

School Opens Alumni Softball Field

The Vernonia School District played the first game at the new Alumni Softball Field on Tuesday, April 26, 2016.

The Vernonia Lady Loggers defeated Willamina 14-8 in a comeback victory in the first game played on the newly constructed field.

Athletic Director Gordon Jarman opened a dedication ceremony prior to the start of the game and thanked numerous people for their help in getting the field built and opened. He pointed out the hard work and time dedicated by Superintendent Aaron Miller, offered "sincere thanks," to Jim Eckland of the Vernonia Education Foundation and thanked the alumni donors who contributed to the fund to build the field. In addition Jarman thanked Senator Betsy Johnson, Marc Brown, Dan Titus, Eli Everett, Joe Walters, softball coaches Mike Fetch and Ernie Smith, Robert Watts Construction, West Oregon Elec-



Jim Eckland threw out the first pitch at the new Alumni Softball Field on the Vernonia Schools campus.

tric Cooperative, Everfin Energy, Brian Grey at Knife River, Don Wallace and KLS Surveying, and the City of Vernonia.

Eckland, who has helped head up the effort to raise funds for sports facilities at the Vernonia School campus, threw out the first pitch at the new field to Lady Logger catcher Pearl Cook. Before the first pitch Eckland spoke.

"When my wife Kathy and I launched this campaign back in October of 2012, we didn't have a clue how many alumni we could track down or how much money we could raise. But that sign out there in the outfield means a lot to me. Over 200 alumni have been involved in this project. Some have written small checks, some have written big checks, and some have bought tickets to fundraising events. I'm pleased to report that over \$250,000 has been contributed to Vernonia athletic fields since we started."

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Eckland also took time to recognize the efforts of all the volunteers who contributed to the project, including coaches Fetch and Smith and especially noted the work of Superintendent Miller and the many hours he personally spent working on the field in order to help cut costs. "There aren't too many superintendents in Oregon who would spend their weekends working on a softball field," said Eck-

land. "Next time you see him, please say thanks."



Kassidy Fetch was the starting pitcher for the Lady Loggers in their 14-8 victory over Willamina in the first game at their new field.



Jim Eckland of the Vernonia Education Foundation was instrumental in raising funds to build the new Alumni Softball Field.

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