

## 47J Budget gets Committee approval; hearing set

The Vernonia School District Budget Committee last Thursday approved a proposed budget for 2001-02 that adds a half time teacher at the first grade level, a half-time teacher at the sixth grade level, and a certified half-time media specialist at the high school.

The position of curriculum specialist will be increased from half to full time, with additional responsibility for grant writing.

Classified staff will also increase slightly with full time Special Ed classroom aide and a half-time person in the cafeteria. People are already employed for these last positions even though they were not in the 2000-2001 budget.

Also included in next year's budget is an increase of approximately \$20,000 in the high school athletic budget. It is not anticipated that the whole amount will be used but, be-

cause of changes in how extra duty compensation will be handled, it was deemed wise to include every extra duty position that has ever existed in the district.

The next fiscal year will also bring relief to teachers who bought supplies – again and again – for their classrooms. There will be about \$20,000 more for supplies in the coming year.

The total budget for the district, including general fund

monies and special funds is about \$5,870,000.

The budget hearing will be June 28 at 7:00 p.m. in the district office. That is the time for anyone interested to present questions. A copy of the budget may be obtained at the district office between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Following the budget hearing, the Board of Directors will convene a special board meeting to adopt the budget.

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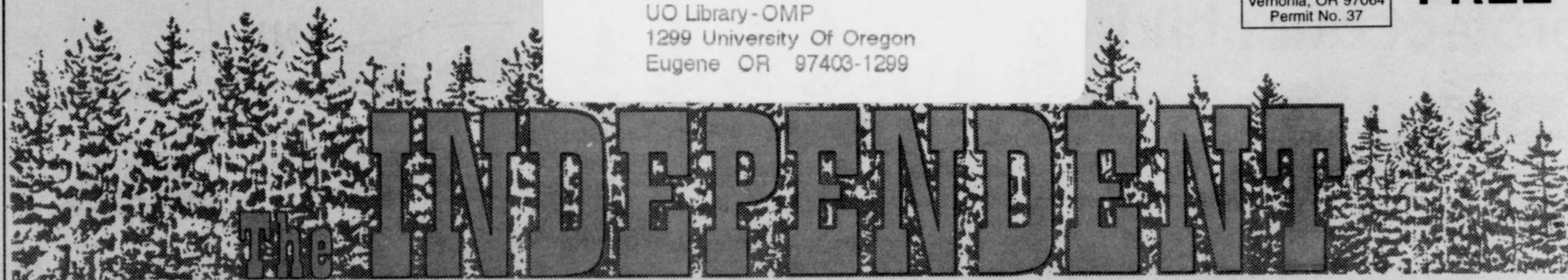
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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

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### Lonely guardians...



The pioneer Burn Road Cemetery is a two-acre island in a sea of a replanted commercial clear cut.

## Burn Road Cemetery logging controversy

*"Deep in the woods lies a tiny cemetery with remains of 58 souls."*

This quotation is the first sentence of "A Day to Remember" written by Faith Reynolds for Memorial Day, 1998.

Mrs. Reynolds' essay gives a brief history of a small group of pioneers who settled near the community now known as Mist, and reminds the 65 descendants who gathered to visit the cemetery that day of the values held by their ancestors.

The United Brethren in Christ Cemetery, the original name, has long been known as the Burn Road Cemetery. It was established in 1889. In 1984, the cemetery was transferred to the Vernonia Evangelical Church, now called Vernonia Community Church.

Over the years, commercial timber companies bought the land surrounding the cemetery and it has been clear cut in the last two or three years.

An application for a permit to clear cut the two acre cemetery was filed May 15 by Steve Weller, on behalf of the Vernonia Community Church, but the descendants of those 58 souls, led locally by Lee Enneberg, are strenuously objecting to the proposal.

Weller said he had been hunting in the area and noticed the treed area in the middle of the clear cut. When he inquired about it, he said, he was surprised to find out that it belonged to the church where he is an active member.

Of the four members who signed the papers at the time of transfer, two (Carl Holsey and Ben Westbrook) are still active in the church, but Weller thinks the transaction was simply forgotten over the years.

A meeting May 30 brought representatives of the descen-

dents and the church together with Mirra Meyer of the state Pioneer Cemetery Commission, Jay Worley of Oregon Department of Forestry, Douglas Trotter of Oregon State Parks and Verne Ferguson of the Mist-Birkenfeld Historical Society. Pastor Grant Williams and Gordon Bronleewe represented the church. There were seven descendants, including Reynolds and Enneberg.

*"They built a church and a school in the midst of this untamed land. They dedicated this tiny 2-1/2 acre plot for their cemetery..."*

No consensus was reached at the meeting; ODF has no jurisdiction over cemeteries; the Cemetery Commission has no jurisdiction; state parks has no jurisdiction; descendants do not own the property; the church says it wants to log and restore the cemetery.

The church has not developed a plan, Weller emphasized, and wants to work together with the descendants to restore and fence the cemetery. He feels that there will be heavy loss of trees from blow down because Longview Fibre has clear cut its timber all around the cemetery.

Reynolds and Enneberg fear that heavy equipment will further obliterate graves that have lost their markers. In many cases, an oblong depression in the ground is the only sign of a grave. They do not want the tree canopy removed because that would destroy the deeply peaceful atmosphere in the cemetery.

The church isn't likely to log, according to Weller, if an agreement can't be reached. The descendant group has suggested the cemetery be transferred to the Mist-Birken-

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## City adopts budget with little flexibility

A very tight budget adopted by the Vernonia City Council leaves all employee positions untouched except one. The position of clerk in the Vernonia Police Department will be reduced to half time for the 2001-02 fiscal year, but, in an effort to make the loss of time less painful, there will be no loss of benefits.

The budget includes increased costs of health insurance for all employees, but a cost of living increase of 3.4 percent is included only for non-union employees. Contract negotiations are still underway with two unions and, until they are concluded, union employees' compensation will remain unchanged.

The total budget – general fund and all special funds – is \$2,676,691. Of this amount, the general fund, which is basically the only fund available for discretionary expenditures, is \$729,916.

The General Fund is allocated as follows:

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| General Operations  | \$75,285 |
| Buildings & Grounds | 30,280   |
| Police Dep't.       | 348,218  |
| Library             | 57,117   |
| Administration      | 143,634  |
| Non-Departmental    | 75,382   |

### Sewer rate increase

Vernonia City Council, Monday night, adopted an increase of \$6.00 on all City of Vernonia sewer bills, effective July 1, 2001.

Special (non-discretionary) funds in the budget include Streets, Parks, Water, Public Works, Stormwater, Sewer, Cemetery, Airport, Community Development, Housing Rehabilitation (This is actually a revolving loan fund that is administered through Community Action Team, Inc. When a job is done and a loan is repaid, it becomes available for use again.) and equipment reserve funds.

**Vernonia Town Hall  
Energy and Water  
Conservation  
Monday, June 25  
7:00 pm, City Hall**