

Merkley and Bonamici Hold Town Hall *continued from front page*

cerns about the number of students in classrooms and the loss of special programs and activities, like band, for students. He said we need a vision for education that provides a pathway through both degree and non-degree programs and stressed we need more training and technical education programs. Bonamici said most education funding decisions happen at the state level, but that states need to maintain federal programs. She said she is also concerned about class size and encouraged citizens to contact their state representatives. She said she is committed to doing what she can at the federal level.

A hot topic of the meeting was the Oregon LNG and Pipeline projects. Bonamici said she was aware of

the project and was concerned about building the project in a subduction zone but said she also understands the need to build the local economy, but thinks we need to find a way to do that while protecting the safety of the environment and local residents. Merkley expressed concern about the use of the fracking process to extract natural gas and the damage it creates. He also noted the effect of our continued dependence on fossil fuels and its impact on global climate change. Both Merkley and Bonamici encouraged citizens to stay involved in the local and state permitting processes. Merkley asked State representative Brad Witt, who was in the audience, to address the issue of the Oregon LNG and Pipeline projects as well. Witt reiterated concerns he

expressed in an interview with *Vernonia's Voice* earlier in the month about the project, stating that he is against it and is especially concerned about the placement of the storage facility at the mouth of the Columbia River. Witt encouraged local activists to get involved with the fight in Warrenton and Astoria and not just oppose the pipeline portion of the project.

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A member of the Oregon Sierra Club expressed concerns about fossil fuel trafficking and suggested the types of jobs we need in this part of the country should be focused on renewable energy technology. He also expressed concerns about the potential for a major earthquake in the region and asked whether there is a potential shift in federal spending to protect against an eventual large natural disaster. Merkley replied that it is much easier to get federal funds to rebuild after a natural disaster than it is to get them in anticipation of a disaster. Bonamici said Vernonia is a shining example of resiliency and how federal funds can be used to rebuild. She said resiliency is currently an important topic of conversation but said the discussion needs to be changed to include how investing now saves dollars later; that requires long term thinking, which is not always the way congress operates.

Another hot topic of the day was the Trans Pacific Partnership trade agreement. Merkley showed an in-depth understanding of the possible agreement and expressed concerns about the secrecy of the negotiations as well as enforcement of any agreement. Bonamici said she has concerns that this agreement will lead to more jobs going overseas and is concerned about the secrecy. She said she is asking lots of questions including asking about environmental standards, labor protection standards and enforcement and asked constituents to send her their concerns about this issue. Both Merkley and Bonamici voiced concerns about any "fast-track" on any agreement.

Local resident Tim Nebergall, Executive Vice President of a local non profit, said he has purchased five acres in Vernonia to start a self-sustaining permaculture and education pilot project to teach people to sustainably grow their own food. Nebergall indicated concern about draughts and water shortages and asked for help to fund his project. Bonamici said she was interested in learning more about the project, noting that she is very concerned about potential water shortages and that she is interested in small scale projects that are new and better for growing food and feeding people. Merkley also expressed concerns about water shortages.

Throughout the meeting, during their responses to several questions, both Merkley and Bonamici stated their concerns about the need to take seriously and address global climate change. Bonamici noted the need to use technology and to educate their colleagues about the issue.

Vernonia Marathon



Nicole DeWitt of Vernonia finished the marathon in 3:27:34.

The Vernonia Marathon and Half Marathon took place on Sunday, April 12. The Marathon runners started at Cedar Ridge and traveled along the Banks-Vernonia State Trail. Half Marathon runners started at Stub Stewart State Park. All runners finished at the Banks High School.

Nicole DeWitt of Vernonia finished the Marathon in 3:27:34, the 24th finisher overall and 4th among women and qualified for the Boston Marathon. Jennifer Draeger also completed the marathon in a time of 3:58:34 good for 67th place out of 147 runners.

Top Vernonia finishers in the Half Marathon included Derek Handegard who finished 19th with a time of 1:30:02; Tim Becken, 22nd, 1:30:37; Nicole Miller, 185th, 2:02:37; Andrea Grant, 186th, 2:03:03 and Rebecca Scotto, 233rd, 2:10:07. 453 total runners completed the Half Marathon.

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Spring Clean!

Household Hazardous Waste Collection |
Saturday April 25th, 8AM - Noon
Vernonia Lake Park

Keep your family, pets and wildlife safe.

Dispose of hazardous household items safely and at no cost.

Call 503.397.7207 for information. Remember to secure your load!

Accepted Items Include:

- Ammunition
- Batteries
- Cleaners / detergents
- Fireworks / flares
- Gas/diesel / fuels
- Used Motor Oil/Anti-Freeze
- Lawn / garden supplies
- Light ballasts
- Medical Sharps
- Mercury thermometers

PLEASE NOTE: Latex or acrylic paint and stains are not accepted at HHW Events. Use it up, dry it out or drop it off during regular hours at Vernonia Hardware or the Transfer Station. Medical Sharps must be in sealed, puncture-proof containers available at local pharmacies, the Transfer Station scale house or Walmart. No commercial hazardous waste accepted. Call Graham Gadzia of Cleanharbors at (253)639-4240 for an appointment.

