

## Readers Lend Their Voices...

To the Editor,

In May we will be able to vote on a 35 cent increase in the natural resource depletion fee.

This 35 cents will be added to the existing 15 cent depletion fee and will cost the gravel industry a total of 50 cents a ton.

The mining industry will probably pass this cost along to their customers and a 10-12 ton load may cost a buyer \$5.00-\$6.00 more. This amount of money is not enough to put anyone out of business, nor will it cause people to look elsewhere, since the cost of hauling gravel or rock into the county would be greater than the total price increase.

Columbia County is blessed with a wonderful rock resource. Our gravels are more valuable than gold. Unlike gold, miners don't have to use acids or caustic chemicals to extract ore. The hardness of our rock is excellent for concrete, road construction and for other building materials. Our mined Columbia River Basalt is also prized for its hardness and is used for rock jetties, rip rap and numerous other purposes.

Our rock is a wonderful resource and it is non renewable. Once it is gone, there will be nothing to show for it other than holes in the ground.

Our roads are being destroyed by heavy truck traffic and our public transportation system is hurting for money. The depletion fee has not been increased in 18 years.

All new fees will go toward roads and public transportation.

This ballot item will give people an opportunity to help build our counties infrastructure.

Bill Eagle  
St. Helens, OR

To the Editor,

I would like to thank all of those who helped get signatures of the Initiative for Safer Roads & Bridges and

CCRider Transportation. From the very nice lady who saw me standing outside of Ace Hardware on one of the colder days and brought me a wonderful cup of tea to all of the very nice people who stopped and talked about the initiative. I would like to thank the management of Ace Hardware both in St. Helens and Scappoose and Wal-Mart. They were instrumental in allowing the democratic process to continue and flourish in Columbia County.

While gathering signatures can be a slow process, that wasn't the case with this initiative. We were able to quickly get the signatures we needed for this initiative to be on the May ballot. The comments were supportive and most were very clear. The roads so need to be improved and CCRider does need stable funding.

The initiative is not about eliminating jobs - because it will not eliminate jobs. It's not about taking company profits, because it is a modest increase that as not been raised in 18 years. It is about maintaining essential services - our roads and saving CCRider for seniors and voters who need to get to jobs, the grocery store and medical appointments. Economic development goes hand in hand with good transportation services. Even one of the County Commissioners rode the bus the other day.

As with my last letter, I feel that we all need to work together. There should be no conflict between me, the County Commissioners or the miners. We need better roads and public transit in Columbia County and if the County Commissioners would help provide a stable source of income for the Rider and for road improvements, then I would withdraw my initiative right now. But I don't see that happening, so I'm going forward and work to get the Safer Roads & Bridges and CCRider Transportation initiative approved by voters.

Will you work with me to get

approval of this initiative? If you want to help, let your opinion be known or call the commissioners at 503-397-4322.

Thelma Bonar  
Chief Petitioner  
Safer Roads & Bridges  
and CCRider Transportation

To the Editor,

A year ago last Christmas I lost my companion and best friend to cancer. We'd travelled several years together up and down the West coast aboard "Journeyman," my 36' motorcoach. It'd been 50 or so years since I'd driven 101 north and south so I was surprised to find pot holes big enough to hide a small mammal in 'em.

"Beka" - my "Not-So-Great-Dane" - helped navigate from the copilot's chair. Didn't criticize my driving, loved all the music I played, and her regularity reminded me to walk out the kinks at rest stops every 3 or so hours.

I was unable to look for another dog for most of a year, hobbled by the pain that holds on after losing someone so dear. So I was finally ready to be pleased when my daughter called about a Labrador retriever in need of a home. I told her that we would like to meet him when we flew up to Portland for Christmas - could she set something up?

Well, she did and we did and after 3 weeks, 2 cancelled return flights, the resurrection of our old Ford station wagon and a hotel night in Ashland, "Chester" is sleeping, now, at my feet, by the fire. He has begun to share the space in my heart that once belonged to "Beka".

We feel very lucky to have found him! He's a 6 year old Yellow lab - who thinks he's 2 - who's spent the last 2 years on a beautifully wooded preserve outside your lovely town. With maybe even a few dozen doggie friends at any given time he's become wonderfully socialized. He's in excellent health,

## Upcoming Events

Columbia County Chapter of Oregon Hunter's Assoc. Fundraiser - Saturday, February 28 at the Columbia County Fairgrounds, 588892 Saulser Rd, St. Helens. Doors open 5:00 PM, Dinner served 6:30 PM. 503-396-5265

Safe Kids Columbia County Car Seat Clinic - Saturday, March 14, 11:00 AM-12:30 PM at Vernonia Fire Station.

Vernonia Sportsman's Banquet - Saturday, April 18, 6:00 PM at the Vernonia Christian Church, 410 North St. Tickets on sale March 2 at R&S Market.

having been lovingly cared for by Erica Ochs at her "Run! Day Camp for Dogs," a thoroughly amazing service. We're most grateful for her generosity and help with "Chester's" adoption, and most especially for taking such good care of him. Erica Ochs; a truly splendid friend of dogs! We are having a happier New Year, thanks to Vernonia's Erica Ochs.

John Thomsen  
Los Gatos, CA

## Need Help?

Call for meeting times and locations

Columbia Community Mental Health  
Call 503-397-5211 -or- 1-800-294-5211

For after hours Crisis call: 1-866-866-1426  
<http://www.ccmh1.com/crisis.html>

Narcotics Anonymous NW Region  
503-345-9839  
<http://portlandna.com/>

Alcohol Anonymous NW Region  
503-366-0667  
<http://www.pdxaa.com/>

### HOW TO SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Vernonia's Voice welcomes and requests your thoughts, opinions and ideas. Please include your name, address and phone number, limit your letters to 300 words or less. Vernonia's Voice reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted. We will print letters space permitting. Deadline is the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month. Email: [scott@vernoniasvoice.com](mailto:scott@vernoniasvoice.com) or mail to: Letters, PO Box 55, Vernonia, OR 97064.

## Columbia Humane Society Featured Pet



Please meet Bella. This very friendly little girl is going to melt someone's heart. She gets along well with other cats and is very friendly with every person that she meets. She is about 5 years old. Come in and meet her today she is the Bell of the ball.

2084 Oregon Street  
St. Helens, OR 97051  
Web: [www.columbiahumane.org](http://www.columbiahumane.org)  
Phone: 503-397-4353  
Email: [animalwelfare@columbiahumane.org](mailto:animalwelfare@columbiahumane.org)

Her adoption fee is \$90.00 which includes all her vaccines, her microchip and her spay.

## Safe Kids Columbia County Car Seat Clinic

Saturday, March 14th  
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Vernonia Fire Station  
555 E. Bridge Street  
For more info call:  
503-556-3736

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Vernonia Police Department is currently accepting bids on two patrol vehicles. Both vehicles are equipped for law enforcement use. If the winning bid is not a law enforcement agency, all emergency equipment will be removed prior to delivery.

Vehicle #1  
2007 Ford Expedition 4x4  
Color: White  
Mileage: 77979  
Minimum Bid \$9000.00

Vehicle #2  
2006 Ford Crown Victoria

Color: White  
Mileage: 93971  
Minimum Bid: \$3000.00

#### NOTE:

This is a sealed bidding process. Please mail your sealed bids to the Vernonia Police Department (Attention: Angie Handegard), 1001 Bridge St, Vernonia, Oregon 97064. All bids must be received by February 13th, 2015 at 5:00 pm.

For information regarding these vehicles, please contact Chief Michael Conner (Vernonia Police Department) at 503-429-7335 ext. 110