

Readers Lend Their Voices...

To the Editor,

I've had the pleasure of living in this town for the last 10 years and I would like to ask that you vote for the Vernonia School Bond 5-259.

Many times in the past I have asked for your support in one form or another on behalf of the kids of Vernonia and I have never been disappointed. Our community is poised to have a tremendous positive impact on both the Mist and Vernonia school facilities by contributing the funds necessary for badly needed updates to the beloved Mist School as well as the completion of many items left undone on the Vernonia school's campus. The passage of the school bond allows our district to refinance the existing debt and continue with our current funds available for everyday teaching and programs, PLUS it would take advantage of the Oregon Department of Education's OSCIM Grant of \$2.7 million. These are our Oregon tax dollars that we can put directly back into our own Mist and Vernonia school facilities. But they are only available if voters pass 5-259.

It's my belief that the time to support the fire department is not when your house is burning down. The time to say yes to police is not when you have a break-in. And surely the time to support completing the school campus and meeting our debt obligation is not years from now, after the school has suffered severe budget cuts and the grant funds have disappeared. The time to support the Vernonia School District is right now with this bond. This is an opportunity to meet our obligations, do right by the kids at both Mist and Vernonia campuses and invest our state tax dollars back into our local community. The cost to the property owners of Vernonia that own a \$300,000 home would be \$72 per year. Equivalent to a footlong sub sandwich per month. The benefits are FAR greater.

It takes a vote of "YES" on Measure 5-259 to provide the schools our kids can really thrive in, which leads to increased community vitality, which leads to being a place people want to visit, which leads to them thinking, "Hey, this is the kind of place that's perfect for raising a family." Just the kind of thinking that led me to make Vernonia our home.

Please vote yes with me on Vernonia School Bond 5-259.

Susan Ely
Vernonia

To the Editor,

My name is David Crawford and am writing as a citizen of Columbia County, not in any official capacity, regarding Measure 5-257 Renewal of Local Option Levy for Jail Operations.

Having recently retired I am skeptical of measures or levies that raise local taxes. So when the opportunity came I applied for and was accepted on the Jail Operating Citizen Advisory (JOCA) Committee. My goal was to see just how the funds from the current levy were used. I was pleasantly surprised to find they were used properly and that the Jail's operating funds were spent appropriately. I am even more pleased to share with you a few facts that opened my eyes and that you may wish to consider.

First, this measure is to renew, not increase, the existing levy. Additionally, the Jail Bond will expire in 2018 reducing the property tax levied in the future. That will reduce the effective tax rate by \$0.38/\$1,000 of property value.

More importantly, our streets and our communities are safer and the offenders are held accountable for their offenses in a secure and professionally operated jail facility. Prior to the current levy the Jail was forced to return all but the most violent people arrested back into our communities. Today, forced early release is not used at all. The revolving door is gone. The failure to appear rate for those given bail has also significantly improved.

Prior to the current levy criminal activity had ballooned to alarming levels particularly with property related offenses. Today those needing to be in jail remain there. The revolving door is gone and criminals know it. Property crime levels have been significantly reduced.

Today there are programs available to divert those arrested through education, drug dependency intervention, and help with mental and emotional issues. These progressive programs were not available before the current operations levy was approved.

The revolving-door eliminated, a dramatically reduced property crime rate, and programs designed to produce fewer individuals being re-arrested for the same crimes are changes we can live with. It sounds to me like a jail that is working for the communities in Columbia County. It is working for your family and for mine.

For those who are interested in detailed information the report of the JOCA Committee Findings to the Board of Commissioners can be found on the Sheriff's Office web-site (co.columbia.or.us/sheriff). Select Jail Operating Citizens Advisory Committee from the menu under Corrections. An overview is printed there. To see the entire report press the link on that page. Please review the document for additional details.

Also, I recommend that you call the Sheriff's office to find the scheduled dates and times and take a Jail tour. I believe you will be impressed with the professionalism of the staff and the security measures of the facility. You will have an improved feeling of personal security when you leave, I guarantee it!

The choice is yours. I am a fiscal conservative to the bone. I am going to trust the Jail management team to continue their good work. I will also stay on the JOCAC to see that they are doing just that. Will you join me? I believe they have earned your trust.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve!

Dave Crawford
Birkenfeld, OR

To the Editor,

In a recent opinion piece I pointed out Margaret Magruder, who is running for County Commissioner, had been on the County Budget Committee for well over thirteen years. I was wrong. As it turns out Ms. Magruder has been on the Budget Committee for almost twenty years.

What does this mean? Well this means not only has Ms. Magruder had plenty of time to help Columbia County get out of debt as I had previously stated but it also means she was there and voted for the poor decisions that made Columbia County the most indebted county in the state of Oregon. Ms. Magruder's supporters claim she is working hard to get us out of debt therefore we should elect her to County Commissioner. That idea is ridiculous. It's like saying we should hire the fox to guard the henhouse because the fox knows how to steel chickens better than anybody else.

I want a County Commissioner who is not indebted to special interests, will resist new debt, and work hard to get rid of old debt. This is why I am voting for Wayne Mayo and I hope you will do the same.

Brian Rosenthal
Scappoose

To the Editor,

I understand that a lot of local people are struggling financially and that some people are going to vote against the school bond measure. I encourage these folks to consider 3 things:

1. This measure will cost \$6/mo for a

Upcoming Events

Life After War; Photography and Oral Histories of Coming Home - Saturday, November 5, 4:00 pm at the Vernonia Library. A free conversation with photographer Jim Lommasson.

Mist-Birkenfeld Fall Festival - Saturday, November 5, dinner served at 6:00 pm, entertainment begins at 7:00 pm at the Mist School, 69163 Hwy 47.

OSU Forestry Presentation - Thursday, November 17, 7:00 pm at the Vernonia Grange. Sponsored by the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council, Professor Doug Maguire presents the latest research relating to clear cutting and its impact on watersheds in Oregon.

The Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia - Saturday, December 3. For more info: Facebook page The Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia Oregon.

Christmas in the Country Bazaar - Saturday & Sunday, December 3 & 4 at the Vernonia Schools Commons.

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

Saturday,
November 19, 10 am
Grace Family Fellowship

If you have lost a family member or loved one to suicide please come to help heal and to find support.



\$300,000 property. Compare that with how much you spend for soft drinks, beer, chips, and donuts, not to mention your smartphone and satellite dishes.

2. The measure will be matched by almost \$3 million of state money. FREE money!

3. Public schools are an essential part of anyone's community, and the kids who learn there are our future (and will support our Social Security checks!).

Jo Zettler
Vernonia

Columbia Humane Society Featured Pet



Meet Nadia. This lovely girl came to us from a small rescue in the Redwood forest in California. She is about 2 years old and very sweet. She does very well with other dogs, and does not seem to mind cats. We believe that she is a heeler/hound mix of some type. She will chase kids on skateboards or on bikes. Her adoption fee is \$200. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call or email.

Web: www.columbiahumane.org
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St. Helens, OR 97051

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

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.

Where do you read the Voice? Show us where you have traveled. Submit your photo by email to: scott@vernoniasvoice.com