



LCDC designates whole County EFU

by Ned Mawhirter

On Jan. 29, the Columbia County Commission and interested citizens met with the LCDC in Salem in a public hearing on the Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) issue. The Columbia County Board of Commissioners had previously declined to designate EFU land within the county due to public pressure. Thus failing to meet LCDC deadlines for designating EFU lands within the county the hearing was held by LCDC in Salem. This was a second hearing in Salem on the issue the first one producing no action from the LCDC.

However at the Jan. 29 meeting the LCDC made a temporary order that essentially designates all rural land in Columbia County as EFU. The order will be in effect until Columbia County comes up with its own designation of EFU land or appeals the LCDC order. The latest understanding being that Columbia County will plan to appeal the order.

A draft of the Order by LCDC states: Columbia County must make the following findings in approving any land use action on agricultural or forest lands outside of mutually adopted urban growth boundaries and major timber holdings;

1. On predominately forest lands, that the proposed action will conserve forest lands for the production of wood fibre and other forest uses as required by Goal 4, or;

2. On predominantly agricultural lands, that the proposed action is either, a. consistent with or provided in conjunction with the farm uses defined in ORS 215.203 (2), or, b. within an area built upon or irrevocably committed to nonfarm uses, or, c. is a nonfarm residential dwelling which:

1) is compatible with farm uses described in subsection (2) of ORS 215.203 and is consistent with the intent and purposes set forth in ORS 215.243, and, 2) does not interfere seriously with accepted farming practices, 3) does not materially alter the stability of the overall land use pattern of the area, and, 4) is situated upon generally unsuitable land for the production of farm crops and livestock, considering the terrain, adverse soil or land conditions, drainage and flooding, vegetation, location and size of tract.

ORS 215.203 subsection (2) is essentially a discription and catagorization of what constitutes farm land and farm uses. ORS 215.243 is a policy statement clarifying the intent of the EFU designation as being the preservation of farm land and rural open land from the "expansion of urban development into rural areas".

The LCDC order or the EFU designation does not deal with size of parcelization or subdivision only that all land be reserved for agricultural use.

VHS students hold rummage sale to prepare for State

The Vernonia High School students are planning a rummage sale to earn money for the State Basketball tournament that will be held in Pendleton. It will be held Saturday, March 3, at the High School gym.

If you have any items to donate please drop them by the high school or call the school for pick-up (429-3521). If you have any questions please contact Gordon Crowston (429-8093) or Nancy Eckland (429-3703).



Max O'Black standing by his newly delivered 'original' Wells Fargo Stage coach that is to be part of historical museum.

Mist man starts museum

by Jenelle Wiggins

Max O'Black, of Mist Route, has an eye for old and rare objects and for the past thirty years he has been bringing home his finds. His collection includes fragile depression glass, polished river rocks, deer and elk antlers of extraordinary size, Cougar and Bobcat pelts, antique tools and machinery used by our ancestors, and priceless Indian artifacts which Max himself has dug from abandoned Indian campsites along the shores of the Nehalem River.

The only problem has been in finding space to house all his collectibles and Max finally decided that only a museum would suffice. So he purchased the old Petersen estate, also of Mist Route, and he has been putting in long hours restoring the 90 year old house. He has already replaced the entire foundation, and this spring will begin work on a new roof. A coat of paint inside and out will top off the finishing touches and hopefully Max's museum will be open to the public by next fall.

Max O'Black is as rare a human being as are the treasures which will soon fill up the rooms of his museum. Thanks to him the history of our Nehalem Valley will be on view for all to see. Because the museum is non-profit, visitors will be asked to make a donation towards the upkeep of the building and grounds.

The Solar eclipse to hit Vernonia dead center

by Linda Bottfeld

The moon has intrigued astronomers and astrologists, scientists and poets of times old and new. It is constant. Although the skies often get cloudy and misty during the day and evening here, the moon still waxes and wanes and grows to full size and then decreases to new moon or no moon.

At the point when there is no moon for us to see, the sun is shining on the part of the moon that is not facing us. It is during this lunar phase that the moon passes between the earth and sun and conditions are right for a total solar eclipse. The complete shadow of the moon (the umbra) sweeps across the earth, and the earth, the moon, and the sun all rendezvous in space.

What will happen on Monday, February 26, will totally affect the environment, which includes all of us, and human curiosity is now rising to its peak. Eclipses have been vividly described by those who have seen them before, by those who have read about them in writings by the Chinese, Egyptians and the Bible, and by those who are able to imagine and predict.

The earliest eclipse known to man was in 2130 B.C. Eclipses occurring that long ago were not understood and much superstition followed in their wake. Astronomers have been beheaded on their account, and even great battles have ceased. In 1878 in Wyoming, Thomas Edison viewed an eclipse and was able to measure the solar chromosphere.

Monday's solar eclipse is a total one. That means the moon will be in the exact direction of the sun and the path of totality will be a narrow 180 miles across. When the eclipse is over, the moon's shadow will leave the earth and continue its course through space.

Vernonia is set right within the path the eclipse will travel through. Find a spot where the eastern horizon looms ahead of you as the sun rises, and where the moon can be seen wispig by, and you will enjoy an event that may not be repeated in our lifetimes. This is the last total solar eclipse of this century visible from North

America. The next total eclipse to be visible from the U.S. and Canada will be on August 21, 2017. In future generations (millions of years from now) total eclipses will not be seen from the earth. The moon is slowly spiraling away from the earth and only the annular (partial) eclipse will occur.

We sure are lucky. The perfect cozy spot. The perfect time of our lives. Unfortunately though, perfect weather conditions are slim. The statistics for the Portland area are grim for next Monday, indicating a predicted 81 percent total overcast. The worst that can happen is a big storm rolling off the Pacific Ocean and 3 layers of clouds. The best that can happen will be clear skies.

If the sky is clear we will witness what seems like magic before our eyes, but in reality is a very predictable event. The actual time the moon will cover the sun will be 2 minutes and 14 seconds. Totality begins at 8:13 a.m., however the entire ecliptic process will start happening as soon as the sun rises for a new Monday morning. At 7:10 a.m. the first contact, when the moon first meets the edge of the sun will begin. The moon will be racing past the sun at a speed of 2,000 m.p.h. Just after the break of dawn, the sun will seemingly change its mind and the day will once again become night. The blue (or gray) sky of day will plunge into the darkness of an evening sky. It will be dark enough to see the stars. Venus will be to the south and it will be very bright. The red planet in the sky 14 degrees east of the sun will be Mars. We may see Mercury at the time of the eclipse. It will become very quiet around, the animals and birds become confused and excited and the flowers will close as if for the night. It will also become colder, as the temperature drops in the coolness of the moon's shadow. All will be seemingly quiet and still. By about 9:00 a.m. this amazing celestial spectacle will be over.

There will be so much to see and enjoy as the strange and interesting sights occur. What we will see is:

1. Shadow Bands will be moving in one

direction. They are 6 inch long wiggling bands of light that can be seen off snow or a white sheet spread out on the ground. They will move so rapidly that the ground will seem to jerk.

2. **Baily's Beads** will be a light from the glint of the sun resembling a string of beads around the dark disk of the moon. Their appearance signifies the first contact of the moon with the sun and will last only 2-3 seconds.

3. **Diamond Ring** is the last of Baily's Beads crossing the disc of the moon. Here you can see the solar corona.

4. **Solar Corona** is only visible during a total solar eclipse. This spectacle is a crown of white light shining in all directions around the dark solar disc. This phenomena will be invisible if skies are not clear.

As the corona disappears and totality ends, the same events that preceded totality now occur in reverse order and on the opposite side of the sun as the sun is gradually uncovered by the passing moon.

Only during the time when the sun is totally covered by the moon in totality is it safe to view the eclipse. For about 1 hour before and 1 hour after the phase of totality, the sun is only partially obscured. During this time it is too dangerous to look at the sun. Because the lenses of our eyes act as tiny magnifiers looking at the partially eclipsed sun can burn them. Binocular lenses, sun glasses, camera lenses, and welding masks are not adequate lenses through which to view the eclipse.

We are a lucky generation of people, witnessing and experiencing the totality of the solar eclipse next Monday, February 26. It may send shivers up and down your spine, or give you a feeling that you may want to duck. Whatever you do, and however you choose to experience this event be sure to relax and enjoy. It will be a feeling, a happening, an event, and a special time in our lives.