

## County Moves Forward on Transportation District

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners voted at their September 9, 2015 meeting to direct staff to prepare an order to initiate the formation of a special transportation district in the county.

The order proposes a tax levy of \$.23/per \$1,000 of assessed property value for the purpose of providing stable funding for public transit services provided by the Columbia County Rider Transportation (CCRider). The tax levy would generate \$1 million annually. The Board of Commissioners intends for the proposed transportation district and the permanent tax rate to be put before voters on the May 2016 election ballot.

The Board of Commissioners has scheduled a public hearing for October 28 to hear comment on the order to initiate the formation of the transportation district.

The order was presented to the Vernonia City Council at their September 21 meeting. Vernonia is within the boundary of the proposed transportation district and would not be included in the district without the consent of the City. The Council voted 5-0 to approve the drafting of a resolution for the inclusion of Vernonia.

In May of 2015 the election ballot for Columbia County included a measure to increase the natural resources depletion fee, which would have been used in part to fund public transportation. That ballot measure was defeated by just 375 votes. According to Janet Wright, Director of CCRider, who presented the order to the Vernonia City Council, the Board of Commissioners believes the closeness of the vote "... demonstrates that there is substantial support and a desire for public transit

services in our communities."

According to the County Assessor, the amount a property owner would pay on a home assessed at \$200,000 would be \$46 per year.

According to Wright, the funds generated if the measure was approved would be used to leverage match dollars available through existing grant funds; maintain operations of current services, routes, and maintenance of vehicles and facilities; the possible increase of demand/response services that were cut several years ago; and the improvement of services and education of users on the availability of public transit. According to Wright, CCRider would no longer need to ask cities to provide a Community Contribution for public transit.



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## Opponents Fill FERC Hearing to Testify Against LNG Projects *continued from front page*

and Vernonia's drinking water. Peach testified that fraq outs often occur on stream bed bores of 1,000 feet. The bore under Rock Creek is proposed to be 3,000 feet long. Peach also told the FERC panel that drilling fraq outs have the potential to increase water turbidity by a thousand or more percent. She asked the FERC panel to revisit their analysis of the environmental impact and not put U.S. citizens at risk.

• Dan Serres, Conservation Director of Columbia Riverkeeper, asked FERC for an extension for providing public comment, which ends on October 6, 2015. Serres noted that there are studies referenced in the EIS that are not complete and are not yet available to the public and said FERC should deny the project because Oregon LNG does not have control of the site where they intend to construct the shipping terminal. Serres also noted that the EIS does not adequately answer questions about public safety. Serres referenced that fact that the EIS acknowledges the City of Vernonia's concerns about the project, but does not adequately address them.

• Vernonia Mayor Randy Parrow submitted the Resolution passed by the City Council opposing the project and raised concerns about potential damages to Vernonia's drinking water and the potential for fire that could lead to the destruction of the Vernonia community.

• Ted Gleighman, representing the National and Oregon Sierra Club, addressed concerns about the inevitability of a class I earthquake hitting this region, known for its rugged terrain and geologic instability, and the impact it would have on a pipeline.



Vernonia Mayor Randy Parrow

• Noni Andersen also spoke about the potential of landslide hazards in the region, which the EIS acknowledges, but does not adequately address.

• Carol Davis spoke about the potential impact to the people that live in the region and their way of life if there is a disaster.

• Jack Phillips stated that he did not believe FERC was doing their job and listening to what the people are saying and are instead listening to rogue investors chasing short term profits who destroy the long term environment.

• Steve Calhoun told FERC of the lack of high quality potable water, noting that Rock Creek is a good source of quality drinking water.

• Rande Bruhn stated that he believes the draft EIS has "gaping holes" in the document. He questioned Oregon LNG's statements that they would not follow Oregon Forestry Practices standards. He also suggested that the project that includes piping natural gas from Canada across Washington and Oregon and then shipped to Asia should be denied because it doesn't benefit Oregonians.



Happy Hour Mon-Fri 4-7

### Events

Sun, Oct. 4th - 2:00pm

Texas Hold 'Em

Sat, Oct. 31st

Halloween Party

Sat, Nov. 7th

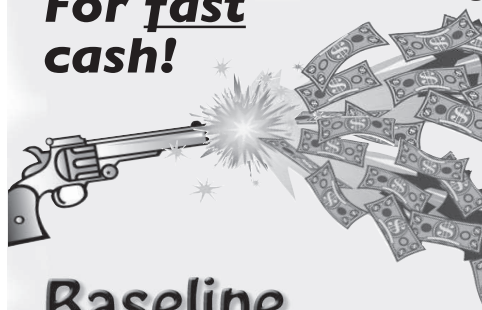
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