

Tri-City F.D. urgently in need of volunteer firefighters

A shortage of volunteer firefighters in the Tri-City Rural Fire Protection District, especially in the Timber area, has resulted in the virtual shut-down of the Timber Fire Station.

"We won't actually close the Timber station," said Fire Chief John Schlegel, "The equipment (fire engine, water tender, rescue vehicle and equipment) will remain in the fire station. Volunteers from other stations will

respond to assist."

The situation is not a reflection on the Timber volunteers, Schlegel made clear. It results from the reality that available personnel is unknown at any given time of day, on any day of the week, and that any particular incident may require additional resources of equipment or manpower.

With only one Timber volunteer at present, the operations plan calls for him to respond,

when he is available, with the Rescue vehicle, Schlegel explained. There will be simultaneous response from the other stations, depending on the personnel available. The fire engine will not respond with only one person.

Tri-City has mutual aid agreements with other districts, including the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District, and has kept them informed of the problem because of the possi-

bility that more assistance may be needed than in prior years.

The lack of available volunteers is a problem not only in Timber and the Tri-City district, but in many rural districts that must rely on volunteers to augment limited budgets.

At this time, however, the need for more volunteers in the Tri-City district is acute. For more information on what is required of volunteer firefighters, call Schlegel at 324-6262.

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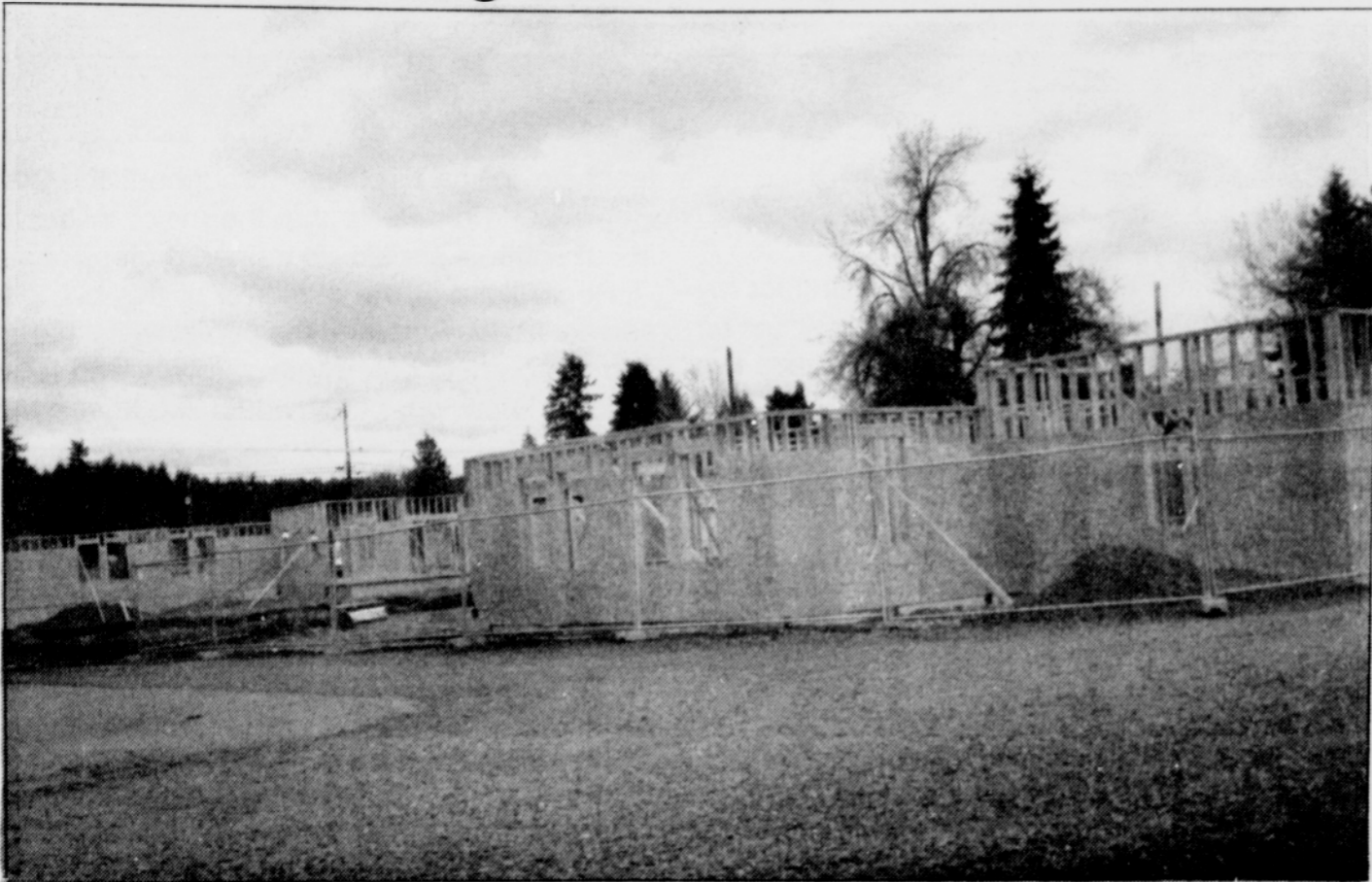
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Dream becoming real



The new Vernonia City Hall and Library are gradually taking shape as construction gets underway on the old railroad grade along Weed Avenue between Bridge and Maple Streets. In this view, the library is in the foreground; city hall is in the background.

Replacement of water lines will start soon

As soon as all the paperwork is complete, probably next week according to Vernonia Director of Public Works Robyn Bassett, three crews of workers will start tearing things apart in various locations around Vernonia.

It's all for a good reason – the water distribution system in Vernonia is worn out and must be replaced – but it will sometimes be disruptive.

First on the schedule is installation of a 12-inch water line. It will connect to existing line where Mellinger Road and Stoney Point Road form a junction, go west on Stoney Point to State Avenue, then south to Bridge Street. At Bridge it go west to Rose Avenue, then south to the city limits. On Bridge Street, it will move from the north side of the street to the south side when it crosses Rock Creek.

Preparation for the pipeline includes asphalt grinding, where it will be in the street, and demolition of the sidewalks in front of downtown businesses where it will be under the sidewalk. Initially, sidewalk demolition will be only on the south side of Bridge Street,

west of Rock Creek.

A second crew will be in the OA Hill area, working on placement of a 10-inch waterline to the Nehalem River Bridge. A third crew will be in the area of Corey Hill. This crew's task is to replace old 1/2-inch service laterals with one-inch lines, then transferring service from the existing two-inch line to an existing six-inch line. The two inch line will be abandoned.

If all goes as planned, sidewalk improvements on Bridge Street will be completed by mid-July, as will paving improvements on Jefferson Avenue.

"The entire project is scheduled for completion by the end of October," Bassett said, "With over 33,400 linear feet of water line installed, 450 water services replaced and 54 new fire hydrants installed."

Property and business owners in the affected areas will be given notice in a timely manner, Bassett assured. Businesses are likely to be disrupted for a minimum of 60 days, although the contractor will make every effort to provide safe access to all properties in the construction area.

WOEC ponders capital credits

By Jim Buxton

The West Oregon Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, at their regular meeting on April 20, directed staff to look into retiring \$100,000 of capital credits.

Capital credits amount to pennies on the dollar that members paid to the COOP for electricity during a particular period of time over and above costs. The percentage represents the difference between the amount paid and the actual costs involved. That difference is expressed as membership equity in the COOP.

The members currently own about 30 percent of the COOP; lending institutions own the rest.

If \$100,000 were returned to the membership, some people would receive checks for less than \$1.00, most would receive about \$15.00, and a few businesses would receive approximately \$500.

Questions facing the directors are:

1. Should WOEC retire old (1944-1965) capital credits?
2. Should WOEC retire new (1997) capital credits?
3. Should WOEC retire capital credits with a combination of the two?
4. Should WOEC keep the money and use to help pay off existing debt?

If the old time period (1944-1965) were chosen, staff estimates that only about 15 percent would be cashed, and the remainder would have to be set aside for former members who cannot be found. In that case, the COOP would have to put about \$85,000 in a special fund for several years, or until it could legally be used by WOEC.

If the new time period were chosen, staff estimates are that about 85 percent would be cashed and 15 percent would have to be set aside.

Directors would like to have

input from members regarding the four questions posed. Members may call the director from their area, call WOEC, or write to The INDEPENDENT, Letters to the Editor, 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064. If you choose to write a letter, it must be signed and have a verifiable address.

Anyone for baseball? Let's look at the old mill site

Does Vernonia need more baseball fields and RV parking? No doubt.

Should the old mill site be developed with baseball fields and RV parking?

If so, how much would it

cost and how could it be financed?

Does anyone have alternative suggestions for use of the property?

Questions and answers about the old mill site will be

the topic on May 10 at a joint meeting of the Vernonia Community Development Corporation and representatives of the Oregon Downtown Development Association, which has experience in similar developments.

The meeting will be held at the Head Start Community Building on California Avenue (just east of Washington Grade School) at 7:00 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

The Vernonia Community Development Corporation is a nonprofit corporation of local citizens interested in economic

Put this on your calendar:

Vernonia will become part of the Portland telephone Extended Area Service on October 2. Before that time, rates will be set by GTE with the concurrence of the Oregon Public Utilities Commission. The proposed rates will be explained in a public hearing to be held in Vernonia on May 13, at 7:00 p.m. in the Washington Grade School gym.

There will be opportunity to ask questions and to testify.