

from the editor

Many people attend the Vernonia Friendship Jamboree and Logging Show each year in Vernonia. Many people return year after year because they enjoy seeing old friends and meeting new people. Others enjoy the events: the parade, lawn mower races, horse gaming and logging competitions. Others enjoy the food, music or other activities. Some celebrate our heritage, whether it's the logging culture or the fact that Jamboree weekend has been a part of the Vernonia community for almost sixty years.

The Vernonia Jamboree and Logging Show Committee recently distributed a survey to find out just how much attendees really know about the Jamboree. Mostly they wanted to know if people really understand who organizes and pays for Jamboree. It turns out many of us don't understand just how Jamboree actually comes together each year.

According to the survey results, over a third of respondents think that Jamboree is run by either the Chamber of Commerce or the City of Vernonia. One third had no idea how much it cost to organize and run the Jamboree each year. A third of those who responded thought the Jamboree cost \$5,000 or less to run.

Just to set the record straight, Jamboree is organized by volunteers each year-the previously mentioned Jamboree and Logging Show Committee.

Fees that are paid by vendors and participants go towards paying the numerous expenses it takes to hold Jamboree each year. Insurance, port-o-lets, and garbage collection are all things that I think most of us just take for granted when we show up each year to enjoy the parade followed by BBQ, elephant ears, and milkshakes.

Recent budget documents show that Jamboree racks up around \$10-\$15,000 each year in expenses and that over the last several years the Jamboree has operated at a loss.

What else did the committee learn from the survey? 96% of respondents attended the parade last year. Favorite events: Parade, Logging Show and Food Court. Why do people attend? Because it's fun, to see friends, it's a fun local event, and to show their community pride.

This past year several new members joined the Jamboree and Logging Show Committee and are attempting to breathe new life into the event. The Committee has several new executive officers and is made up of President Ernie Smith, Vice President Bill Hawkins and Secretary/Treasurer Alicia Normand. The Committee has decided to meet continuously throughout the year on a monthly basis as a way to better plan, organize, and fund raise for the upcoming event.

continued on page 21

An Opinion Pass the Jail Levy

By Scott Laird

On November 5, Columbia County residents will be asked to vote in a special election. On that ballot will be Measure 5-234 which proposes a tax levy to raise funds for operation of the Columbia County Jail.

In 1998 Columbia County voters approved funding for the construction of a new jail with a 225 bed capacity. The jail had no corresponding funding for operations. The county has depended on renting beds space to the federal government which is an undependable source of revenue.

The County meanwhile has had to cut bed space they fund due to a General Fund deficit, leading to space shortages and the early release of prisoners. Right now Columbia County is only able to fund 25 beds in their own jail.

The proposed levy of \$0.5797/per \$1,000 of assessed value would provide funding to restore 75 beds for local use as well as funding additional staff for the jail.

Columbia County residents have been notoriously unwilling in the recent past to support funding for the Sheriff's Department, twice rejecting levies that would have provided additional patrols on our county roads. This levy is somewhat different as it directly impacts city police as well.

In 2013 Columbia County has released over 600 criminals early as a result of not having enough bed space to house them. Criminals who have been arrested or who are sentenced to less than a year of jail time are being allowed to walk free.

If the citizens of Columbia County fail to pass this levy the Columbia County jail will close. I recently did a ride along with the Vernonia

continued on page 5

VERNONIA'S
voice
reflecting the spirit of our community

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

Contributors

Chip Bubl
Dr. Ken Cox
Tobie Finzel
Dr. Carol McIntyre
Jack Phillips
Sonia Spackman

Photography

Scott Laird
Bill Langmaid
Josette and Casey Mitchell
David Western

Want to advertise? Have an article?

Contact: **scott@vernoniasvoice.com**

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PO Box 55
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503-367-0098

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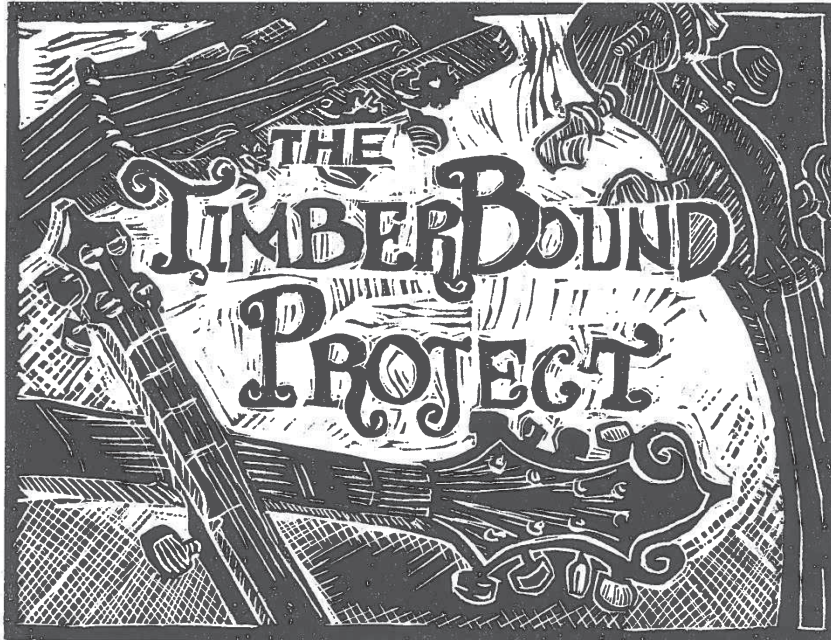
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