

Letters to the Editor

Not overreaction, just good training

To the Editor:

Re: Fire Department tends to overreact (The INDEPENDENT, July 14, 1993)

I would like to comment on this! Scott Sword, being a past Mayor of Vernonia, should know better than to make a statement like that without knowing all the facts.

The suspected explosive device was found by Police Officer Gene Baska. He then asked Fire Chief Steve Weller to look at the device, together they decided it could be a danger to life or property. The area was then closed off to protect the public. Initially one way traffic was allowed around the cordoned area. Chief Weller then called the Oregon State Police which has a bomb squad and special training to handle this type of situation. They ad-

vised him to close down the highway completely until their arrival. We then diverted traffic around the area, assisted by state highway crews, until the area was safe.

This may look like we overreacted to the situation, but not knowing what was in the device, and not being willing to risk someone's life, we have no alternative but to handle the situation as we did. If we have a situation like this and do not follow this protocol and someone is injured or killed, the City of Vernonia could be liable.

I have been with the Volunteer Fire Department for forty years and have seen times years ago, when we lost more property to fire than we saved, did more water damage than damage done by the fire and risked firefighters lives unnecessarily.

Today, because of updated education, years of training and experience and modern

equipment, you can now count on your fire department to do a better job. If you have questions or concerns about the way situations are handled, please feel free to come by the station and discuss it with us. Or better yet, help us do a better job by joining the department!

Don Webb
Ass't. Fire Chief
Vernonia

Insults not helpful for community life

To the Editor:

Re: Dollars or Sense and PO'd Voter & Taxpayer (The INDEPENDENT, July 14, 1993)

There are divisions in our community relationships which disturb and separate us, but the things which unite are actually greater than things which divide us.

I'm truly annoyed, having read such, undeserving, outrages, insults, thrown in the faces of our Fire Dept and Police Force.

Being a wife, one of many wives or husbands, in the community, whose partners have volunteered to serve Vernonia and Columbia County, I would like to set straight the derogatory statements made about the Fire Dept.!!

The Fire Dept. and Medic volunteers, save lives and property! Not because they are hired or well paid to do so, but of their own free will.

These volunteers, on their own time, spend many hours training, hours taken away from their families, to absorb knowledge and develop the ability to serve the community. Why? So when called upon, they're ready to respond to any disaster, fire or medical emergency with confidence; so they're ready to work as a team to protect us.

Vernonia's, Fire Dept. personnel are not strangers to us. They are neighbors with families, giving of themselves to each and everyone of us. They put their lives on the line each time they respond to a call and these volunteers are on call 24 hours a day for the community of Vernonia.

Some may say the Fire Dept. tends to overreact. In reality they are following State Guidelines and Codes.

We should be overjoyed; we have men and women trained and on their toes, ready to react to any incident that may occur. There may be times we are inconvenienced with detours, etc., but please remember, they are only protecting you from possible harm... because they care.

As for our "over-staffed Police Force," the statement alone is a joke. You might take a good look around, you'll see how fast the community of Vernonia is growing. [PO'ed] didn't let Vernonia residents know just how many police officers, he'd like Vernonia to have??

I see our police force, on duty, doing their jobs... They also take time to listen to any

member of our community having a problem or questions that need answers. They listen when our children or teens ask question.

When you need them in an emergency, they are there. We are very lucky to have a police force who are neighbors and who care about the community.

Anger and insults do not make way for change. As a voter and taxpayer, I see changes need to be made. There is always room for improvement.

Change won't come from insulting remarks that zero in on members of our community, people who protect us and ty, people who protect us and put their lives on the line every day.

Even in Vernonia, potential, real danger exists. There is a very real possibility that one of those people you have insulted could lose his or her life while on duty, protecting this community. That's no joke!

If you criticize another person's efforts, just be certain that you can do the job better. Also, be certain that you will give of your time to do the job.

It seems that it's always easier to find fault than to praise.

I feel strongly that the Fire Dept. and police Dept. deserve an apology.

Linda Mae Miller
Vernonia

Vernonia Residents:

Do you Council members and appointed mayor ever drive around our town? Probably not, you respect your car too much. You must walk because you're more worried about sidewalks than our streets.

While you're walking around do you notice all of the run down buildings? Empty shacks of houses that should be burned down. Or all of the dogs running loose? How about all the kids with nothing to do? You're good at forcing good people to put sidewalks in at their expense. Question is, How do we get you to fix our streets? You told us you don't have the funds to do it. Well how can we afford an administrator and too many Police officers?

You doubled our water rates, what for? I was told that after 1 year the extra money would go towards repairing our streets. Yeah, right.

Let's hear from the rest of you that are fed up, let's make these guys put up or get out! Write me a letter.

Dave Squires

910 Pot Hole (Louisiana) Avenue

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