20th Annual Memorial Day Service



Memorial Day was observed on May 29 at the Vernonia Memorial Cemetery. The grounds were prepared by Scout Troop 860, the Vernonia Cemetery Committee, and other volunteers.

Salem Report continued from page 5

Johnson voting no, and it is now in the House Rules jobless rate is 3.7%, while the national rate is 4.6%. Committee

A big part of the Legislature's job is to try and anticipate future needs. It's a challenge because we have to consider a wide range of factors, including the impact of federal policies on our economy, but we have experienced and reliable staff to help us parse the numbers. Recently the Office of Economic Analysis presented the latest Revenue Forecast to the Legislature, and it's this information that will provide the basis for the 2017-19 budget. The news is mixed: Our economy continues to do better than the national average, although there are signs that the growth is beginning to slow down as we reach full employment. Oregon's

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In spite of these good numbers, we are still facing a \$1.4 billion shortfall in order to fund our schools, health care, human services and public safety at just the current levels. The reasons for this are multi-faceted, but the main reason is a wildly fluctuating income stream that promotes a feast-or-famine economic climate. As described in my previous columns, overdependence on personal income taxes and the lowest corporate taxes in the nation have paired up to make long-term stability nearly impossible to achieve.

The Joint Committee on Tax Reform is working hard to come up with revenue enhancement that will be both fair and adequate, and pass muster with the voters. Ways and Means has prepared budgets that slash



SAFE of Columbia County Welcomes New Executive Director

The Board of Directors of SAFE of Columbia County has announced that Ellyn Bell has been named the new Executive Director.

Bell has worked as an organizational leader with at-risk and marginalized youth in the juvenile justice system, foster care, and in family services. She has also been a strong and active leader in the movement to address sexual and domestic violence for over 20 years, and worked extensively with human trafficking in San Francisco.

Her personal experiences and challenges as a youth informed her career choice. She holds a Master's Degree in Religion, with an emphasis in Theology. Her undergraduate degree is in Sociology and Anthropology. She also received her social work license in the State of Iowa.

Bell is a yoga teacher, a dancer, and a published author. She is mother to two wonderful people who are now extraordinary young adults.

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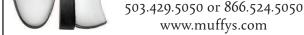
> over \$600 million from current expenditures in order to balance the budget. But even if all of this comes together, there is yet another concern to contend with and that is the Kicker, the arcane law passed in 1979, that will require about \$400 million in personal income taxes be returned to individual taxpayers in 2018.

> This law requires state economists to estimate what we can expect income tax revenue to be over the next two-year budget period, within 2%. This is a thoroughly unrealistic expectation that has rarely been met. If the actual revenue received exceeds the 2% estimate, then the entire excess must be returned to the individual taxpayer. To compound matters, the kicker is often triggered following a recession, just when the state can least afford it. It is also interesting to note that the estimated refund for the lowest 60% of taxpayers ranges between \$5 and \$191. The top 1% will get back about \$4,500. This policy is in the constitution so any changes must be approved by the voters.

It's that time of the year when construction projects start popping up in our district. As a heads-up for drivers, be aware that speed limits will be strictly enforced in work zone areas. Also, I intend to pass along closures/restrictions as my office is notified.

> Vernonia's Voice is published on the 1st and 3rd Thursday. Look for our next issue out June 15.





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