

Property clean-up program works slowly, but is



Donna Leer was the first private owner to turn her property, on Cherry Street, into a good building lot.



This former mess on Weed Avenue is owned by Columbia County.



These properties owned by the City of Vernonia have both been cleaned up. The property on the left is on Noakes Road, the other, which had been overgrown with weeds, is on OA Hill.



Last June, The INDEPENDENT published pictures of four properties in Vernonia that were not only eyesores, but were unsafe by the standards of the uniform building code used by the city, and in an editorial we urged the city council to start action to clean up the town. As we said then, it isn't simple and it isn't fast, but if we don't have pride in our community, no one else will.

The council responded positively to the suggestion, and after much checking and double-checking of legal status, got the program started. It hasn't been simple and it hasn't been fast. Some of the property owners who received notification of violations haven't responded. Some property owners have

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making progress

moved so often that they haven't yet been located. Some of the properties are tied up in litigation.

But there is good news. Two of the private owners responded that they plan to remove or repair their buildings, but have requested an extension of time. One extension was granted to Don

Dailey for an Alder Street property, and the other, for Emil Rode's Weed Avenue property is pending a decision by the Appeals Board.

Two additional property owners have cleared their properties and now have good building lots. Donna Leer and Ellen Bodenhamer are to be congratulated for

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RELEASES

Feb. 6: Eye for an Eye (NR); Trinity is My Name (NR); Children of Rage (PG); Gal Young Un (NR); Terror at Red Wolf Inn (R); Psycho III (R)

Feb. 10: Teddy Ruxpin: Treasure (NR); Teddy Ruxpin: Escape (NR); Teddy Ruxpin: Grunger (NR); Return of Josey Wales (R)

Feb. 11: Running Scared (R); In the Shadow of Kilimanjaro (R)

Feb. 12: Texas Chainsaw Massacre (R); Heartburn (R); Friday the 13th Part VI (R); Robin Williams, Live at the Met (NR); Instant Justice (R)

Feb. 14: Toxic Avenger (R)

Feb. 19: Half Moon Street (R); What Comes Around (R); Twist and Shout (NR); Manhunters (R)

Feb. 20: Armed and Dangerous (PG); About Last Night (R); Transformers The Movie (NR)

Feb. 25: Ruthless People (R); The Cheerleaders (R)

Feb. 26: The Girl in the Picture (PG-13); Radioactive Dreams (R)

Feb. 27: In Search of a Golden Sky (PG); Aliens (R)

Feb. 29: Avenging Forces (R)

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Fire, school board seats are open

Filings for fire district directors in Vernonia and Mist Birkenfeld, which will be filled by election on March 31, will close on February 19 at 5 p.m. according to the Columbia County Elections Department.

Candidates for office must file a Declaration of Candidacy with at least 13 valid signatures of electors within the district, or by paying a filing fee of \$10 with the Elections Department by that time.

Petitions of candidacy can be picked up from the County Clerk or at school district offices.

Mist-Birkenfeld Rural Fire Protection District positions that will expire are Position 1, a four year term now held by Art Laubach, and Position 2, a four year term held by Larry Oblack.

Vernonia Rural Fire District positions that will expire are Position 2, held by Dan Fletcher, Position 3, Joe Baucom, Position 4, Frank Schrier.

School district openings are the four year terms of Don Skinner and Lea Ann Berg, and a one year term held by Caroline Keasey.



This Rose Avenue house owned by Ellen Bodenhamer made a good practice session for Vernonia firefighters.



their prompt and positive actions.

Three other properties, owned by the City of Vernonia and Columbia County, have been cleared. While it is appalling that public agencies let property fall into such a state of disrepair, we appreciate the quick response.

Some other properties that

haven't been cited have also been cleaned up. Whether this is because of the cleanup campaign, or is coincidental, we don't know. We do know that some people are showing pride in our community. We hope others will follow their example.

Miyasaki, Fischer named to Appeals Board vacancies

The Appeals Board that will be handling complaints or requests for extensions of time in the city's property cleanup program received two new members at the January 19 council meeting.

Jan Miyasaki, who was appointed to fill the council position vacated by Bill Hansen, was also appointed to his place on the Appeals Board, by Mayor Wallace

Vaughn. Another vacancy on the board, created by the resignation of Bob Sargent, was filled with the appointment of Kerry Fischer as the at-large member.

The remaining board members are chairman Rob Richards, who is a city council member, and Leonard Simmons and Fred Klinger of the city's planning commission.

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