

Bridge Street Mini Mart Gets New Branding and Look

Owner makes changes and offers new products and services for customers

By Scott Laird

In case you haven't noticed, the Bridge Street Mini Mart has a fresh look, with several upgrades.

Sabi Singh took over ownership of the former Shell station in downtown Vernonia in May of 2016; he also owns a Chevron station in Knappa on Highway 30. He recently installed new digital pumps and a new digital sign that displays prices after converting the Vernonia station to Chevron. Both fuel pumps can now dispense premium and plus fuels, in addition to the regular grade.

"Chevron offers us a better opportunity," says Singh. "They have better service, better fuel, and a better look." Singh adds that Chevron will take more credit cards, including Texaco, Chevron, and CFN gas cards, Visa, Master Card, American Express, and Discover, along with several other fleet cards. He also notes that a higher percentage of people hold Chevron gas cards, so the change will be more convenient for more customers.

Toni Barton is the manager of Bridge Street Mini Mart, and has worked there for 23 years. Barton talked about all the services the mini mart is featuring. They recently upgraded the self-serve coffee station which now features espresso drinks - the store is currently offering \$0.99 coffee drinks - and fresh maple bars and apple fritters are made each morning. Barton reminds customers that they still receive a free coffee or a fountain drink with the purchase of \$20 of fuel. They have also added a F'real self-serve flavored milkshake machine. They still have pre-made hot deli food and cold deli sandwiches and salads. They expanded their cold beer selection to include more microbrews. They've also

added a freezer with frozen meals, pizza, and ice cream. Singh adds that Bridge Street Mini Mart has a clean public restroom and continues to accept EBT cards for food.

One of the more popular food additions has been made-to-order Skippers sea-



food, including clam chowder and chili. They recently extended the hours the fryer is open, now until 8:00 pm, and they will take phone orders.

In fact, owner Singh encourages people to order any quantity of food they serve. "If they want a big bag of chicken or a bunch of corndogs, we'll make it fresh for them," he says.

In addition to their regular items like snacks, candy, motor oil, smoothies, fountain drinks, and cigarettes, the store has added cell phone accessories, a selection of sunglasses, and e-cigarettes supplies.

"I'm really happy with all the upgrades and new products Sabi has brought in," says Barton. "He has a really big heart and he's really friendly with customers. He works a lot of hours and he's a very hands-on owner."

Singh has really tried to embrace the Vernonia community and his place as a business owner here. In addition to the new pumps and sign, Singh installed a generator to make sure he has power and can sell fuel to the com-

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Football Field and Track Construction to Begin This Summer

The Vernonia School District (VSD) has announced that construction of a new track and football field on the Vernonia Schools campus will begin sometime in June.

This project is one of the largest to be completed with Bond funding, approved by the community in November of 2016, and is

the VHS football team to play its home games on their home campus. Bleachers, not a stadium, will be in place for seating. The field will be completely fenced and it is scheduled to be playable for the second home game of the season against Nestucca on September 14.

"In order for this project



scheduled to be finished in time for the Vernonia High School (VHS) football team to play on it for at least two of their four home games in the 2018 season.

"Once completed, the new facility will provide our track and field athletes with a fully functioning, 8-lane track, a jumping area, and a throwing area," said VSD Superintendent Aaron Miller. "This new track and field will meet OSAA regulations, and will meet all requirements necessary to hold official meets, including district and state tournaments."

In addition to the track facility, the new football field in the middle of the track will enable

to move forward, the large pile of dirt that is currently sitting in this area must be removed," added Miller. "The District has been providing this dirt to local patrons for free, transportation not included, in hopes that it will all be gone by the time the track and field are ready for construction."

Time is running out so if you or someone you know is in need of fill dirt, the VSD may be able to meet your needs for free. There is a form for you to complete, but the dirt is free of charge. If you need dirt, or have any questions regarding school bond projects, please call the Vernonia School District at (503) 429-5891.

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School Board Discusses Facility Safety

The Vernonia School Board held an informal discussion concerning gun violence and the safety of the Vernonia Schools facility during their May 10, 2018 School Board Meeting.

Board Chair Brett Costley had placed the issue on the agenda and allowed back and forth conversation between the Board and members of the audience.

Earlier in the meeting Superintendent Aaron Miller had updated the Board on plans for the School District and the City of Vernonia to share the cost and services of a Student Resource Officer (SRO), a trained and armed law enforcement officer that would be based on the school campus when school is in attendance. Miller said the District and City are continuing negotiations on the details of the agreement that would allow the City to hire the officer and place

them at the school. Miller confirmed that both he and High School Principal Nate Underwood would be part of the hiring process for the SRO.

Miller said students in the Project Based Learning class have been researching school violence. He also noted that he has been part of several meetings with those students that included Vernonia City Administrator Josette Mitchell, Principal Underwood, and Vernonia Fire Chief Dean Smith, to discuss school safety. "I'm gathering input from the students on what they think is necessary from their perspective to make this work," said Miller.

The discussion next addressed the idea of a more secure front entrance with ideas about keeping the front door locked and requiring someone in the office to allow entry. The idea of more video security at the front entrance and

in the parking lot, to alert staff inside of a threat, was also mentioned. Miller noted that, while the front door is not locked during school hours, all other doors into the building are locked and fire exits have alarms if they are opened from the inside. "My concern is the balance between safety and being a welcoming place," said Miller.

Audience member Dale Webb, who originally proposed that the Board organize a community discussion about school safety several months ago, asked whether the administration was familiar with a security revue, identifying facility vulnerabilities, that was done by the State Police when the building was originally opened. Miller said he was unaware of any revue but would investigate whether it occurred and if there was information available that might

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