

# Vernonia City News...

## At the September 16, 2019 City Council Meeting:

**Council Hears Presentation From Columbia County Tourism Initiative** – The Council heard a presentation by Alison Hart of the Columbia County Tourism Initiative. The presentation explained the goals and progress of the organization, which is working to cultivate Columbia County as a tourist destination by leveraging and enhancing resources, while engaging the community. Hart said they recently completed both a Strategic Plan and a Destination Development Plan, and have been awarded \$85,000 in grants for specific projects at Prescott Beach, the CZ Trail, and Salmonberry Lake. The organization is asking local governmental entities to participate financially to help continue the program, and requested \$5,000 from the City of Vernonia. After a discussion the Council asked staff to identify potential sources of funding in their budget for the program.

**Council Approves MOU for School District Use of Wetlands** – Council approved an MOU between the City and the Vernonia School District for use of the Mill

Site Marsh Wetlands area for continuing educational purposes.

**Council Discusses Nehalem River Campground Fee** – Council discussed a recommendation from the Parks Committee to decrease the camping fees at Nehalem River Campground (formerly Airport Park) from \$20 to \$15 to make it consistent with the tent camping fees charged at Anderson Park. After a discussion, Council declined to make the change.

**Police Department Report** – Police Chief Mike Conner told the Council he has three applicants for the open patrol officer position and is waiting for more applicants before beginning the interview process. He said he is considering hiring part-time certified officers from other agencies to temporarily fill coverage gaps.

**City Administrator Report** – City Administrator Josette Mitchell told the Council the sale of the cemetery house has been completed for \$132,000. She said some of the revenue from the sale will be used to construct an equipment shed and a columbarium wall at the cemetery.

Mitchell told the Council the Agricultural Access Easement for the Weller family, and the Senior Citizen Lease Agreement for the Cabin in Vernonia have both been completed.

## Citizen of the Month

**Citizen of the Month** – Mayor Rick Hobart recognized Arnie and Mary Tolonen, and Craig and Tonya Tolonen for their years of service to the community as owners of the True Value Hardware store on Bridge Street. The Tolonens celebrated 50 years of business on September 14.



## A Cares/Senior Moment! *continued from front page*

Coordinator; Mary McArthur, Executive Director of Columbia Pacific EED who served as the grant administrator for the project; Trent Jorgensen, the architect on the project from Sid Scott Architecture; Columbia County Commissioners Alex Tardif and Margaret Magruder; representatives from the Columbia Pacific Food Bank, Columbia County United Way, and Community Action Team (CAT); and Vernonia City Councilors J.R. Allen and Dale Webb. Eric Larke, the project supervisor, and Terry Brown of Five Star Builders also took part in the ceremony, along with Sandy Welch, Executive Director of Vernonia Cares and Tobie Finzel representing the Vernonia Seniors. Jim Tierney and Casey Mitchell, both formerly of CAT and instrumental partners in the project, were unable to attend.

The long awaited project, which became necessary following the 2007 flood, has taken a meandering, and sometimes frustrating, path. Following the flood which damaged the former Se-

nior Center on Bridge Street, the building was bought-out through FEMA funds and demolished. Since then the Seniors have been without a real location of their own, and have shared space with Vernonia Cares at their headquarters at the American Legion Hall. Vernonia Cares was flooded in 2007 and immediately cleaned up so it could help in flood recovery efforts. The American Legion building remains in the flood way, and had several close calls during high water events over the past decade, with volunteers activated to move all food supplies to safety on several occasions.

The City has been in the process of acquiring the funding for the project for the last several years, and had to make adjustments to the design after all construction bids received last fall were over budget. The project will house both the Senior Center and Vernonia Cares under one roof, with separate entrances and a wall dividing the two operations. The Senior Center will be the final project undertaken as part of the 2007 flood

recovery efforts across the community.

The Vernonia Senior Citizens recently took over operations of the Cabin in Vernonia (aka Scout Cabin) in Hawkins Park, and will use the space as an interim meeting place until construction of the new facility is complete. The Senior Center Board of Directors will host a luncheon on Wednesday, September 25, at 11:30 am, and invites local area residents 60 and older to the Cabin in Vernonia to hear from the senior community on their ideas/wishes/dreams for new potential activities and services in the two venues. Lunch will be served at noon followed by a short presentation

on plans for the new Senior Center and the recently-inherited Cabin. Please call (503) 429-3912 or sign up at the Seniors' thrift store at 939 Bridge Street so there will be sufficient food.

Following the groundbreaking ceremony, attendees and guests were invited for cake and coffee at the Vernonia City Hall. Vernonia Cares Director Welch was recognized for her efforts on the project by Mayor Hobart and given the honor of cutting the cake.

The project is expected to be completed by summer of 2020.

## Police Blotter September 1-16, 2019

### Arrests/Reports Taken

- September 2, 2019 Arrest on a Warrant near Bridge Street
- September 6, 2019 Abandoned Vehicle Report near North Street
- September 9, 2019 Found Property Report
- September 12, 2019 Report of Theft II and Burglary I near East Bridge Street

### Citations/Other

- September 13, 2019 Cited for Driving While Suspended near California Avenue

**Vernonia Police Department responds to calls that do not always end in Arrest, Report, or Citation. 9/01/2019 through 9/16/2019 VPD had 130 calls for service.**

**The Vernonia Transfer Station is scheduled to be open on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday January - October**

**September 28  
October 12 & 26**

*Dates and times are subject to change due to weather*

## Vernonia City Council Meetings and Closures

**City Council Meetings are scheduled for 7:00 pm:**  
Monday, October 7, 2019  
Monday, October 21, 2019

**City Closures are scheduled for:**  
Monday, November 11, 2019  
*Veterans Day*

*Dates and times subject to change*

## VOICES FROM THE MILL POND

A Collection of Stories, Poems, Photography, & Artwork from Vernonia's Talented Community

**NOW ACCEPTING SUBMISSIONS!**

Deadline:  
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Publication:  
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**COVER CONTEST:**

One of the artwork or photograph submissions will be used for the cover.

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