

## Schools Update: Attendance

The topic of attendance in our schools has come up quite a bit recently. We are addressing the issue, and we're beginning to see changes for the better.

Mr. Miller presented data at the board meeting last month that shows significant improvement in our Kindergarten attendance. We are continuing our research into our middle and high school attendance data, which we will be reporting on at our next board meeting on March 13.

Parents were notified earlier this year of our new attendance policy. We have made it a practice to have teachers, counselors, and, if necessary, the principal contact parents about their student's attendance. We have made adjustments to that policy and will be placing it on the Attendance page on our district website.

In other news, we had a successful town hall meeting last Tuesday, February 25th. With over 60 in attendance a number of different topics were covered. The two main items of discussion were future opportunities for our career and technical education programs and the establishment of a task force to research the feasibility, advantages, and disadvantages of a four day school week. If you are interested in participating or have ideas about either of these topics, please contact the district office.

## Boosters Buzz

**Basketball-**Vernonia Youth Basketball just wrapped up their very successful 2013-'14 season. There were a total of 5 teams that consisted of 47 players. The teams ranged from 3rd-6th grade boys and girls. Vernonia dominated



their opponents throughout the 8 weeks of games, and at every age group that participated. The teams participated in the Forest Grove Youth Basketball league and have made a name for themselves over the years. A big thanks goes out to our Booster Basketball organization for making this happen; Mackenzie Dennis-President, Amanda Wolf-Secretary/Treasurer and several board members; Derek Handegard, Jeff Ely and Amy Cieloha. A big thanks also goes out to the coaches of our five teams. Mackenzie Dennis, Amanda Wolf and Jasen Shaw were the coaches of the 5th/6th grade girls. Todd Sullivan, Jason Harral and Scott Rice were the coaches of the 5th/6th grade boys. Bob Zavales and Stacy Adams were the coaches of the 3rd/4th grade girls. Greg McCallum and Matt Poetter were the coaches of the 3rd/4th grade boys. Thank you all so much for another successful and fun season!!

**Last Call-**for any youth interested in participating in youth baseball or softball. Sign-ups were held in February, but we are still looking for more kids to fill our teams. Practices are scheduled to start in April and games will start in May. The season usually goes through the middle of June and possibly longer for baseball. The cut off date for signing up for these sports is Friday, March 14th. Please call Amy Cieloha for baseball at 503-429-0745. For softball, please call Katie Poetter at 503-799-8946 or Amanda Wolf at 503-970-1552.

## Four- Day School Week *continued from front page*

concerns from the audience, repeating that it would be the job of the Task Force to explore how other school districts in Oregon operate with a four-day week. "We are not going to re-invent the wheel," said Cox, "without going to a district that is already doing this, that has already answered the questions and already has the input and answered the questions from the Oregon Department of Education."

Cox noted that there is evidence that suggests that districts that use a four-day school week have improved test scores. He also noted that teacher performance has been shown to improve when they have preparation time, and the four-day week could allow for more teacher prep time. "It is important that our teachers have the opportunity to improve their abilities and their skills for teaching our kids," said Cox. He pointed out improvement in the Vernonia School District this year at the Elementary level after implementation of additional teacher prep time.

Cox noted that he does not expect a four-day school week to be implemented next year, although he did say it could be possible if the Task Force began meeting immediately. "Is it possible for next year? I would say it is," said Cox. "Is it probable? Probably not."

Cox stressed that the real purpose of exploring the four-day school week concept is not about cost savings. "The purpose of this is not to save money; the purpose of this would be to help students learn better. If we can't prove that or if we don't believe that, then we don't want to mess with it."

In addition to the four-day school week discussion, Cox explained how the funding from the CTE Grant would be spent. He noted that funding would be used to build a new shop building, which he expected to be complete in time for next school year. He noted that the District is attempting to increase the number of qualified CTE programs the school offers from two to four by adding Engineering and Natural Resources/Forestry. The District already offers Construction and Digital Arts programs. Cox asked for input from the audience as to what new courses they would like to see added that could be housed in the new shop facility. Ideas included: automotive, small engine repair, welding, metalwork, and robotics/computer programming.

Cox explained that the Vernonia Education Foundation has raised \$60,000 in their Sports Initiative campaign and has approved spending \$13,000 for surveying work and a de-

sign plan for new sports fields at the new school campus. He also suggested that a softball field could be constructed in the near future.

Cox discussed the construction of replacement fields at New Spencer Park and stated that a Request for Proposals (RFP) is being prepared for this

spring so final construction can be completed this summer/fall. Cox noted that the fields would not be usable until next spring.

The audience also heard an update on fundraising from John Donovan of Met Group.

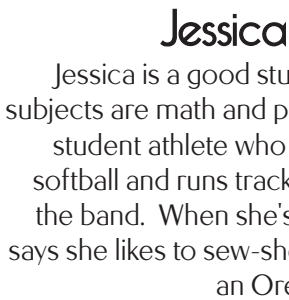
## Vernonia Students of the Month

### February 2014



**Dilyn Lardy** Kindergarten

Dilyn is a hard worker who always gives 100% everyday at school. Dilyn follows all the rules, sets a good example, helps his peers, and has a positive attitude about school. Dilyn says his favorite subject is reading. He plays t-ball and says he likes to help take care of the family dog, cat and two horses.



**Jessica Butcher** Grade 6

Jessica is a good student who says her favorite subjects are math and physical education. She is a student athlete who plays volleyball, basketball, softball and runs track. She also plays the flute in the band. When she's not playing sports, Jessica says she likes to sew-she's in the middle of making an Oregon Ducks quilt right now.



**Heather Patton** Grade 12

Heather is a friendly and upbeat student who says her favorite subject is science--"I love science!" she says. She is part of the new choir that was just started this year at school. She says she is interested in the theater and likes to read and walk in the woods in her free time. She is also involved in her weekly church youth group. Heather says she hopes to study to be a veterinary technician after graduation.



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**A** Use this notice if public comment will be taken at this meeting.

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**NOTICE OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

A public meeting of the Budget Committee of the Vernonia Rural Fire Prot. Dist., Columbia, State of Oregon, to discuss the budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, will be held at 555 E Bridge Street, Vernonia OR.

The meeting will take place on March 11th at 6.

The purpose of the meeting is to receive the budget message and to receive comment from the public on the budget. This is a public meeting where deliberation of the Budget Committee will take place. Any person may appear at the meeting and discuss the proposed programs with the Budget Committee.

A copy of the budget document may be inspected or obtained on or after March 11th at 555 E Bridge St, Vernonia OR, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

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