

## Decreasing Cat Overpopulation in Vernonia

In July, Kim Tierney responded to an appeal from Angela Bettencourt to help a family with a large number of feral cats. Tierney agreed to help trap and transport these feral and stray kitties to the Feral Cat Coalition Clinic in Portland. At the Feral Cat Coalition clinic, cats and kittens are spay and neutered, vaccinated, treated for fleas, given antibiotics and pain

trying to help find homes.

Many people react when they learn that cats are released after being trapped, but trap and release is considered a very effective way to reduce the cat overpopulation. Feral and stray cats have a rough life and don't tend to live very long. However, a pregnant feral cat can have 18 kittens during a season, and it is easy to see why it is so critical to get them spayed. Intact males are more likely to spray and fight. They are more likely to spread disease like FIV through fighting and mating. Intact males will go out and find girlfriends and bring them to the food.

After Tierney learned about how Vernonia had a reputation for having large populations of feral and stray cats, she arranged with the Feral Cat Coalition to coordinate clinics for Vernonia cats. There is no charge for this service, but the suggested donation per cat is \$30 but any donation level is welcome. Since July, Tierney with the help of many caregivers has taken in 132 cats and kittens. An additional 60 are scheduled for the next month. Since this effort began, many others in the community have stepped up to help by nursing and socializing kittens and



Kim Tierney with an easy to make outdoor cat shelter. Plans are available at the local hardware stores.

Kittens can be spayed as early as 2 months of age if they weigh at least 2 pounds. Kittens less than 3 months can be tamed and homed. There is now a list of community volunteers who have stepped up to either socialize feral kittens or nurse young ones that have been found. Creatures Pet Store has helped place many abandoned and feral kittens. Michal Smith, owner of Creatures, has also contributed money for veterinary care and has spent significant time nursing

many kittens back to health. If you find kittens less than 3 months old, catch them or ask Tierney for help trapping them so they can be tamed and placed into homes.

In the last several months entire neighborhoods have worked together to trap and care for the stray and feral cats in their neighborhoods. Several neighbor-



Kittens that have been caught and tamed have been available for adoption at Creatures Pet Store.

hoods have tackled their feral cat problems, fixing the adults and trapping kittens so they can be tamed and rehomed. Winter is a critical time to keep up trapping because cats don't normally reproduce until spring.

What doesn't work is to ignore the situation. Abandoning or dumping cats is illegal, cruel and makes

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## FEMA Compliance in the City of Vernonia

Vernonia City staff recently met with Christine Shirley, National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator with the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. She reviewed a sample of open file issues from the 1996-1998 flood recovery effort as well as discussed in general terms the plan to conduct a Community Assistance Visit soon to review all of the more recent flood recovery projects since 2007.

Shirley also reviewed a small sample of properties that are held by financial institutions and/or were acquired

out of foreclosure. The State will provide the City with guidance on modifications to the appeal process for substantial damaged buildings when acquired out of foreclosure, guidance on the use of substantial damage and substantial improvement rules where the assessed value for improvements is a fraction of the pre-flood value when acquired through foreclosure, and will assist the City in securing information that would support the creation of a floodplain management program.

The City will review their files and work with Columbia County flood recovery staff over the next two months to ensure that are files are complete. Any deficiencies that

are found will generate a phone call and/or letter to property owners asking them to provided information for City files.

Working with the State, the City will secure a data set to identify, by address, those buildings that have received any federal assistance (e.g. Increased Cost of Compliance, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, and Flood Mitigation Assistance). If a property was ever damaged by floodwaters and the property owner at that time received a NFIP benefit for any portion of that damage, then that property must retain NFIP insurance in perpetuity for that future property owner to have access to any FEMA benefit during a future storm event.

The City intends to develop a procedure to record a Notice of Design-

ation of Substantial Damage against flood enforcement properties that are not in compliance. This will be reviewed by the City Attorney and City Council prior to enactment. This will assist with bank owned properties in particular, as there are no disclosure requirements for properties acquired through bank and HUD owned foreclosure sales processes.

The City's ability to maintain complete files is contingent on the community working proactively with them. This includes pulling building permits for all work performed on your property - as a physical check of City files is a component of a Community Assistance Visit. Having all flood foundation vents open and clear is a second major element of the review.

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## A Christmas Carol

A one hour, family friendly and 100% FREE performance for Vernonia! December 7 at 7:30 at the Grange Hall

Bag&Baggage Productions, Hillsboro's only professional theatre, is proud to present a free rehearsed reading of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol!, as part of the "Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia" celebration on December 7th. Six professional actors in Victorian costume will perform a 1 hour version of this classic holiday tale followed by a short post-show discussion about the role that professional theatre can play in YOUR community! The performance is FREE for all and is 100% family friendly! Come and experience Bag&Baggage's unique, tongue-in-cheek style and celebrate the holidays with laughter!

For more information about Bag&Baggage, please visit our website at [www.bagnbaggage.org](http://www.bagnbaggage.org).

