

## Sentry is Now R&S Market

A long time business in Vernonia has changed its name and logo, but isn't changing their commitment to the community.

The Vernonia Sentry Market has officially changed its name to R&S Market.

The R and the S stand for Randy and Sharon, as in Parrow, the couple who now fully own the business. The Parrows are the sole owners of the store after completing their purchase from long time owners Gordon Smith and Chuck Hendryx three years ago.

"As long as I've lived here this has always been a locally owned market," said Randy Parrow during a recent interview, "with owners who live in the community."

Randy Parrow says the name change is really about necessity. At one time there were fifty-six Sentry Markets in Oregon, Washington, and California, says Parrow. Over the years many have been bought by other market groups, joined other market groups and changed their name or just plain closed down. The Vernonia Sentry was the last Sentry Market in Oregon. "We were the final hold out," says Parrow, although he notes there is still one last Sentry Market in North Shore, CA.

"It just made sense to make the change," says Parrow. He adds that a new sign outside the market will be installed shortly, which will be the final step in the changeover.

R&S Market will now operate as part of the Select Market group.

The Parrows recently redecorated the store with new paint and new signs. They've added a new logo to go along with the name change, which reflects the logging history and culture that signifies the town's roots. "With the mill here, logging was obviously a big part of this



town," says Parrow. "And we still are a logging community in some ways and still have deep ties to the logging industry. We're a country, timber town store, so the theme made sense."

Parrow says when he moved to Vernonia in 1968, the store was called Cliff's and was owned by Cliff Norwood, although Parrow has advertisements from even earlier when the store was called Dean's Market. According to Parrow, Gordon Smith bought the store in 1973 from Norwood and brought in Chuck Hendryx as a partner shortly after that. Parrow has been managing the market for the last twenty-one years and has been slowly buying into the ownership over the last ten years.

The Parrows have been married  
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## City to Save Money with Wastewater Project Financing

The City of Vernonia is close to completing an agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for funding to complete construction of the Wastewater Treatment Upgrade Project. The funding package includes a large grant award and refinancing of current debt at a lower interest rate.

City of Vernonia Finance Administrator Angie Handegard confirmed that the USDA funding package the City has negotiated includes a grant for \$2,230,704. The funding package also includes a loan in the amount of \$5,577,000 of which \$2.8 million will go towards project construction and \$2.7 million will be used to refinance existing debt.

"This funding package will allow the City to finish the Wastewater Upgrade Project without having much, if any, effect on current sewer rates," said Handegard.

According to Handegard, by securing financing through the USDA's Rural Development Program at a 1.13% rate, the city will see a reduction in current debt service in the sewer account of approximately 20%, lowering annual payments from \$465,000 to \$390,000.

The City is refinancing part of the debt they owe to DEQ that was

incurred during initial construction of Phase I of the project, construction of the headworks, the flume upgrade, and project design. The interest rate on the DEQ debt was 2.93% plus a .5% annual fee.

The total funding package from USDA totals \$7,807,704, including the \$2.23 million dollar grant. "The grant portion of the funding package is a huge bonus for the City," said Handegard. "We don't have to pay for almost half of the new construction."

According to Handegard the USDA funds do not become available until the project is complete. The City has secured Interim Financing through DEQ at a rate of 1.06% while the project is under construction, which will be paid off with the USDA funding package at the completion of the project.

Now that project funding is secured, Handegard says the City is preparing to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) for construction work, which is ready to go out to bid and is only awaiting a final review of compliance from USDA.

It is anticipated that the project will begin in early March 2015, weather permitting.

## City and Ridge Riders Heading for Trial Over Lease

By Scott Laird

The question of whether there is a valid lease for use of the horse arena at Anderson Park between the City of Vernonia and the Vernonia Ridge Riders equestrian group looks like it may be heading to a court trial.

A recent decision by Judge Ted Grove on October 24, 2014 granted a motion by the Ridge Riders to set aside a previously entered judgment in favor of the City which ruled the lease invalid. According to City Attorney Ruben Cleaveland, this order did not provide any ruling or opinion of the court as to the validity of the lease, but is a small procedural decision that allows the Vernonia Ridge Riders the opportunity to move forward with litigation regarding the validity of the lease.

A motion to award attorney fees to the Ridge Riders was denied as part of the same order by Judge Grove.

There are numerous questions concerning the lease which governs the use and maintenance of the Anderson Park Horse Arena. The dispute between the City of Vernonia, who owns the property, and the Ridge



Riders, which has leased the arena and significantly improved the property, dates back to 2010. At that time the City told the Ridge Riders that the written lease between the parties was not valid. The two parties have been unable to resolve the dispute since that time. The Ridge Riders have sued the City and the City has counter sued the Ridge Riders. Following Judge Grove's ruling, the issue remains unresolved.

In the latest chapter of the ongoing dispute, the Vernonia City Council met in an Executive Session on April 7, 2014, and upon returning to regular session, revealed that a court judgement had been handed down in favor of the City determining that the lease the Ridge Riders have been operating under was not valid.

Ridge Rider President Rick Gardner says the decision in April was made without any input from the Ridge Riders legal counsel.

Judge Grove's decision on October 24, overturned that prior

decision, setting the stage for a either a trial or some kind of mutual agreement between the two parties.

Judge Grove granted a ninety-day period, until February 2, 2015 for the parties to conduct discovery regarding the validity of the lease. Following the ninety days the parties are scheduled to appear in court at a pre-trial conference to determine trial readiness and hear any motions filed in the case. At that point, according to City Attorney Cleaveland, the court will begin the process of settling whether the Ridge Riders have a valid lease.

Following Judge Grove's ruling, former Mayor Sally Harrison addressed the City Council at their November 6, 2014 meeting, stating she was representing the Ridge Riders and encouraged the City to meet with the Ridge Riders to try to resolve the issues without going to trial.

Ridge Riders President Gardner says the Ridge Riders have had a good

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