

## Witt Visits Vernonia

On Friday, March 27, Oregon State Representative Brad Witt stopped by Vernonia for a visit with *Vernonia's Voice*, and updated us on the current legislative session and some of the bills he's working on, and to talk about some other topics of interest.

Representative Witt has been extremely busy, and is the primary sponsor on over twenty bills this session, which he said he thought was the, "second most in the Oregon House this session."

When asked about a current local issue, the Oregon LNG and Oregon Pipeline projects, Witt stated very clearly and emphatically that he opposes the projects. "I have been a long term opponent of Oregon LNG and their project," said Witt. "This is the wrong route and

the wrong project for so many reasons. I hardly know where to begin." Witt went on to express concerns about the site of the storage plant in Warrenton, about safety and the potential environmental damage, concerns about the financial stability of the corporation and the sustainability of the projects' backers, and the bad idea of exporting our resources. "There is nothing good in this for the average Oregonian, or the people in Columbia and Clatsop Counties. What this is, is a profit motive on the backs of everyone else. The arrogance is reprehensible and I'm continuing to oppose it."

When asked about the upcoming legalization of recreational marijuana in Oregon beginning July 1, 2015 Witt expressed surprise and disappointment that

Columbia County Commissioners are just now proposing a temporary moratorium on all marijuana businesses for 120 days after they have had so much time to figure out how they want to handle the new law. Witt did express that he sees value in the use of marijuana for medical purposes and also agrees with the legalization of recreational use in private settings. "I think we're finally going to see a situation where it's controlled, because, let's face it, people have been recreating with it for tens of thousands of years," said Witt. "The vast majority of people who use alcohol use it responsibly and there's no problem. Certainly there are those few who abuse it and the law needs to step in when that happens. And I'm sure the same thing will be true of marijuana as well." When asked if he sees the legalization of marijuana as an economic benefit for the state, Witt responded, "Absolutely. I don't see how we cannot view it that way."

Witt also discussed the state budget for education. The rate of funding proposed by the state for education is \$7.235 billion, which the Vernonia School District and other advocates for school funding says will be inadequate and will lead to cuts in programs. Witt's most recent newsletter to constituents states that he believed the state's plan for the \$7.235 amount was adequate and explained that 95% of the state's General Fund goes to education, human services, and public safety. Education already takes 52% of the General Fund. "With a finite amount of money available, we must be mindful that giving larger amounts to one segment will likely cause another to have less," said Witt in his newsletter.

In our face-to-face conversation Witt reiterated these sentiments. "I can't go to DHS and tell them they need to cut back on elderly or housing projects," said Witt. "I can't go to the State Police and tell them they need to cut back on the number of troopers. The problem is we do not have enough revenue in this state, pure and simple. There's a host of reasons, not the least of which is the great recession we just came through." Witt also expressed concern that if the state kicker is triggered that will present another round of problems and cuts. "I don't have an answer. We may need to start taking a serious look at some alternative tax structures in this state."

Witt took time to discuss and explain some of the current bills he is sponsoring.

**Education**  
**2524 Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to establish for every entering undergraduate class at each public university a minimum percentage of students who must be Oregon residents.** "A lot of students from foreign countries are sending students to our universities here because it's a good deal," said Witt. "We're beginning to make it difficult for some Oregonian students to go to school here, so we're trying to address that."

**2525 Directs Higher Education Coordinating Commission to develop standards related to transferability of credits and acceptance of test scores for community colleges and public universities.** "This would guarantee that any credits you take at an Oregon college will be transferable to another Oregon higher education system."

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## Vernonia Fire District Places Two Measures on May Ballot

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year old engine from the Banks Fire District also provided an upgrade.

"This bond allows us to begin to create a succession plan within our apparatus portion of the District, which we have to have," says Smith. "We've gotten well beyond where we should be."

Smith says that ideally the District would have just tried to renew the 2000 bond in 2010, but circumstances in the community didn't make that prudent. "We were still recovering from

the flood," says Smith.

"We've consistently waited over the years," said Smith. "We held off because the City needed to do sewer upgrades. We held off because of the flood. We held off because the community needed to build new schools. We've consistently taken a back seat and waited to ask for funds because we know the community is tight. I feel the community gets a lot from us. But we're at a point where we don't have a choice."

### Legal Notice

This is to notify you that the Columbia County Board of Commissioners has proposed a land use Moratorium that may affect the permissible uses of your land.

On April 8, 2015, at 10:00 a.m., the Columbia County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing regarding the adoption of Ordinance No. 2015-03. The hearing will be held in the Commissioners's meeting room, Room 308 on the Third Floor of the Columbia County Courthouse, 230 Strand Street, St. Helens, Oregon.

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners has determined that adoption of this Ordinance will affect the permissible uses of your property, on an interim basis, and may reduce the value of your property. The proposed Ordinance would adopt a temporary moratorium on the operation

of recreational and medical marijuana dispensaries and grow operations, pursuant to ORS 197.520, for a period 120 days to allow the County time to develop Zoning Ordinance provisions compatible with changing Oregon State rule and statute.

The proposed ordinance will be available for inspection at the Columbia County Courthouse located in St. Helens, Oregon in the Land Development Services Department, 230 Strand Street, St. Helens, Oregon, on March 26, 2015. A copy of the proposed ordinance will be available for purchase at a reasonable cost.

For additional information concerning Ordinance No. 2015-03, you may call Todd Dugdale or Glen Higgins, at the Columbia County Department of Land Development Services, at (503) 397-1501.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### PUBLIC HEARING IN ACCORDANCE WITH ORS 271.735(2)

PUBLIC NOTICE. In accordance with ORS 271.735, the city council of the City of Vernonia will hold a public hearing on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 on the acquisition of a CONSERVATION EASEMENT for the property located at 1462 Bridge Street in Vernonia, county of Columbia, Oregon, commonly known as the "Lincoln Elementary School Property", whose real property description is Tax Lot 03000 of Map 4N4W05 Section AC, approximately 1.14 acres. The acquisition of this conservation easement is a condition imposed by the city of Vernonia on the approval of land use application PAZC 14-01. The city of Vernonia will hold a public hearing on the question of acquiring the conservation easement on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 for the purpose of providing interested parties with a meaningful opportunity to comment on the conservation easement.

A copy of the proposed conservation easement may be obtained from the City of Vernonia representative identified below. Questions or comments about the conservation easement, or the public hearing, are to be directed to the city of Vernonia representative identified below. Requests for special accommodations in order to participate in the public hearing should be made seven (7) days in advance of the public hearing. Written comments concerning the conservation easement must be received by the city of Vernonia no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Hearing location: City Hall Council Chambers, 1001 Bridge Street, Vernonia, Oregon, 97064. Hearing time: 7:00 p.m. City of Vernonia contact: Josette Mitchell, City Recorder, 1001 Bridge Street, Vernonia, Oregon, 97064, [jmitchell@vernonia-or.gov](mailto:jmitchell@vernonia-or.gov).

# Come to the 2015 Fair & Plant Sale

SATURDAY  
May 9<sup>th</sup>  
9am-3pm

Vernonia Schools  
COMMONS  
1000 Missouri Ave  
Vernonia, OR 97064

## Vendor Booths

800 Certified Organic Tomato Plants  
Many other Plants and Vendor Items Available

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