has been working on with a written and verbal report. Haack reported that the City has hired Dan Kenoyer as part-time Building and Grounds Maintenance and that the City is currently in the process of selecting a wintertime Park Host for Anderson Park. Haack also provided updates on work to detect leaks within the city water distribution system, meetings he had with the new Banks City Manager, the new head park ranger at Stub Stewart State Park, with ODOT personnel and with professionals working to provide medical services for Vernonia.

Vernonia Geographic

By Ben Fousek

After a hiatus from contributing to Vernonia's Voice, I'm excited to be once again writing about Vernonia from a geographic perspective. A lot has changed here in Vernonia over the last year from a geographic point of view; and with more change on the way, I'll have plenty to share with you in coming installments.

Today I'd like to let everyone know about the City of Vernonia Geographic Information System's (GIS) new web site. The site features a parcel search, which allows you to search for parcels by address or parcel ID (PID); and view parcel information. Official city maps, including land use and flood zones are available for download in PDF format. These include zoning and flood zones, with more coming in the next few months. The best feature of the site is an interactive web map called Vernonia Explorer.

Vernonia Explorer is a great way to learn about Vernonia, and gain a better geographic view of our town. Vernonia Explorer allows you to view over 12 data layers, including parcels, zoning, flood zones, wetlands and more. Parcel search and identify tools make finding a parcel and its related information easy. Parcel information links to Columbia County Assessment data are included. Print a parcel information sheet for a specific parcel or export a customized PDF map. More layers and tools will be added in the coming months, so check back again.

The City of Vernonia GIS can be accessed at <http://vernonia.trianglegis.com/>. Vernonia Explorer is also available on the city's website by clicking on City Info → Vernonia GIS.

Vernonia land use and zoning are in the news, so in the next installment of Vernonia Geographic we'll check out Vernonia's current land inventory, perhaps do a little geo-analysis, and see what we might learn from it.

Vernonia GeoFact: Vernonia city limits has height to width ratio of 0.53; being twice as wide as it is high. This ratio is important for proper scaling and page size when producing print maps.

Ben Fousek is the owner/operator of Triangle GIS.

“National Taking Back Unwanted Prescription Drugs Day” is September 29 New RX Depository is located at Vernonia City Hall

On September 29 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM the Vernonia Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will give the public another opportunity to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. Bring your medications for disposal to City Hall at 1001 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

Last April, Americans turned in 552,161 pounds—276 tons—of prescription drugs at over 5,600 sites operated by the DEA and nearly 4,300 state and local law enforcement partners. In its four previous Take Back events, DEA and its partners took in over 1.5 million pounds—nearly 775 tons—of pills.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, Americans are now advised that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines—flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash—both pose potential safety and health hazards.

Four days after the first event, Congress

passed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, which amends the Controlled Substances Act to allow an “ultimate user” of controlled substance medications to dispose of them by delivering them to entities authorized by the Attorney General to accept them. The Act also allows the Attorney General to authorize long term care facilities to dispose of their residents’ controlled substances in certain instances. DEA is drafting regulations to implement the Act. Until new regulations are in place, local law enforcement agencies like Vernonia Police Department and the DEA will continue to hold prescription drug take-back events every few months.

Great News! In partnership with the Vernonia Prevention Coalition, (VPC) the Vernonia Police Department purchased an RX Depository. This depository is provided in an effort to collect any unused RX and potentially harmful substances. “Much like other communities, we have seen an increase of prescription thefts and other related crimes affecting our community,” states DeAnna Pearl, VPC Director. “Like many others, we are taking a more proactive step in reducing the access of prescription drugs in our community.” Unlike other scheduled take back programs hosted in Vernonia, citizens will be able to deposit items during regular business hours, and during City Council and other after hours meetings. No waiting for an officer or a special date. City Hall doors open at 8:00 AM and close at 5:00 PM.

Extreme Couponing Workshop in Vernonia

Saving money on food purchases is more critical today than ever. If you'd like to learn more about how to maximize your use of grocery coupons, plan to attend a special fundraiser for Vernonia Cares and the Vernonia Grange on Thursday, October 4th at 6:00 PM.

Extreme-couponer Saretta will give a presentation on couponing with lots of tips and some

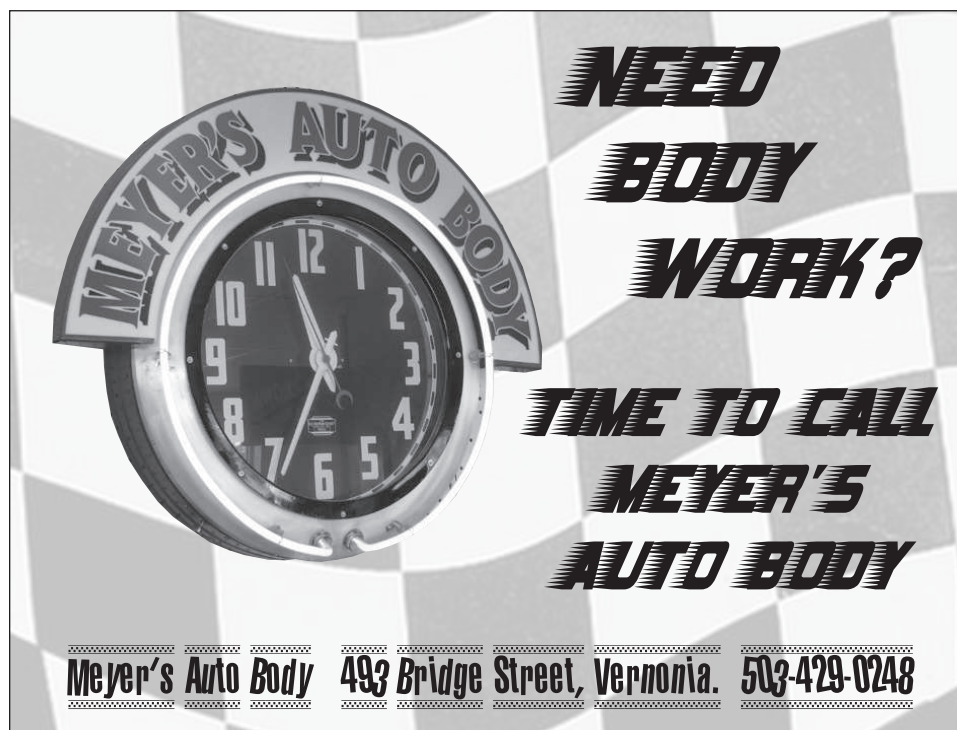
surprises to share. Bring paper and pencil to take notes during this informative session. The class will be held at the Vernonia Grange, 375 North Street. Admission is \$10 and two cans of food for Vernonia Cares or its pet food partner, Bailey's Pantry. Please contact Carol Davis at 503.429.9671 if you have questions.

Vernonia City Council Meetings and Closures

City Council Meetings are scheduled for 7 PM:
Monday, October 1, 2012
Monday, October 15, 2012

City Closures are scheduled for:
Veterans Day, Mon. November 12

Dates and times subject to change due to conflicts of schedules



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