

Vernonia Health Center Has New Physician Assistant

A new Physician Assistant has been hired as the permanent primary care provider at the Vernonia Health Clinic. Kimberly Lovato, PA-C began her position on January 5th. The Vernonia Health Center will continue its partnership with Pacific University and The Public Health Foundation of Columbia County to provide medical care. Students in the PA program at Pacific University will continue to do



rotations in the health center under the supervision of the PA.

Lovato has practiced rural family medicine for seven years and has experience diagnosing, treating, and providing support and maintenance of a wide scope of medical conditions from pediatric to geriatric patients. She is highly skilled in assisting patients to reach their goals in chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma, COPD, endocrine and coagulation disorders. Dr. Eubanks will continue to supervise the clinic. Melissa Walsh, who provided the bulk of coverage at the Vernonia Health Center during the search for a permanent provider, will continue her practice at the school-based health center at the Vernonia Schools.

To schedule an appointment at the Vernonia Health Center, please call (503) 429-0622.

Vernonia Man Arrested on Child Sex Abuse Charges

Columbia County Sheriff's deputies, acting on the information from an alleged 13-year-old victim, arrested a 62-year-old Vernonia man on felony child sex abuse charges on January 8, 2015. Deputies subsequently served a search warrant at the suspect's home, seizing electronic equipment related to this ongoing investigation.

The suspect was taken into custody following a traffic stop and later charged with one count of Luring a Minor, and one Count of Attempt to Commit Sex Abuse, First Degree. Both crimes are felonies. The suspect bailed out of jail the same evening with a no-contact order for the victim and her family. The suspect had at one time been a police officer with the City of

Vernonia.

The case came to light after a sexually explicit message transmitted digitally to the victim was alleged to have come from the suspect. Deputies obtained a search warrant to search for "digital images, motion pictures, digital videos, photographs, digital audio recordings, text messages, call records," etc. and served the warrant at the suspect's home.

This case is an ongoing investigation. There is a chance that other victims are out there. Investigators having any information in regard to this case are asked to call the recorded Tip Line at (503) 366-4698 and leave any relevant information.

Columbia County Planning Commissioner Sought

Columbia County is currently seeking applications for a full term position on the Columbia County Planning Commission. To ensure representation from all areas within the County, applicants from the Vernonia area would be preferable, however all applications will be reviewed and considered. Additionally, there are two vacant alternate positions that need to be filled, with no preference on area.

If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact the Board of Commissioners office at (503) 397-4322 or you may obtain an interest form on our website at www.co.columbia.or.us.

For further information regarding this committee, please contact Glen Higgins, Land Development Services, at 503-397-1501 or by email at glen.higgins@co.columbia.or.us.

PSU Students to Design Pedestrian Bridge for Trail

Graduate students from the Portland State University (PSU) School of Civil and Environmental Engineering will be working to design a pedestrian bridge to cross the Nehalem River as part of their capstone project.

Four groups of students have chosen to work on the project under the direction of PSU instructor Even Kristof.

The proposed bridge will connect the Crown Zellerbach Trail to Vernonia Lake. The trail currently terminates at Knott Street, but Columbia County personnel are attempting to extend the trail to Coon

Creek Road and then develop the river crossing somewhere in that area.

The PSU students received an introduction to the project from Columbia County Commissioner Tony Hyde and Columbia County Parks Manager Glen Crinklaw and toured potential sites for the bridge crossing on January 9. The students will continue to work in the area during the next several months. They will work closely with staff from the Columbia County Roads Department, including Engineering Project Coordinator Tristan Wood and Crinklaw.



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