

An Opinion: Vote YES on All Three Measures

By Scott Laird

Election ballots arrived in the mail this week and local voters are being asked to make a choice on three critical ballot measures. I am encouraging voters to support all three.

The Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District has placed two Measures on the ballot. Measure 5-245 is a ten year bond for the purchase of a badly needed, new fire engine and would cost taxpayers 26 cents per thousand of assessed property value. Measure 5-246 is a five year levy to fund the salary of a Training Captain to assist in the administration of the Department, mainly to organize the training of volunteers, as well as respond to calls when on duty. This would cost taxpayers 32 cents per thousand of assessed value.

The Vernonia Fire Department currently has one paid responder, Chief Dean Smith. According to Smith, volunteerism at the District is at an all time low and call volume is as high as it's ever been. State requirements for volunteer training continue to increase. On top of that the VRFPD remains the lowest funded of any District in Columbia County.

Smith and the Vernonia Fire District are facing a perfect storm-a community that is too busy to volunteer, a limited training schedule to get the small number of volunteers they do have to meet state requirements, limited resources to fund operations and equipment, and not enough responders to answer the larger volume of calls they are receiving.

As Smith likes to point out, he and his small band of dedicated volunteers don't just respond to fires. They assist the local ambulance service on EMS calls and also serve as the local rescue unit. They handle anything from extrications from motor vehicle accidents, to providing traffic control, to getting cats out of trees, and they have to be trained for all of them.

Many times only a small handful of volunteers are available to respond to a call and recently Smith had to head out on a call for a structure fire by himself. When they do respond, they sometimes have to worry whether their aging equipment will get them to the call and function properly when they arrive.

Protecting our community is the responsibility of each of us. We

are lucky to have such a hard working and dedicated Chief in Dean Smith, as well as a group of volunteers who give up their valuable personal time to make themselves available to answer our call when we need help. If you are not able to be a volunteer then you need to consider doing your part by supporting the Fire District and the volunteers and help provide the resources they need to do the job we ask them to do.

Measure 5-243 is asking voters county wide to increase, by 35 cents per ton, the Natural Resources Depletion fee on gravel to fund road maintenance and the Columbia County Rider public transportation system. The fee currently sits at 15 cents and has not been raised in eighteen years.

This measure has been more difficult to gauge. Contrary to what some people would like you to believe, CCRider is a well used transit system, especially during commute times in the mornings and afternoons. Many people within our communities depend on it to get to work, school, or to doctor and other appointments. It has grown over recent decades from what was basically a taxi service for senior citizens to a full fledged transit service, serving the needs of a diverse client base. It provides a reliable and much needed service in our community.

Those opposing this fee have run a loud and visible campaign to convince voters to reject the fee increase. They say they will lose business and will have to lay off workers.

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VERNONIA'S
voice
reflecting the spirit of our community

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I need CC Rider in my life

CC Rider provided more than 125,000 rides last year, many for your friends and neighbors who need stable public transportation to grocery shop, do their banking, and make it to necessary medical appointments. For them, CC Rider is more than just a convenience; it's a necessity.

Measure 5-243 offers reliable, needed funding for Columbia County roads and public transportation, without the need for additional local taxes. By voting yes, you are ensuring continued access to needed services, higher education and transportation to out-of-area jobs.

Please vote YES on Measure 5-243

The ad is paid for by the Committee
for Safer Roads, Bridges &
CCRider Transportation

Jane Wiegant
of Scappoose



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Jewell Memorial Scholarship Fund
invites you to the
36th Annual Smorgasbord
Saturday, May 16th • Doors Open at 4pm • Jewell School

Helping Jewell students achieve their dreams of furthering their education!

Please join us for Dinner, Oral auction,
Silent Auction, Quilt Raffle, Crayon Quilt Raffles,
Door Prizes, and Multi-Raffles!

Gladly accepting donations of new items, handmade items,
gift certificates, and cash donations!

Interested in volunteering/donating contact Faith Samuelson
at 503-717-2234 or samuelsonfaith@yahoo.com

Funds raised by this event go directly to facilitate
scholarships to graduating seniors of Jewell High School.

Cedar Side Inn

Open Mic Night w/ Matt
Saturday, May 16

Sunday Breakfast
Now serving 10am-9pm

Karaoke
Every 2nd & Last Friday

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from opening until 9pm
3 hardshell or 1 softshell \$4.25

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756 Bridge Street, Vernonia 503-429-5841



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733 Bridge St, Vernonia • 503-429-9999

Happy Hour Mon-Fri 4-7
Lady's Night Wed 5-12

Events

Sat, May 30th
Dixie Wrecked

Sat, June 20th
Texas Hold 'Em

"STILL BIKER FRIENDLY"