

# An Opinion: Reasons to Vote YES on the School Bond *continued from page 3*

many people who had little or no direct connection to our town yet worked very hard to help the Vernonia community move our schools: private business people, funders at foundations, government agency workers, local, state and federal legislators and their staffs, alumni who no longer live here, and many others. State Senator Betsy Johnson made it her personal mission to get that campus built and took numerous risky political stands to ensure we got the funding we needed, as did Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski, who issued an Executive Order in August of 2010, authorizing all Oregon Departments to do whatever they could to help the Vernonia effort. Alissa Keny-Guyer, now a State Representative from Portland, was the project manager for Oregon Solutions, and Portland businessman Tom Kelly convened the Oregon Solutions project alongside Columbia County Commissioner Tony Hyde. Jim Eckland, an alumni who lives in Salem, worked diligently to contact other alumni and get their support. The list of heroes just goes on and on. Yes, we passed a \$13 million bond, but now we have a chance to pass this additional bond to finish this project and offer a very big thank you to all those who worked so hard to help us achieve our dream.

**What if the bond fails?** - *Let me tell ya, it ain't gonna be pretty.* (Notice how I used poor grammar to help make a point about the need for good education?) That \$400,000 debt payment will come out of the District's General Fund every year, and will mean serious cuts to teaching positions, teaching aide positions, days in the

classroom, or a combination of all three. It will be up to the Board and the Administration to figure out how to make that budget work, but it will be difficult and will absolutely impact the level of education our children receive. It could eventually lead to the loss of accreditation and the closing of the school, and that scenario of lost jobs and businesses, and the impact to families, is not something I want to try to explore here. Not passing the bond would be a huge mistake.

**Help them across the finish line** - Some of you may have recently seen a video on the internet of a brother helping his brother finish a triathlon race. British triathlete Jonny Brownlee was leading in the 6.2 final leg of a triathlon race in Cozumel, Mexico on September 19, when he became overheated, dehydrated, and appeared disoriented and began to stagger, nearing collapse. Brownlee was passed by the second place runner and then his brother Alistair, who was running in third place came upon him. Alistair immediately grabbed his brother, draped Jonny's arm over his own shoulder and supported him as the two ran on to the finish line, where Alistair, in a selfless gesture, shoved Johnny across the line to finish ahead of himself. Alistair is a two time gold medalist in the last two Olympic Games and Jonny won silver at Rio and bronze at London. Why am I telling you this story? Because I see Johnny as our Vernonia School District,

staggering towards the finish line in this school campus construction race, and the voters as Alistair, passing this bond and putting the District before themselves. This vote is our chance to be Alistair, to be a hero.

**In the end, we get a great deal!** - If voters approve this bond we will have a \$45 million school campus that we can all be extremely proud of, and the total cost to Vernonia residents will only be \$20 million. To me that sounds like a pretty great deal.

Please join me in voting to support our kids, our community, and our schools, and VOTE YES for the Vernonia School Bond.

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## City News *continued from page 5*

the owners to begin selling lots in the development again.

Mitchell reported that the WOE Board of Directors has rejected the City's offer of \$80,000 for the purchase of the lot across Cougar Avenue. WOE was required to put in street improvements when they built their new headquarters and had an agreement that the City would reimburse them for property they had to purchase "if funding was available." WOE is asking for the full price of

\$116,627, plus \$1,250 for an appraisal, plus 6% interest. Council told Mitchell to again offer the \$80,000 as their final offer and inform WOE that they need to maintain the street and lot while it remains their property.

Mitchell informed the Council that Photo Solutions owner Brad Curtis has decided to relocate his business outside of Vernonia, bringing an end to the City's plans to develop an industrial complex on California Avenue.

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