

Preschool Free To Local Families

Local Head Start programs are now recruiting 3 and 4 year olds for the 2016-17 school year.

Head Start offers a comprehensive preschool experience free of charge to qualifying families. A developmentally appropriate classroom curriculum taught by certified teachers offers all children the opportunity to be kindergarten ready.

The program offers parents opportunities to learn and grow along with their children; receive guidance to complete medical, dental and nutritional assessments; get on the job training in

the early childhood field and learn about local opportunities for the whole family.

Children receive USDA approved lunch plus breakfast and/or afternoon snack on each day of class. (Head Start and USDA are both equal opportunity providers.)

For more information you may phone local centers: Vernonia/Mist area (503) 429-9243, St. Helens/Scappoose area (503) 397-4114, Clatskanie/Rainier area (503) 728-2940, Knappa/Astoria/Warrenton area (503) 861-9681.

Head Start is a Community Action agency.



MISSING HORSE

"Montana" a 17 year old bay gelding missing since Monday, August 29th from L.L. "Stub" Stewart State Park. Last seen by a utility worker with a green halter and lead rope off of Hoffman Road near Genzer Road. He is approachable and a gentle, however scared being alone in the wilderness. His owner Nancy Hayter-Griffith can be reached at (503) 807-1826.

Vernonia School District 47J 2016 GO Bond – SEL 803 Explanatory Statement

Following catastrophic floods in 1996 and 2007, voters approved a 2009 bond measure to move the three impacted Vernonia School District schools and District Office to higher ground. The school opened in 2012, meeting FEMA deadlines and before another major flood event occurred (December 2015).

Total cost of moving the District to higher ground was \$42 million, with approximately \$13 million coming from the 2009 bond, \$12 million from FEMA, and the remainder from state and federal grants, and individual and private foundation donations. The final \$5 million needed to complete construction was borrowed.

Fundraising efforts and receipt of grants have paid these loans for seven years, but these opportunities are no longer available. Payments on these loans will now come 100% from the general fund budget, impacting classroom programs. Further, certain key capital projects from the original campus design were never completed due to lack of funding. The proposed bond will tackle all of these issues. Importantly, the District was recently awarded a \$2.7 million matching grant from the State of Oregon; however that money will only be available if voters approve this bond.

This bond will refinance construction debt of approximately \$4.1 million. Current loan payments of \$408,000/year (equivalent to 5 full-time teachers, or 20 days of school) will be eliminated if voters approve this bond. These loan payments will continue, and be paid from general funds, if voters reject this bond.

If this bond is approved Vernonia voters will have a \$47 million dollar school campus project for the overall price of \$19.8 million in local bonded debt.

The bond and matching grants

are expected to fund:

- Refinancing existing debt, freeing up resources for general operations to support classroom learning.
- Constructing, furnishing and equipping new classrooms (including a dedicated art room) and welding/metals shop.
- Protecting the community's investment in Mist Grade School by replacing roofs, gutters, siding, flooring and mechanical systems.
- Improving technology with additional equipment and wireless access.
- Installation of playground equipment at both school campuses.
- Additional investments in school safety through installation of supplementary security systems.
- Completing athletic fields and facilities on the Vernonia Schools campus.
- Installation of irrigation system for natural resource programs and landscaping.
- Other site improvements, furnishings, equipping of projects and Bond issuance costs.

For the 2009 Bond, the District estimated a tax rate of \$1.90 per thousand of assessed value. Because of low interest rates, strong growth in assessed values, and a recent refinancing of the 2009 Bond, the actual rate paid was lower. The addition of this bond is estimated to not exceed that original \$1.90 per thousand rate, with an incremental cost of approximately \$48 per year for property assessed at \$200,000. Actual rates may differ depending on interest rates incurred and changes in assessed value.

New property owners moving into the community would pay for the projects through new property taxes that could reduce the share paid by existing property owners.

Little Misses and Masters of Vernonia

The Little Misses and Masters of Vernonia is a brand new mentoring program being organized by Vivianna Bustamante, a senior at Vernonia High School.

The program is based on assisting kids who need a positive role model and kids who have behavioral issues by providing experience interacting and having one-on-one time outside a classroom setting.

The program is currently seeking additional volunteer mentors in our community.

For more information contact Vivianna Bustamante on Facebook, or by email at: viviannabustamante21@gmail.com.

Readers Lend Their Voices...

To the Editor,

Wayne Mayo understands that increasing government debt should always be a last resort and seldom is ever done.

Unfortunately, we in Columbia County have increased our debt to the point that we are the most indebted county in the State of Oregon. I was

shocked when I recently learned about our debt situation from a newspaper article. What do we have to show for all this debt? It's clear that our county's debt is not due to lazy or uncaring county workers. It is the responsibility of our county commissioners to plan and make sure the county is run efficiently, and does not take on unnecessary risks or debt.

We need new leaders with new ideas and different ways of looking at things if we want things to get better.

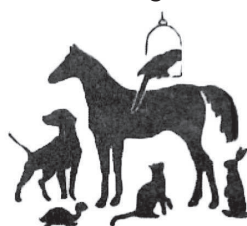
Wayne has owned a small business for decades, and he knows what it takes to balance a budget and not needlessly go into debt.

Brian Rosenthal
Scappoose

LaCabana
will be temporarily
closed due to a family
emergency. Thank you
for your understanding.
Questions? Call
Juan 971-704-4811

Vernonia Veterinary Clinic

Small and Large Animals



Open

Mon, Wed & Saturday
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

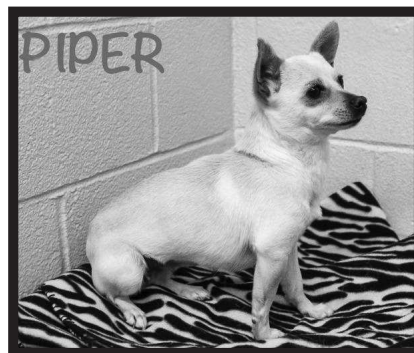
Call for Appointments
(503) 429-1612

Or 24 hr. Emergency Number (503) 397-6470
700 Weed Ave. Vernonia, OR

HOW TO SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Vernonia's Voice welcomes and requests your thoughts, opinions and ideas. Please include your name, address and phone number, limit your letters to 300 words or less. Vernonia's Voice reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted. We will print letters space permitting. Deadline is the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month. Email: scott@vernoniasvoice.com or mail to: Letters, PO Box 55, Vernonia, OR 97064.

Columbia Humane Society Featured Pet



please call ahead to arrange for me to be at the shelter.

Hi! My name is Piper and I am a tan and white Chi mix. I am a spayed female, weigh about 7 lbs, and am really cute. I came from California via ASPCA. I love to play outside and I really need a fenced yard. I get along great with other dogs. Please note I am currently not at the shelter. I am in a foster home. If you would like to meet me

Phone: 503-397-4353
Email: animalwelfare@columbiahumane.org

Web: www.columbiahumane.org
2084 Oregon Street
St. Helens, OR 97051