

## City and Ridge Riders Lease *continued from front page*

working relationship with City for a long time would like to find a way to resolve the dispute without going to court.

The Ridge Riders have a long history in the community and of using the arena for their events. According to Gardner, they have operated over the years by verbal agreement, several hand written agreements and official leases.

One thing is clear - the City has no plans to change the use of the area in question. According to Vernonia Mayor Josette Mitchell, in the summer of 2013 the City of Vernonia engaged MacKay Sposito Consultants, to develop the Vernonia Master Parks plan; the plan identifies and evaluates park and recreational properties owned by the City of Vernonia. The plan further establishes goals and opportunities associated with each property. "The

2014 final summary report clearly identifies in the Anderson Park site plan, the existing and future use of the Equestrian area, arena, and linear trail access as an established amenity within Anderson Park," said Mitchell when asked about the future of the Anderson Park Horse Arena. "As this plan lays out the vision of the community into the future it is clear the overall goal looking forward is not to uproot and diminish equestrian activities within Anderson Park."

City Records indicate that the International Paper Company conveyed the property to the City of Vernonia in 1953. According to the book, "Vernonia, a Pocket in the Woods," in 1960 the City built the Anderson Park campground. The same year the Vernonia Ridge Riders Saddle Club, as they were called then, built the arena and structures for

equestrian events.

Following the April 7, 2014 judgement which ruled the current lease invalid, the Ridge Riders were told by the City they could not use the arena until the legal dispute had been satisfied. This past summer the Vernonia Jamboree Committee secured the use of the arena for Jamboree Weekend and allowed the Ridge Riders to hold their annual Play Day.

Ridge Riders President Gardner agrees that there are some items in the current lease which should be adjusted and hopes the two parties can come back to the table and negotiate some type of agreement.

Early in 2014, Mayor Mitchell, who was also serving as Interim City Administrator, began meeting with Gardner. According to Mitchell, following the judgement in April that ruled the lease invalid, she and Gardner were close to negotiating an agreement based on a recommendation from the Parks Committee that would allow the Ridge Riders to schedule and use the arena twelve times each year for events of their choosing, free of charge, in exchange for maintaining the area.

The Ridge Riders ended up challenging that court decision, which was followed by Judge Grove's ruling in favor of the Ridge Riders' motion on October 24, 2014, and potentially setting the stage for a trial sometime in 2015.

When asked Mayor Mitchell declined to comment on the possibility of further negotiations between the City and the Ridge Riders.

VERNONIA'S  
*voice*  
reflecting the spirit of our community

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## the Birk

### Holiday Music Schedule

Saturday, November 22nd at 7pm...  
*China Davis*

Friday, November 28th at 8pm...  
*Naomi Tee video shoot*

Saturday, November 29th at 7pm...  
*Suburban Slim Band*

Thursday, December 4th at 6:30pm...  
*Kandye Cane Dinner Show*

Friday, December 5th at 7pm...  
*Robert Jon & the Wreck*

Saturday, December 6th at 7pm...  
*Lloyd Jones Trio*  
*with Curtis Salgado & Calton Jackson*

Saturday, December 13th at 7pm...  
*Randy Oxford Band*

Dates open for Holiday parties:  
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