

Students Attend Logging Congress

Vernonia middle school and high school students took a field trip and spent the day on Thursday, September 25 at the 105th Pacific Logging Congress' "In the Woods" show.

The event was held on the Port Blakely Tree Farm in Molalla, OR.

The Pacific Logging Congress provides technical education about forest industries to politicians, educators and students, and the general public. It is also an opportunity for those in the logging industry to see new

equipment. The Pacific Logging Congress provides a forum for loggers to discuss changes and new innovations in the industry.

The Vernonia students did a walking tour of the site of the "In the Woods" program in groups of about twenty-five and learned about the logging and forest products industries and markets as well as viewed a live demonstration of a logging operation. This was the 7th "In the Woods" program, which is held every four years and brought over 2,000 regional students out to the site.

"What you're going to see today, is what happens every day out in the woods," said Eric Metcalf of Pacific Lumber and Shipping Company, who, along with Ray Liebe, acted as guides for one of the Vernonia student groups.

Students attended demonstrations at several stations. Students learned about the makeup of a forest, watched logging equipment in action, tried their hand at some logging competitions, and learned about replanting laws and techniques.

For more photos turn to page 12.



Witt and Johnson Win Approval of Grant Towards Fundraising for Vernonia Schools

Representative Brad Witt and Senator Betsy Johnson have teamed up to deliver \$212,500 for the Vernonia School District to support the final fundraising efforts for the relocation and construction of the Vernonia Schools.

Witt (D-Clatskanie) and Johnson (D-Scappoose) worked with House and Senate leadership to win approval of the grant in a unanimous vote of the 20-member Legislative Emergency Board.

Funding for the grant will come from the Oregon Office of Emergency Management's Local Disaster Assistance Loan and Grant Account.

"This grant is an investment in Vernonia's future," Witt said. "It will allow this remarkable community to move ahead with the amazing fundraising effort that literally began before the flood waters in Vernonia receded seven years ago."

Serious flooding in December 2007 destroyed the Vernonia schools. A replacement K-12 school facility, built on higher ground, opened in 2012. The \$40 million school project was funded by private donations, local, state and federal funds. A small amount remains to be raised. With the recent help from

the Legislature and continuing private philanthropy, the goal of "closing the books" is within sight.

"Vernonia's resilience and resolve continues to serve as a shining example of the true meaning of community. I am proud of Vernonia and happy that I could team up with Representative Witt to provide some of the remaining pieces of funding for the schools," said Johnson, who carried the request before the full Emergency Board Wednesday morning.

In addition to winning approval of the most recent state grant, Witt has worked recently with Portland Community College to secure new computers for the school and Johnson has worked with city leaders on completing the fund raising.

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Kay Lawsuit Dismissed

A lawsuit filed by former Vernonia police officer Michael Kay has been dismissed.

The lawsuit, filed in Oregon District Court, claimed Civil Rights violations and Employment Discrimination.

In a letter received by the City of Vernonia dated August 26, 2014, the City was informed that Presiding Judge Paul Papek had granted all motions for summary judgment and dismissed the case before it went to trial. According to the letter, Kay did not file any objections to the Findings and Recommendations.

The suit named as defendants: the City of Vernonia; current Vernonia Police Chief Michael Conner; former Vernonia City Administrator William Haack; Teresa

King, an investigator with Oregon's Department of Public Safety Standards and Training; Dian Rubanoff, a lawyer with Peck Rubanoff & Hatfield PC who was hired by the City of Vernonia to investigate Kay; former Vernonia Police Chief Matthew Workman; and Columbia County Justice of the Peace Wallace Thompson.

Michael Kay was employed by the City of Vernonia for nine years as a police officer, Sergeant, acting Chief and Captain. He was terminated by the City in 2011 following several investigations into his conduct. He was later decertified by DPSST for ethics violations. In 2013 he lost an employment arbitration hearing that reviewed his termination.

The lawsuit claimed that, as result of various due process viola-

tions and breeches of law, Michael Kay was unfairly terminated and decertified by DPSST and that he lost wages, his retirement and his career. The lawsuit further stated that Kay was intentionally deprived of his rights by the defendants who engaged in illegal, malicious and wrongful conduct together and individually. The lawsuit claimed that Kay had suffered physical, emotional and financial harm and had been placed in an untenable position of believing his life was in danger and that he had suffered from anxiety and extreme emotional distress.

The lawsuit asked that Kay be awarded economic damages of no less \$250,000 and noneconomic damages of no less than \$1.5 million.