

Pages Keep Turning *continued from page 9*

held on an organized day and time.

“Even with a smaller library that has a smaller funding base, there is still a lot you can do with a little,” says Romtvedt. “But it does require a bit more community and volunteer involvement. It’s been good for me to work with some great individuals and organizations in the community to make different things happen. When you look at larger library systems and their schedules of events, there is always something going on. In a smaller community it has to be more hands on.”



As a way to make the Library more inclusive to the community, Romtvedt lobbied for, and was successful in getting the Vernonia City Council to reduce the annual fee from \$40 to \$25 for a family membership to those living outside the Vernonia City limits and also created a scholarship program for membership, funded by the Friends group. She also points out that the Library Board has approved allowing children who live outside the City limits to get a Library card at no cost. “We wanted to encourage use and not have a barrier for children to use the Library,” says Romtvedt.

Other programs of interest that Romtvedt has either initiated or expanded include Membership Passes to OMSI, the Oregon Historical Society, the Rice Museum of Rocks and Minerals, and the Shute Park Aquatic and Recreation Center, which can be checked out by Vernonia Library members free of charge. She had Wi-Fi installed at the Library and helped organize the Books on Wheels program for homebound senior citizens. She joined the library Passport Program which allows Vernonia Library members access to both the Multnomah and Washington County Library systems including e-materials through the Library To Go program, and also made available access to Learning Express data bases where patrons can study for GED, SAT, and other placement testing or learn computer programs.

“Learning Express is a great tool that I haven’t quite figured out how to tell people about, but it really helps expand our collection because we can’t keep ‘how to’ and computer technical books current,” says Romtvedt.

Romtvedt says one thing she really enjoys doing, which doesn’t show up on the Library calendar, is community outreach. She has been a regular contributor to *Vernonia’s Voice*, with a column and advertising in every issue which highlights upcoming programs and events. She has done storytime visits to Head Start, as well as hosted field trip visits from the preschool program. She has visited the Vernonia Senior Center and the Vernonia Lions Club to update those groups on Library activities, and has made connections with the Vernonia Schools to help promote the Summer Reading Program and plans visits to each elementary classroom this spring.

Romtvedt often gets regular support from the Friends group, an active group that raises funds through their annual book sales to support library programming. Last year she had a handful of teens who volunteered at the Library, some who were completing their required community service through the Vernonia Schools, and says she hopes to recruit more teen volunteers in the future; she has also had many regular volunteers who have helped with clean-up projects around the facility. She actively pursues grants and additional funding sources from outside the Vernonia City budget as a way to expand her resource base, and was recently a recipient of a Community 101 grant through the Vernonia High School Project Based Learning Class.

She currently has a full Library Board of community representatives, which helps with policy recommendations and other decisions, although she says two long time members will be stepping down this fall and she will be actively recruiting their replacements this summer.

In the future Romtvedt says she would like to work more with other organizations and businesses in the community, and has already had contact with Vernonia Hands On Art. She also hopes to create more programming for teens, including a reading enrichment program, which was terminated after the schools were moved and the Library was no longer in such easy walking distance for kids. “While we do have some one-time or bigger events for kids, I would really like to see something that takes place regularly once or twice a month, but



With a little help from regular carrier Peter O’Leary, new U.S.P.S. mail carrier Joel Hatcher (pictured above) worked hard collecting 500 pounds of food donations on Saturday, May 13 as part of the annual National Letter Carriers food drive. All donations stay in the community through Vernonia Cares Food Bank.

I’m not sure right now what form that will take to bring in that older age group.”

Romtvedt continues to promote the Library as a community resource for everyone. “I think the Library is something that is very important for the community,” says Romtvedt. “I’m really amazed sometimes when people I’ve never seen in the Library will come to a program, so that is a really great success because that is a new way that people find value in the Library. That is one of the most fulfilling parts of my job. I also really like just being here and having all the different conversations with community members.”

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