

## OSSA Names Aaron Miller Administrator of the Year

The Oregon Small Schools Association (OSSA) is proud to announce Vernonia School District Superintendent Aaron Miller has been named its 2021 Administrator of the Year.



OSSA recognizes one school administrator each year who excels in his/her leadership position. Criteria include integrity, leadership, commitment to community, scholarship, and student achievement.

"The OSSA Board of Directors is very happy to honor Mr. Aaron Miller this year. He is an exemplary leader who I have worked with for over 20 years, and his work has improved the success of students in Oregon's small school districts," said Michael Carter, OSSA Executive Director.

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## CC Rider to Reduce Service

*New plan will cut three bus routes, including Vernonia*

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners will likely cut three bus routes from the Columbia County Rider (CC Rider) service schedule, based on recommendations from transit director John Dreeszen.

CC Rider is the public transit service operated by Columbia County, and currently runs four bus routes: Line 1 between St. Helens and Portland, Line 3 between Scappoose, St. Helens, and Columbia City, Line 5 between Rainier and Longview, and Line 6, between Vernonia, Banks, and Hillsboro. CC Rider also provides Dial-a-Ride, a door-to-door service mostly utilized by elderly customers or those with mobility issues.

The new plan would completely eliminate Lines 3, 5, and 6, and focus funding on expanding Line 1 and Dial-a-Ride services. It would also increase the cost for Dial-a-Ride.

Currently a Dial-a-Ride trip costs \$2.20 within city limits, or \$4 between Scappoose and St. Helens. Under the new rates a ride would cost a base rate of \$3 but would include a \$0.75 per mile after the first 8 miles. Dial-a-Ride would continue to be available where discontinued routes were operating.

## Witt Removed From Committees by Speaker

*House Conduct Committee finds Witt created a hostile work environment with texts to co-legislator*

Oregon Democratic State Representative Brad Witt has been removed from three committees and reassigned to two new committees by House Speaker Tina Kotek following a decision by the House Conduct Committee.

Witt was accused in April of sending suggestive texts to Representative Vicki Breese Iverson, which she interpreted as asking for a date or sexual favors in exchange for Witt's vote on a bill.

An independent investigation released on May 19 found that both Breese Iverson's interpretation of the text as sexual harassment, and Witt's explanation that he was only attempting to find a way to improve their working relation-

ship, were both credible.

On Tuesday, June 1 the House Conduct Committee found that Witt had violated workplace rules against sexual harassment and creating a hostile work environment. The Conduct Committee agreed Witt should undergo "coaching and training appropriate for his conduct violation," and suggested Kotek take additional action.

Kotek removed Witt from his position as Chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, and also removed him from the House Committee on Water, and the House Committee on Business and Labor; Witt and Breese Iverson served jointly on all three of those committees.

Witt has been appointed to the Economic Recovery and Prosperity Committee, and the General Government Committee.

## More Murals Coming to Vernonia

*Collaboration with Portland Street Art Alliance will bring renowned artists and more artwork to downtown walls*

By Scott Laird

If you've driven through downtown Vernonia in the last month of so, it's likely you've seen the new mural at the corner of Bridge Street and Jefferson Avenue. The beautiful mural, celebrating the Day of the Dead in Mexican culture, was created by Na-

cho Arte and really brightens up the downtown.

Now it looks like more artwork in the form of several murals will be added this summer.

The City of Vernonia recently was awarded a downtown beautification grant through Travel Oregon which will fund new garbage receptacles, hanging flower baskets, pocket park improvements, paver resetting, and mural artwork.

Rachael Organ, who heads up the Vernonia Improvement Project which has helped landscape the new Senior Center/Vernonia Cares property among other projects, helped the City prepare the Travel Oregon grant application. With the funding awarded, Organ is now working to secure artists to paint the murals this summer, with the work culminating in a "street art" festival on Saturday, September 4. Details are still being finalized, but Organ is excited that the project is now coming together.

"I've been going through some portfolios of different artists from the Portland Street Art Alliance (PSAA) and we've met with some building owners to talk about art themes," explains Organ.

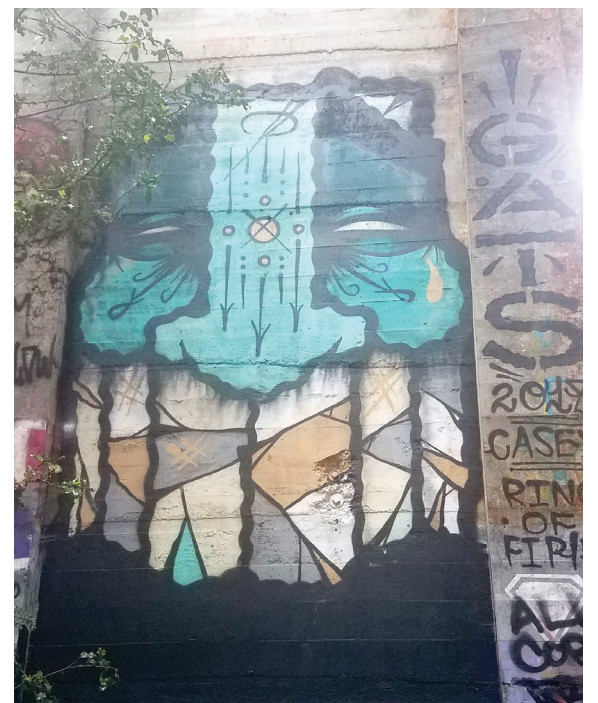
PSAA provides access to resources, networking, and professional development opportunities for Pacific Northwest street artists. PSAA has facilitated commissioned work resulting in over \$350,000 paid to working artists.



Examples of work by artists that may be contributors to murals in Vernonia, including world famous graffiti artist GATS (below).

PSAA is actively transforming the public art landscape by developing place-based programs aimed at increasing access to art for everyone. They managed over 150 private and publicly-funded street art projects, collaborating with hundreds of artists in the region, while also facilitating educational programming, tours, and community events.

Organ says the owners of Black Iron Grill and R&S Market both look to be on-board to have the walls of their buildings painted on the parking lot side. The Rock Creek Building at the entrance to Hawkins Park and the side of Muffy's building might also be



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