

The INDEPENDENT

Serving the upper Nehalem River valley. Published twice monthly, on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, by Public Opinion Laboratory Ltd., 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064, as a free newspaper. Editors and Publishers, Dirk & Noni Andersen. Sports Editor, Caren Coté. Phone/Fax: (503) 429-9410.

Opinion

Non-injury accidents not important to law agencies

There were three non-injury motor vehicle accidents on the Nehalem River Highway (Hwy. 47) on April 8-9. In two of them, both on April 9, hail, sleet and ice were contributing factors in single-car rollovers.

The accident on April 8, though also non-injury, was far more serious because it was caused by a driver who passed another car and a log truck on the stretch of road between the old trestle and the first curve up toward Top Hill—a no passing zone. Before that driver could get back in his own lane, a pickup truck came around the curve and, though there was a collision, good driving by the pickup driver avoided a head-on wreck.

Why are these three accidents being discussed here? Because only one, the second rollover on the 9th, has been recorded by any law enforcement agency.

Why not? Apparently there is nothing that requires keeping track of non-injury accidents. The one that was recorded, was handled by Oregon State Police; the two car collision caused by passing in a no passing zone was handled by the Washington County Sheriff's office; the first rollover on the 9th was cleared up before any emergency personnel arrived and was not recorded.

It's easy to understand why law enforcement agencies don't want to bother with paperwork on non-injury accidents. Most of them are short on personnel and paperwork takes a lot of time.

OSP Troopers spend as much time as they can patrolling Hwy. 47 in both marked and unmarked cars, but they are limited by inadequate manpower.

Another important factors is involved, too.

For a long time, people in this area have been asking for safety improvements to Hwy. 47, however, when the Oregon Department of Transportation looks at the records, very few accidents show up. It's no wonder ODOT puts those requests on the back burner.

New phone switch is good for the future of Vernonia

Phone users in the 429 prefix have complained loudly about the outdated switch for this area because it prevented them from fully utilizing some of the technology available in other areas, even though fiber optic cable has been available here for several years.

That is changing. As you read this, GTE is installing the equipment necessary to bring this area into the 20th century...a full three months before the 21st century begins.

Joking aside, this is good news. In October, when Vernonia becomes part of the Portland Extended Area Service (EAS), people here will also be able to access all of the technology available over telephone lines. This is not just a matter of being able to install Caller ID, far more importantly, it means that businesses can now locate here without the burden imposed by an expensive and inadequate telephone communications system.

BUY ME, TRY ME, USE ME,
BUT REMEMBER THAT BY MY USE YOU MAY
EXPERIENCE SIDE EFFECTS SUCH AS, NAUSEA, HEAD-
ACHES, UPSET STOMACH, DIZZY SPELLS, COUGHS, CON-
GESTION, ACES, PAINS, SORENESS, BRUISING,
INSOMNIA, CONSTIPATION, ITCHING, RESTLESSNESS,
DRY MOUTH, FLAKING SKIN, RASH, RUNNY NOSE, FUN-
GUS, DRY EYES, SWEATS, KNOCK KNEES, CROSS EYES OR
EARACHES. USE ONLY UNDER THE
DIRECTION OF YOUR DOCTOR... AND
CONTINUED USE MAY CAUSE, STROKE, HEART
ATTACK, CRONIC CONGESTION, NASAL DRIP,
SLEEPINESS AND DROWSINESS, NARCOLEPSY, ITCH,
OVERACTIVE BLADDER, STOMACH DISORDER, GLAUCOMA, SKIN
DISORDER, HYPERTENSION, HEARING LOSS, ARTHRITIS,
HEART BURN, NOSE PICKING, DIARRHEA, OUT OF POCKETNESS...
SO BUY ME, TRY ME, USE ME. I'VE BEEN PROVEN EFFECTIVE!

PHILIP H. INDEPENDENT APRIL 99

Salem Report

By Elaine M. Hopson
 State Representative, District 2

Occasionally, I find myself apologizing for my passion for public education, for fear it would be my only focus here at the Legislature. Since I've been here, I have found that my horizons and knowledge level have increased in leaps and bounds in every area. With that in mind, I am going to talk about education again since it has been at the top of the agenda for most people in the House.

Recently, many members of the House of Representatives and the Governor and his staff visited numerous schools around the state. Representatives Randy Leonard and Gary Hansen, both from Portland, joined Representative Jackie Taylor and me as we toured Wilson Elementary School in Tillamook, Warrenton High School in Warrenton, and Lewis and Clark Elementary School in Astoria. This tour provided an opportunity for urban legislators to see that problems in the rural areas are similar to those found in the urban areas. The message was clear; more money is needed to provide adequate facilities and programs.

We heard story after story from school employees, parents, and students indicating their concern that adequate, stable funding must be found for education. Although the details were different, the message was the same from everyone. This same story was replayed across the state. Now it is up to us to find a way to fund education for our children's future.

Another important bill has passed in the House — SB100 on Charter Schools. Although the Senate had previously approved SB100, even they admitted it was not a good bill as written. Although I voted against SB100, it is not a horrible bill and the House did provide many changes that make it more reasonable.

The premise behind the Charter School movement is to give parents and students more choice in selecting their educational programs and to allow charter schools to be innovative in order to develop methodologies that may then be adopted by the regular schools. This is done in part by allowing the charter schools to waive many of the laws currently in place.

My main objection at this point is that the bill does not require licensed teachers. One argument that continually surfaces is that students should have the advantage of educational opportunities from community experts, particularly those in the arts and trades. I agree, but this is already possible and experts in many areas are

teaching in many places throughout the state. However, I do believe that the major instructors in our schools should be trained professionals.

Regardless of the outcome of this bill, it will serve all educators and the public well if parents and patrons become more involved and let the schools know what they would like to see done in their schools. There is no reason why many of the attributes of Charter Schools cannot be achieved now. One of the major benefits of charter schools is the involvement of adults in the communities. We need to find a way to encourage that participation in all of our schools; the schools need to open up the doors and welcome people and the patrons need to come in and become a part of the process. If we do this, we can achieve all the potential benefits of Charter Schools in all of our schools for all of our students.

A major issue passed the House this week and that was the Tip Tax credit bill. The various aspects to this bill made it extremely complicated and controversial. When the taxpayers passed the minimum wage law that was gradually implemented, there were no provisions to count tips as part of any wage. There have been several attempts to include tips but none made it through the process before. Included within the bill is a section that allows employers to pay \$1.00 less per hour to employees who work less than 90 days and are under 18 years of age.

Several groups of students were able to visit this capitol recently, although the timing prohibited much interaction with them. When one group was present, the issue was a law to limit insurance payments to drivers who had a blood alcohol level above the legal limit or who were uninsured, even if those drivers were not at fault. The driver would still receive medical costs but not receive insurance money for "pain and suffering." This is just one of the issues that seems easy on its face but is actually very complicated.

The legislature's major concern and focus continues to be on the budget...how to allocate the revenues available and support the major responsibilities we have as a state. As the pieces start to come together, there will be more news and I will keep you posted.

Please keep up your communications with me.

Rep. Elaine Hopson Salem Office:
 H-376 State Capitol
 Salem, OR 97310
 Phone (503) 986-1402
 email hopson.rep@state.or.us