

County-wide Election Candidates Finalized

Positions on school, community, and public safety boards all across Columbia County will be up for election on May 21, 2019.

Voters now know who is running with the deadline to file having passed on March 21. A total of 56 races will be decided on election day, although a majority of those positions have candidates running unopposed.

In Vernonia, the Vernonia School Board has four seats up for election, but two of those seats did not have any candidate file to run, and will be vacant unless someone mounts a write-in campaign. Current Board President Greg Kintz is running for re-election unopposed for his Director Position #2. Steve Whiteman, also currently on the Board, will run for the four-year Position #3 unopposed after being appointed to fill the Position #6 vacated by Brett Costley, who resigned to take a teaching position. Position #6 will only be a two-year term to complete Costley's previous term. Current Board member Britany Roberts missed the filing deadline, but indicated she is considering running a write-in campaign. Former Board member Katie Cook resigned from her

#7 seat prior to the filing deadline.

The Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District has three positions up for election and all the races have the current Director running for re-election unopposed. Joel Glass is running for Position #2, Jesse Harbour is running for Position #3, and Tim Buchanan is running for Position #4.

The Mist-Birkenfeld Rural Fire Protection District has two Director positions up for election, with current Position #1 Director D. Scott Carpenter facing a challenge from former Fire District Chief David Crawford. Current Board Treasurer Joan Jones is running unopposed for Position #2.

The Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District has several positions up for election, including District #4, which includes Vernonia. Former Mist-Birkenfeld RFPD Chief Dave Crawford, the current Vice President on that Board, is running unopposed for his position.

In addition, the Columbia 9-1-1 Communication District is seeking the renewal of its five-year tax levy to fund operations of its emergency dispatch center. The levy calls for continuing the

current rate of \$0.29 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The Portland Community College Board of Directors has two positions up for election, including Position #7 which includes Vernonia. Alex Diaz Rios of Hillsboro is running unopposed for the seat that is currently held by Deana Palm.

Three positions are up for election for Commissioners on the five member Board at the Port of Columbia County (formerly the Port of St. Helens). For Position #1 current Treasurer Patrick Trapp faces a challenge from Nancy Ward and Stephen Hanson. For Position #2 current 2nd Vice President Mike Avent is being challenged by Chip Bubl and Amie Jo Kopecky, and current Vice President Larry Ericksen is running unopposed for Position #3.

Columbia County will not be publishing a voters guide for this election. For more information on positions up for election or to see the Candidate Filing applications visit the Columbia County Elections Department webpage at www.co.columbia.or.us/departments/elections-department-main.



Publisher and Managing Editor
Scott Laird
503-367-0098
scott@vernoniasvoice.com

Contributors
Congresswoman
Suzanne Bonamici
Jack Kauppila
Representative Brad Witt

Photography
Jason Gonzales
Scott Laird

Want to advertise?
Have an article?
Contact: scott@vernoniasvoice.com

One year subscriptions
(24 issues) \$35

Vernonia's Voice is published
on the 1st and 3rd Thursday
of each month.

Vernonia's Voice, LLC
PO Box 55
Vernonia, OR 97064
503-367-0098

Salem Report



**By Representative
Brad Witt**

Recently in Salem I was proud to join my colleagues in helping to pass House Bill 2014, which lifts the current \$500,000 cap on non-economic damages for victims of negligence. There is no limit to the amount juries can award for economic damages in lawsuits, which covers medical bills, lost wages and property damage. But a 2016 Oregon Supreme Court ruling established a \$500,000 cap on non-economic damages. I signed on as a sponsor of this bill because it would restore fairness to the system and allow victims to recover the damages a jury determines are owed. The cap on non-economic damages is a cap on justice for the victims of negligence. The House voted 36-22 to advance HB 2014 to the Senate.

On March 26 the House passed legislation to strengthen consumer protections for payday lending. A payday loan offered by a non-bank payday lender is a cash loan of up to \$50,000

with a short-term (31-60 days) made to a borrower with a regular income. HB 2089 prohibits a practice known as "debt stacking" where payday and title loan companies lend additional money to individuals who have outstanding debt with those companies. Legislation passed in 2007 to reform title loan and payday lending included that interest not exceeding 36% per year, a payday loan can be renewed only twice, and established a seven day "cooling off period" between payday loans. Previous legislation did not clearly prevent payday lenders from "stacking" or offering multiple loans to a consumer as long as the loans were not within seven days of the expiration of a loan. By clarifying the statutory language, HB 2089 seeks to limit payday lenders to one loan at a time, giving consumers time to repay the loan and help prevent a cycle of high-interest debt. The bill was approved by a 46-13 House floor vote and moves to the Senate for consideration.

Consumer awareness of single-use plastics and their impact on the environment has prompted bills regulating single use plastic bags, straws, and polystyrene.

Plastic bags are among the most

commonly found litter and pose a major contamination problem at recycling centers. Beginning with the City of Portland's ordinance in 2011, 16 local jurisdictions have regulated the use of plastic check-out bags. They have been totally banned in both Hawaii and California. Such a ban may also help stimulate demand for recycled paper bags as the bill requires.

HB 2509 prohibits the use of thin, single-use plastic bags at retail establishments and restaurants. Retailers may offer paper bags, but there will be a charge of at least eight cents. The extra charge will be waived for customers participating in food assistance programs such as EBT, WIC, and TANF. Small plastic bags for produce and meat will still be provided in-store for consumer health reasons. Bags used for dry cleaning, pet waste, newspapers, or garbage liners will also be exempt.

HB 2883 is a ban on the use of polystyrene takeout containers. Every day millions of disposable plastic items are discarded, and polystyrene commonly referred to as Styrofoam is among the worse forms of plastic pollution. Like all plastics, it does not biodegrade, but it does break down into smaller and small-

er pieces, which can be swept into waterways, ending up in oceans and lakes. Portland banned polystyrene takeout containers 30 years ago, and other Oregon cities have followed suit.

Reports from cities who have implemented a ban are positive, less trash and plastic pollution and an increased market for less costly recycled paper containers. Many individuals and organizations came to Salem to offer support for this ban, and HB 2883 was scheduled for a work session on April 2 in the House Committee on Energy and Environment.

Email: Rep.BradWitt@oregonlegislature.gov
Phone: 503-986-1431
Address: 900 Court St NE, H-374, Salem, OR, 97301
Website: <http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/witt>

Cedar Side Inn

Full Dish Sports Package

Big Screen, featuring Pac 12 games

Taco Tuesday

from opening until 9pm
3 hardshell or 1 softshell \$4.25

Ladies' Night

every Thursday 6pm-close



• Free Pool • Free WiFi • Specialty Pizzas

Check our Facebook page for daily specials and upcoming events
756 Bridge Street, Vernonia 503-429-5841



FULL DISH SPORTS PACKAGE!

Happy Hour Mon-Fri 4-7

"BIKER FRIENDLY"

EVENTS

Sat, April 27
Texas Hold 'em

- Specialty hamburgers
- 8 Draft beers & mixed drinks
- 5 Craft beers on tap
- Pool tables & satellite TV
- Free Wi-fi
- Beer & Kegs to go

Sun - Thurs 11 AM - Midnight • Fri - Sat 11 AM - 2:30 AM
733 Bridge St, Vernonia • 503-429-9999