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The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the upper Nehalem River Valley"

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Keep on truckin'



Here are a few of the 63 log trucks in the Jamboree parade.

Planners to consider park use permit

Representatives of the state Parks Department will go before the Columbia County Planning Commission on September 10 to request a temporary conditional use permit for development of the Banks-Vernonia Linear State Park in this county.

The planning board's preliminary staff report said the request meets the criteria for approval, but wanted comment from affected agencies and property owners.

The property is zoned Primary Forest-76, Forest Agriculture-19 and Rural Residential-5. Parks are allowed as a

conditional use in forest resource zones but the county's comprehensive plan fails to address parks in Rural Residential zones, which is why the temporary use permit is being sought. The state Land Conservation and Development Commission considers the omission "an oversight" that will be corrected in the upcoming plan review.

The commission may grant the permit after conducting a public hearing, providing the requirements of the proposed use satisfy specific criteria. The staff report says the criteria have been met.

The planning commission will take public comment, but comment will likely be restricted to the specific criteria the commission may legally address. The meeting will be at the county courthouse in St. Helens.

47J tries for approval of reduced levy

A pared down levy request will go before the voters of Vernonia School District 47J in a September 18 mail election. The one-year operating levy of \$367,962 is outside the district's tax base and will not automatically increase the tax base in future years.

District Superintendent Ellis Mason suggested several specific budget cuts to the school board, to reduce the levy amount from the voter-rejected \$530,215 previously

New manager will take over at WOEC

By Jim Buxton

The West Oregon Electric Board of Directors announced the hiring of a new manager for the cooperative, at their last meeting.

David Seuss, 55, a native of Pennsylvania, has been in the electric utility business his entire career, including twelve years as a manager. The two utilities he managed were Fox Island Cooperative in Maine, and a municipal electric company in Hardwick, Vermont.

Seuss has a reputation as a "turn-around-man" because he enjoys taking on tough challenges and turning bad situations into good ones.

Seuss will be moving to Vernonia with his wife, Julie, and will assume his duties September 1st.

Martin Baughman, who has managed the cooperative for the last several years will leave September 15.

Local developer Boyd Ruby requested relief from the cost of installing power to his subdivision. The board settled on payment terms of six months.

In response to a West Oregon Electric letter informing Pacific Corp. (Pacific Power & Light) of the possible sell out of WOEC, PP&L replied that

they're not interested in the entire system, only in areas adjacent to their present facilities such as Olney and Hamlet. The board decided that the good of the whole system demanded that they take no action on PP&L's response.

Larry Estal, a representative of the coop's computer service, Central Area Processing of Kansas City, Missouri, met with the board to explain the costs of service and to make suggestions on how to increase the service while reducing the cost. Estal's suggestions may save the cooperative as much as \$500 per month.

Though WOEC is using the service for most accounting programs, engineering and special services, it isn't yet utilizing the full potential of the computer service. It is adding services as staff and time allow.

Board members attending a Bonneville Power Administration conference reported the possibility of reopening discussion on BPA assuming some of WOEC's transmission facilities. The request had previously been turned down by BPA officials.

asked for.

Items Mason proposed cutting included \$125,000 from the unappropriated ending fund balance, \$74,000 from high school winter and spring extracurricular athletics, \$41,000 from capital improvements, \$25,000 from transportation (which would result in a \$12,500 loss of state transportation funds next year), \$25,000 from elementary winter and spring extracurricular athletics, and

lesser amounts from many other areas. Other reductions would eliminate drama and reduce tuition for vocational education by \$3,000.

The board took no action, deciding to wait until after the election to make any decisions.

According to figures provided by the school, there would be a reduction in the tax rate from the current \$10.51 per thousand to \$8.32, even if the levy is approved.

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