

# Senior Meals Program Struggles During Shutdown

Senior citizens everywhere are struggling during the current shutdown and Stay at Home orders. They are some of most vulnerable citizens, especially susceptible to COVID-19.

Many senior citizens who are homebound are able to receive some assistance in the form of home delivered meals.

In Vernonia those meals are delivered through a program sponsored by the Vernonia Senior Center. Currently there are 12 senior citizens in Vernonia receiving a midday meal, delivered Monday through Friday each week by local volunteers. Meals are free to qualified seniors, who can apply for the program through Community Action Team (CAT). Seniors must live within a two mile radius of Vernonia. The program has been funded through income the Senior Center makes from their Bargains on Bridge Street thrift

store, their main source of income.

“They are not truly free as the senior center pays the cost aside from a small (less than 25%) reimbursement from USDA,” says Senior Center Treasurer Tobie Finzel. “We normally make up the difference with thrift store proceeds. With the store closed due to the Oregon closure mandate, we are more than ever dependent on donations from the community.”

The cost to keep the Home Delivered Meals Program operational is significant for the Vernonia Senior Center. Currently the meals are prepared by local restaurants, because the Senior Center does not have their own facility and kitchen. The prepared meals cost \$6 each. At over 200 meals each month, that adds up to well over \$1,200. The Senior Center receives \$100 per month from CAT to run the program. Reimbursement from USDA is only \$1.25 for each meal. That leaves

the Senior Center to cover about \$1,000 each month, with no current income.

If you are in a position during this difficult time, and would like to help the Vernonia Senior Center’s Home Delivered Meals Program, please send a check to Vernonia Senior Citizens at 939 Bridge St., Vernonia, OR 97064. (Please note on the check your donation is for the Home Delivered Meals Program.)

“We are totally grateful to our volunteer drivers who deliver these meals, day in and day out, year round,” added Finzel.

To apply for Home Delivered Meals contact Mandy at Community Action Team (503) 397-3511. You can also call and leave a message at the Senior Center (503) 429-3912.

# Columbia County Commissioner Candidates – Answers to Questionnaire for May 19 Election

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ing as Columbia County’s budget officer the past three years has provided the opportunity to dive deep into the county funds and develop a long term strategic financial plan that provides a road map for financial sustainability. I’m committed to you and continued responsible stewardship of county spending. The people of this county deserve a responsible, transparent and accountable commissioner that will continue to make the needs of this county top priority, I am that candidate.

**Casey Garrett:** I’m Casey Garrett and I am running for Columbia County Commissioner Position 3. I have lived in Saint Helens for the past 14 years and was raised outside of Scappoose in the heart of Chapman.

I have nearly 20 years work experience in the private sector, plus 5 years working in government administration. For over 15 years I have managed complex operations, projects and schedules, and multimillion-dollar budgets. I have a track record of success and know how to navigate government processes. I have led efforts to make drastic changes within the county’s General Services Department, proving we can do better. I take a hands-on approach and am never afraid to get my boots dirty.

I take great pride in the history of our County and want to do everything I can to make it an even better place for our residents, workers and visitors. I am active in our community and have volunteered thousands of hours of my time to support local causes. As your County Commissioner I will work tirelessly to manage public resources responsibly and make the absolute most of what we have.

## 2. What do you think are some positive things, or things that are going well in the County?

### Position 1

**Stockwell:** This year in particular has shown us the importance of having high speed internet available to those within our County. High speed internet is crucial for businesses within our county to compete with others in their industry, and also opens up opportunity for many residents in our county to start online businesses, or even work from home opportunities while still residing in our great County. While high speed internet is important, it is also equally important that the steps to implement this across our county is approached in a logical

manner with an ever vigilant eye on reducing costs and working with vendors and grants to help shoulder those expenses and prevent it from becoming a financial drain as some counties have found implementation to be.

**Magruder:** There are very positive things happening on the economic development front with Columbia County commissioners and staff, the various cities, State Senator Betsy Johnson, State Representative Brad Witt, the Port of Columbia County, the Columbia County Economic Team (CCET), business/industry leaders, and educational institutions working together to bring desirable jobs, training, and an increased tax base to our county.

The development of the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center (OMIC) in Scappoose is continuing with Portland Community College (PCC) increasing its commitment with the recent groundbreaking of its new training center on the OMIC campus.

The Port of Columbia County is working with Perry Institute, an outstanding vocational school based in Yakima, to site a second campus in south Columbia County.

The NEXT Renewable Fuels proposal for Port Westward near Clatskanie will produce recycled green energy biofuels and will employ hundreds during the construction process and over 200 permanently. NEXT will NOT use the railroad.

Working under CCET, the Columbia County Tourism Initiative has involved business people and public agency representatives in developing a plan to capture tourism dollars by improving and promoting our waterways, trails, parks, and other natural and cultural assets.

**Dudzic:** Some positive things in our County are:

- The Columbia County Family Treatment Court Program has performed so well that Oregon HB4040 was modeled after its success. This is proof that even a small county can be a trailblazer in providing solutions for state or national problems.
- Columbia County’s road maintenance crew provided critical support to Umatilla County after catastrophic flooding in February.
- PCC’s new workforce training center and their partnership with OMIC. Investing in local education that then produces quality jobs is highly prefer-

able than continuing to place costly (and failing!) bets that some mega-industry will come in and solve all our problems.

• In the wake of Covid-19, residents of all ages are showing up for each other in some remarkable ways. I have seen the distribution of food, donations, the creation of thousands of masks, and other very creative ways of showing concern for each other – many times, with folks refusing to accept payment for their offerings.

As your county commissioner, I will take that mighty spirit of resiliency with me to local government policy creation. Local government channels paired with someone with political will to do the right thing presents a critical opportunity to shape our future.

**Mayo:** Vernonia is becoming a destination for a growing community of bicyclists. With the paved, Banks to Vernonia bike path, more and more people are coming out on weekends and discovering Vernonia.

The West Oregon Electric facility and other new construction greets all coming into Vernonia on Hwy. 47 and speaks well for the community.

Next Adventure, a sporting and rental shop with a strong Portland connection has generated a tremendous amount of Portland customers in rental kayaking from their leased facility at Bayport Marina. They need an expanded facility. It would be great to see them start another outlet in downtown St. Helens for access to the mouth of the Lewis River and Sand Island.

Downtown Rainier is getting a

complete makeover with the upgrades of parking, curbing and landscape. The family businesses will certainly benefit once the project is complete.

The new Grocery Outlet and the Dollar Store in downtown Rainier are a welcome addition. There was no grocery store in Rainier. Not only is Grocery Outlet a beautiful store, it is well stocked, even during the pandemic.

Teevin Brothers sort yard and the barge loading facility are adding industrial activity with each passing year.

Projects like these will make Columbia County thrive.

### Position 3

**Correll:** I do like to start with the positive aspects to any situation. After making Columbia County my home for most of my life, I can honestly say, our beautiful rural setting brings me joy each day, and I couldn’t ask for a nicer group of friends and neighbors. These are the reasons my husband and I talked about local politics – to figure out how to give back to our community. The Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center (OMIC) Research & Development Center and its affiliated PCC Training Center near Scappoose are a prime example of a grand improvement in the area. I see new single family homes and apartments being built throughout the county, along with new schools. People are enjoying the recreational opportunities available to them. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, our economy was doing very well; only the future will tell if it will be able to get back to where it started quickly. I hope so! It seems that

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

**April 25  
May 9 & 23**

*Dates are subject to change*

**Currently not accepting oversized items (mattresses, couches, etc.) and limiting the number of vehicles in the yard at one time.**

**Vernonia City Council Meetings and Closures**

Please check the City’s website for details on upcoming City Council Meetings scheduled for 7:00 pm:

Monday, April 20, 2020  
Monday, May 4, 2020

**www.vernonia-or.gov**

**City Closures are scheduled for:**  
Monday, May 25, 2020  
Memorial Day Holiday

*Dates and times subject to change*