

New Pavilion at Vernonia Lake



A new covered seating area at Vernonia Lake was recently dedicated. Pictured left to right are Margaret Wells who donated funds to build the pavilion; Sierra Trass from the Columbia Economic Team; Vernonia Mayor Rick Hobart; David Sterner and Richard Traver, owners of Calypso's, an ice cream and snack bar next to the pavilion which also celebrated their grand opening at the dedication; and Jason Moon, the new Director of the Columbia County Small Business Resource Center.

P.E.O. Scholarship Clarification, Fundraiser Scheduled

The Vernonia chapter of P.E.O. awarded four \$500 scholarships to graduating senior girls at the annual VHS scholarship dessert. Thanks to a generous donation by a local donor in honor of the late Claudine East, VHS Class of 1953 and a 59-year member of the chapter, the chapter awarded two extra scholarships this year in Claudine's name. The two 2022 Claudine East Scholarship winners are Wana Grimes and Olivia Lloyd. The two traditional P.E.O. chapter scholarships were awarded to Jenna Romaine and Sydney Smith.

P.E.O., a Philanthropic Educational Organization, is an international women's organization founded in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, in 1869. The Vernonia Chapter was founded in 1945. P.E.O.'s main mission is the education of women and owns an award-winning women's college in Nevada, Missouri, that is primarily funded by P.E.O. International's quarter million members.

Please mark your calendars now for P.E.O.'s annual "Junk in the Trunk" sale which will be held Saturday, July 16, from 10 am to mid-afternoon at the Spencer Park Play Shed. All proceeds from this multi-contributor sale go to support the chapter's fundraising for scholarships.

National Commander Visits American Legion *continued from front page*

lard. "This is well deserved and well needed." Dillard noted that the U.S. House passed the PACT Act before the Senate passed an amended version. Dillard said he expects the bill to go back to the House where it must pass again before it can be signed by the President and become law. "It was time to do it and it's the right thing to do." Dillard said he testified in front of Congress on behalf of the passage of the PACT Act. He noted that one Senator was quoted, following his testimony, as saying that the American Legion always brings them good information. "The main thing I want to let you know is, the American Legion – you folks – is why this got done. We started working on this back in October and then it started getting some traction. I encourage you to tell everyone about our legislative alerts for the next battles we're going to be fighting."

Dillard briefly discussed some other pieces of the current American Legion Legislative Agenda, which includes the Pay the Coast Guard Act, Protecting the American Flag, and Citizenship for Honorable Service. He noted that President Biden recently signed nine bills to help improve health care for women veterans, which was another Legion priority, including access to mammograms, maternity health care, and access to wellness clinics.

Dillard also spent time discussing another legislative priority, the need for suicide prevention and peer support for veterans. Dillard encouraged all veterans to do 'buddy checks' – phone calls or visits to other veterans they served with to check on their welfare. "Make those



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phone calls because you never know when you might be the one to save a life," said Dillard. "Especially after the last few years, with all the isolation. Pick up that phone, call them and don't be afraid to ask them how they are doing. If we could reduce our veteran's suicide we would save over 3,600 lives every year. So be the one."

When asked about the importance the American Legion plays in small communities like Vernonia, Dillard said he thinks any place that has a high school should have an American Legion post. "That's where I'd concentrate on building a post," said Dillard. "Here, it's where you live. It's where you raise your family. And I think the community can buy into that, as long as the post will step out and not stay confined within their walls. Get the families involved, because the American Legion is family. And that brings your community in. Do things that keep you out in front of the community. The American Legion is important everywhere, but it's more important in a small community."

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