

FCC change makes local radio possible in Vernonia

The approval of Low Power FM (LPFM) radio service by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) may result in the culmination of many Vernonians' long-held dream—a local radio station.

Rules adopted Jan 20 by the FCC create two classes of LPM radio stations — a 10 watt station that would reach an area with a radius of between one and two miles, and a 100 watt station that would reach

an area with a radius of approximately three-and-one-half miles.

The new LPFM service will be exclusively noncommercial, according to the FCC. Parties currently holding broadcast licenses, or parties with interests in other media such as cable or newspapers, will not be eligible for LPFM stations.

An additional regulation will also provide opportunity for local development. During the

first two years of availability, licenses will be awarded exclusively to local entities. Following the two-year period, non-local entities will be eligible for licenses. Each licensee may own only one station in any given community but, eventually, a licensee may own up to ten stations nationwide.

Vernonia City Councilor Cindy Ball, and a group of additional volunteers, have been supporting local efforts to de-

velop a radio station. The initial impetus for a local radio station derived from the need to be able to notify people, area-wide, in case of emergency. From there, the idea quickly took hold because of the potential for education and community-based programming.

For further information, or to help with any aspect of the project, contact Ball at 429-6033 or by e-mail: ckball@easys-treet.com.

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Vol. 15, No 3

"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

February 2, 2000

Ready to dig in...



Judy Hill/The INDEPENDENT

The Wheels Park design committee met last Saturday with even more ideas, following a presentation by skatepark designer Tony Gembeck. See story on page 5.

Road closed five hours by lumber truck accident

Scappoose-Vernonia Road was closed for approximately five hours last Friday when a lumber truck lost its load going around a curve.

Cameron Hall, a Sweet Home resident, was driving the 1986 Kenworth owned by Smalley Trucking of Sutherlin. He suffered minor injuries that were treated on the scene by a Metro West/Vernonia Ambulance crew.

Hall had just picked up a load of lumber at the Olympic Forest Products mill in Mist and was enroute to California when the load shifted, about three miles east of Pittsburg junction, dumping both the lumber and the truck. It also caused a small toxic spill of about 35 gallons of diesel oil, according to Vernonia Fire Chief Paul Epler.

The lengthy road closure was caused partly by how much time it took to pick up lumber — estimated to be worth about \$140,000. Law enforcement officers kept unauthorized "helpers" away. Grumpy's Tow Service of Scappoose removed both the truck and the lumber.

Weight limitations considered for residential streets

Vernonia City Councilors, at their Jan. 24 meeting, discussed instituting an ordinance governing allowable weights on residential streets. Among the elements discussed by the council were weight limits, signage, a parking area for overweight vehicles and a permit

process for exceptions.

Elroy Miner, a city resident who initiated the subject at a prior meeting, emphasized that he wasn't referring to log trucks only, but to all heavy vehicles that contribute to the deterioration of residential streets, which are not designed for

heavy use.

The council will also review applicable ordinances currently being used in Cornelius, St. Helens and Forest Grove.

There will be a new water fountain on Bridge Street, Councilor Mario Leonetti announced, funded by Vernonia Pride. It will be installed at the corner of Madison Avenue, in front of the former J. C. Penney building, where, long-time residents remember, there used to be a drinking fountain.

Plumbing for the fountain was installed at the time of the streetscaping project. The cost to Vernonia Pride, for the fountain and freight, is approximately \$750.

In other business, the council:

- Approved the reappoint-

ment of Mike Seager and Don Stevens to the Airport Committee.

- Agreed to extend sewer service to Todd Sullivan, on Noakes Road, in exchange for an agreement to annex at a later date. Sullivan must pay all costs for the extension.

Road closure disrupts meeting

The truck accident that closed Scappoose-Vernonia Road also closed a meeting for local residents with the Columbia County Board of Commissioners. Commission Chairman Jack Peterson and Commissioner Rita Bernhard were expected to join Commissioner Tony Hyde in Vernonia at 1:00 p.m. to meet with local residents at City Hill and tour the

linear trail extension project.

Unable to get through, Peterson and Bernhard took the long way around, using Meissner and Apiary to get to Hwy. 47, and arriving in Vernonia about 3:00 p.m. Most people had to leave before they arrived.

Before people left, Hyde said the commissioners would reschedule the meeting.

Handicapped fishing dock gets recommendation for second time

When funding for a handicapped accessible fishing dock at Vernonia Lake disappeared last year because the legislature eliminated the program which had already approved the project, the idea was put on the back burner. The pot appears to be boiling again.

The Oregon Watershed En-

hancement Board (OWEB), which was formed to replace the former advisory panel, has also approved the project.

The project must now go to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for final approval. It will consider OWEB's recommendations at its March 24 meeting.