

Business Notes

Costly environmental regulations force closure of many area gas stations

As gasoline stations close throughout Oregon because of requirements that underground fuel tanks be tested for leakage, it becomes more and more obvious that people in rural areas will find it increasingly difficult to say "Fill 'er up."

The tanks are being tested (at \$500 per tank) to find those that are leaking and polluting the soil or ground water. Leaking tanks must be removed, or emptied and filled with sand or some other substance to prevent them from being used in the future. The station owner must also remove the polluted soil, a procedure that can easily cost \$100,000 or more.

Permits for new underground tanks will be virtually impossible to obtain, and above ground tanks violate fire and safety codes in many municipalities. In addition, the cost of liability insurance has soared with the new requirements.

Legislation to help station owners with the increased cost of liability insurance isn't likely to help the situation in the upper Nehalem valley - it's too little and too late - and most of the stations are ei-

ther closed or nearing a closing deadline.

The pumps have been shut down at Birkenfeld and Mist. In Vernonia, Ralph's Service has closed, Riley's Service is scheduled to close March 15, Sunnyside Service will close in either September or December.

Costs for replacing the tanks would be approximately \$30,000 according to both Judy Budge at Sunnyside, and Ralph Sturdevant, and they don't sell enough gas to make such an investment

worthwhile.

The tanks at Riley's Service are only five years old, according to Judy Riley, and probably wouldn't need to be replaced for several years, but insurance increases of \$2400-\$3600 annually will shut down the station the Riley's lease.

Commercial accounts will have the option of using the Wilcox & Flegel cardlock in Vernonia, but retail customers will be served only by MiniMart, which lacks the capacity to pump diesel fuel.

Insurance premium hike will close Riley's Service

A Vernonia business will shut down March 15 as government regulations, coupled with the cost of mandatory liability insurance, forces the closure of Riley's Service.

Riley's, a nine-year-old business, provides not only gas and diesel service, but propane and a U-Haul agency.

Joe & Judy Riley were notified January 22 by their landlords, Sliger and Monroe of Hillsboro, that the five-year-old, underground fuel

tanks would be decommissioned. Comparatively minor upgrading of the tanks is needed to meet current federal Environmental Protection Agency criteria but, with the increased cost of insurance coverage, it is no longer economically feasible to operate the business, Judy Riley said.

Riley's will continue to accept Unocal, VISA, Master Card, Discovery and American Express credit cards through March 15.



Love birds bill and coo at the Old Time 5¢ & 10¢ store.

Business tax forms due

March 3, 1990 is the deadline for businesses to file their personal property tax forms with the Columbia County Assessor's office.

Owners and operators of businesses in Oregon are required by state law to file the forms listing furnishings, leased equipment and other items that are used in their businesses. Livestock, most licensed vehicles and household goods are excluded from the report.

The forms are filed in March, then the assessor's office determines the true cash value of the property and assesses a tax to be paid the following November. No tax payment is required with the March filing.

The assessor mails the tax forms to those who have received them in the past, but new businesses must obtain the form and file it before the March 3 deadline. A penalty is assessed for late filings.

Personal property tax

forms are available at the assessor's office in the Columbia County Courthouse in St. Helens. They can also be obtained by mail, by contacting the assessor's office at 397-2240.

Bid opening for two Jewell area bridges

Bids will be opened February 22 for two bridges on Highway 202 northeast of Jewell, when the Oregon Transportation Commission considers eighteen projects estimated to cost \$14.2 million.

The work on the two bridges, over Grub Creek and the Nehalem River Overflow Channel, is estimated to cost between \$250,000 and \$500,000. In addition to replacing the bridges, it includes reconstructing the approaches and installing guardrail at the bridge ends.

The project is scheduled for completion by October 31, 1990.

Lew's Place

Join our annual

St. Patrick's Day Parade

Bring your entry and join us at the corner of Bridge & State Streets.
All entries are free. Parade starts at 4 p.m.

Corned Beef & Cabbage all day!

Dance to Wild Weekend
8 p.m. - Midnight

Saturday,
March 17th

Featuring
Dick Berry
at the Piano Bar
5 - 8 p.m.

Your Hosts,
Pat & Darlene Knight

Lunch & Dinner served Tuesday through Saturday - Closed Sun., Mon.
Call us for your banquet or catering needs - 429-3751

934 Bridge Street, Vernonia, Oregon 97064

ANNUAL

MEETING TIME

VERNONIA FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Election of Officers • Door Prizes

1st - 1/4 oz. Gold Piece • 2nd - 1/10 oz. Gold Piece
3rd - 1 oz. Silver Piece (6 Third Prizes)

March 29, 1990, 7:30 p.m.

At Senior Citizens Center, 446 Bridge St., Vernonia (Use side door.)



622 Bridge Street
429-8031

