

Reader questions future of natural gas funds windfall

To the Editor:

The discovery of natural gas in Columbia County could have created a tremendous windfall for Columbia County's present and future taxpayers if managed properly.

It also created some potential financial and physical pitfalls and gross inequities in distribution of the newfound funds for Columbia County and its private and corporate citizens.

I attempted to point out early in 1980 to the county commissioners they possessed all the tools to create the former and alleviate the latter, they as usual chose not to listen.

Instead, in their rush to get their hot little hands on the money, they have squandered taxpayer's funds to hire experts to help bungle the job completely.

Judging by what few facts that have been published, I would bet Columbia County has received and is

boggles the mind to realize Columbia County and its various taxing bodies are treating millions in public funds in slush fund fashion with hardly a squeak of protest from the local press.

One wonders if the local press did their job better, we voters might possibly do our job better. In which

under the limelight of the local press by finding gas funds to grease the wheel and political palms at the same time. Congrats to the citizens of Mist on a political coup. Your receipt and expenditure of the gas funds may be the only proper and lasting use of the windfall Columbia County citizen taxpayers receive.

To demonstrate the legal and financial thicket we are being led into one need only realize all the county taxing bodies are operating on voter approved budgets. They cannot expend public funds in excess of that budget, no matter the source, without voter approval. Even if they can legally circumvent the citizen taxpayers, the political arrogance displayed is inexcusable. If this citizen-taxpayer abuse bothers you, keep in mind it may get worse.

All of this and they still have the unmitigated gall to ask us for \$3 million more to cover their shortage. Not a chance! Then again, maybe the same political wisdom that elected them still prevails.

Dan Sprague
Clatskanie, OR

PUBLIC FORUM

in the process of distributing and spending 35 to 50 percent of all known gas revenue expected. It

case our elected officials would definitely do their job better.

Instead of tax relief, Columbia County taxpayers are not being asked or informed of the expenditure of their funds.

The one notable exception occurred when the people of Mist, as possessors of one of the most glaring inequities in funds distribution, demonstrated political wisdom by becoming a squeaking wheel at election time. Our commissioners, accompanied by our state representative, resolved the problem

Thoughts offered on sewage problem

To the Editor:

In response to the recent front page articles on the sewer lagoon, I offer the following thoughts.

It is easy to place the blame on the Public Works Department, I know, I do it frequently, myself.

Mr. Burright of the sewer committee, appears to be quite concerned about the problem. I just find it strange that a non-resident of Columbia County, (not to mention, a non-resident of Vernonia. Granted he is an absentee property owner and landlord.) is the one who brings this problem to the public, via the press.

The real blame for the public works deficiencies should be put squarely on the shoulders of the person responsible, which incidentally is not Roy Sanders, who tries to do a big job with little money.

The person to blame is "THE VOTER", regardless of whether they voted or not. The total blame lies squarely on the citizens who won't, usually through lack of involvement, make the elected officials do the job they were elected to do, and won't give these same elected officials the money to do the job with.

Jerry Sanders
Vernonia Control

Council member defends sewage lagoon

To the Editor:

Due to the sensationalism of the recent articles in the *Freedom* concerning the sewer overflow into the Nehalem, I felt compelled to respond. I feel the public is entitled to more than half-truths, innuendo and supposition.

I find it strange that the DEQ grants you information concerning the condition of the water in the Nehalem being dangerous when they haven't told the city. Also, how do you know the overflow is due to "rain and leakage in the city sewer

system"? Also, it is *not* true that storm drains on new constructions are connected to the sewer.

These are all minor points. What I'm really concerned about is the impression you are giving the public that we, the city council, are doing nothing.

There are many problems facing the city of Vernonia at this time, including dog control, adequate police protection, garbage disposal, vandalism and most of all, street repair and the upgrading of our sewer system.

Sally Harrison
Councilperson

OEDP scheduled to meet Feb. 9

TO: OEDP members and interested persons

FROM: OEDP staff

The Overall Economic Development Program committee will hold its regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, February 9, 1981 at 6:30 pm

in the Village Inn, St. Helens, Oregon.

Reports will be given by the recreation committee and the solid waste committee. Also, there will be a discussion on project proposals to be submitted for funding this summer. The public is encouraged to attend.

ColCo voters asked to approve road levy

The voters of Columbia County will be asked to approve a three-year, \$3,000,000 special road levy at a special election to be held on February 17, 1981.

According to the Board of Commissioners, the monies received, if the levy passes, will be used to maintain and upgrade the 540 miles of existing county roads. No new roads will be built.

A small portion of the funds, \$16,000, will be used for Capital Improvement during the first year. These improvements include the installation of a state required exhaust system in the St. Helens Road Shop, and equipment storage buildings at the Vernonia, Rainier and Clatskanie County Road Shops.

Cities within the county will receive a portion of the funds based on each city's current valuation. The funds received by the cities would be used for maintenance of city streets.

Distribution to the cities for the first year would be as follows:

St. Helens	\$93,993.92
Clatskanie	13,146.26
Scappoose	
Scappoose	25,302.58
Rainier	15,856.98
Vernonia	10,525.73
Columbia City	10,448.86
Prescott	467.02

The remaining funds would be allocated and used on the county roads in each of the four districts as shown in the above diagram.

District allocations for the first year would be as follows:

District	No. 1	\$274,993.30
	No. 2	215,679.39
	No. 3	131,873.49
	No. 4	210,514.41

Amounts allocated to the cities and to the four districts for the succeeding two years would be based on the current valuation for these two years.

Notice of election of board members

Vernonia School District 47J

Notice is hereby given that on March 31, 1981, an election will be held for the purpose of electing two (2) board members to fill the following positions and terms, including any vacancy which may exist on the Board of Vernonia School District: Position no. 1, term four years and Position no. 4, term four years. The

polls will be open from 8 am to 8 pm.

Each candidate for an office listed above must file a declaration of candidacy or petition for nomination for office with the Elections Department of Columbia County, Oregon, not later than the 35th day before the date of the election. The filing deadline is 5 pm on February 24, 1981.

Arthur M. Parrow
Superintendent/Clerk

Vernonia Freedom

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