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Engineering survey reveals dangerous deficiencies

From page 1

have remained constant, recent geological studies in Western Oregon, and observation of building damage in past earthquakes, have resulted in a 50 percent increase in the earthquake force level for which a building must be designed.

Both WGS and VHS have a number of deficiencies, any one of which would be sufficient to cause all or part of the building to collapse in the event of an earthquake, according to Soderstrom. For example, the window wall of the VHS library is no longer vertical but leans outward, probably due to ground settling.

Other deficiencies noted include:

- A lack of interior bracing necessary to transfer horizontal load (shaking) from the roof or second floor of the building to the walls and ground.
- Interior walls at VHS are built around the lockers and cannot transfer shaking in the roof to the floor.
- Walls and roofs have straight board construction, in which boards are placed perpendicularly across joists and studs. Like a cardboard box that can be easily pushed out of its square shape; straight construction does not allow for side-to-side or up-and-down movement.
- Walls and floors are not anchored together.
- Unreinforced masonry (URM), i.e. brick, walls and chimneys, in both buildings would require support. Some are overstressed.
- The beautiful brick exterior of WGS presents particular problems because it is not reinforced and it is not attached to the building. Studies of similar buildings after significant earthquakes show that this type of brick exterior literally falls right off of the building, like water off a duck's back. (In contrast, the new play structure at WGS,

which looks like brick, is actually constructed of a type of block with a brick-like face, similar to cinder block, with the center hollows reinforced with re-bar and filled with concrete.

• Examination of the walls at WGS also revealed that they were constructed of locally made hollow clay tiles, instead of the material called for in the plan. The hollow clay tiles have virtually no load carrying capacity according to Soderstrom.

Soderstrom said that studies of this type bring a moral responsibility to the engineers and architects who work on a project. Even if parts of the building were retrofitted sufficiently to survive an earthquake, the building still could not really be considered safe. The best that could be hoped for would be to provide the capacity for children to exit the buildings in relative safety. According to Soderstrom, the bricks will still fall off, the chimneys will still collapse, and the library wall will still fall in a shower of glass.

Soderstrom concedes that WGS, in particular, is the most beautiful building in town. But he compares it to fixing the frame of a car, an expense really not worth the effort.



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Community Calendar

AUGUST							SEPTEMBER							OCTOBER							NOVEMBER																				
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S														
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26	27	28	29	30	31	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30																			

VERNONIA			MIST-BIRKENFELD			BANKS			COLUMBIA COUNTY (All meet in St. Helens unless otherwise noted.)		
Alcoholics Anonymous	Mondays	6:30 p.m., Head Start Bldg.	M-BRFPD Board	2nd & 4th Tuesday	7:30 p.m., Main Fire Station	Alcoholics Anonymous	Fridays	8:00 p.m., Methodist Church	Board of Commissioners	Wednesdays	10 a.m., Courthouse
Alcoholics Anonymous	Saturdays	7:00 p.m., Head Start Bldg.	M-B Ambulance Assoc.	1st & 2nd Thurs.	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station	Banks City Council	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., City Hall	Citizens for Senior Justice	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Sunset Park Church
American Legion Post #119	2nd Thursday	627 Adams Ave./ 503-429-4000	M-B Firefighters Assoc.	1st & 2nd Wed.	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station	Banks Planning Commission	Last Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall	COLCO Transportation	2nd Friday	10:30 a.m., Courthouse
Arts & Crafts Society	2nd Thursday	2:00 p.m., City Library	M-B Rescue	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station	Banks School Board	2nd Monday	7:30 p.m., Jr. High Library	County Council of Seniors	2nd Friday	1:00 p.m., Courthouse
Boosters	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., VHS Library	M-B Helping Circle	2nd Wednesday	10:00 am, 755-2346 for info.	Banks Youth Group	Sundays, Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., UMC Youth Bldg.	County Fair Board	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fairgrounds 4-H Bldg.
Boy Scout Troop 201	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., Head Start Bldg.	Natal Grange	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Grange Hall	Chamber of Commerce	1st Thursday	12:30 p.m., Brown Derby	County Parks Commission	3rd Monday	6:00 p.m., 1054 Oregon St.
Boy Scout Troop 860	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., LDS Church	T.O.P.S.	Sundays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station	Citizen Participation Org.	3rd Monday, odd months	7:15 p.m., City Hall	Emergency Comm. Dist. (9-1-1)	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Courthouse
Cemetery Beautification Comm.	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m., Leonetti's Grill				Citizen Participation Org.	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library	Historical Society	4th Wednesday	Noon, location call 429-3713
Chamber of Commerce	2nd Wednesday	Noon, Lew's Place				Friends of the Library	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library			
Doll Club	4th Tuesday	1:00 p.m., Senior Center				Lions Club	1st & 3rd Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Methodist Church			
Girl Scouts	Thursdays	6:30-8 p.m., Christian Church				Sunset Park Assoc.	3rd Wednesday	8:00 p.m., Gun Club			
Izaak Walton League	3rd Thursday	For location call 503-429-7193				T.O.P.S.	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Administration Bldg.			
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Tuesdays	6:30 p.m., Lew's Place				Tri-City RFPD Board	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Station 13			
Narcotics Anonymous	Fridays	6:00 p.m., Head Start Bldg.									
Nehalem Valley Car Club		For Info Call 503-429-4074									
Preschool Story Hour	Mondays	10:30 a.m., City Library									
Upr Nehalem Watershed Council	4th Thursday	For location call 429-2401									
Vernonia Airport Committee	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., City Library									
Vernonia Cares Directors		For location call 503-429-1414									
Vernonia City Council	1st & 3rd Mondays	6:30 p.m., City Hall									
Vernonia Comm. Dev. Corp.	2nd Tuesday	Noon, City Hall									
Vernonia Grange	2nd Friday	7:00 p.m., Grange Hall									
Vernonia Health Center	2nd Thursday	6:00 p.m., 510 Bridge St.									
Vernonia Planning Comm.	1st Thursday	7:00 p.m., City Hall									
Vernonia Pride		For Info Call, 503-429-5201									
Vernonia Ridge Riders	Last Thursday	7:00 p.m., City Library									
Vernonia RFPD Board	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station									
Vernonia School Board	2nd Thursday	8:00 p.m., District Office									
Vernonia Sr. Center Board	1st Friday	1:00 p.m., Senior Center									
Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station									
WOEC Directors	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., WOEC									

Organizations and meeting dates not listed may be included by calling 429-9410 or by mail to The INDEPENDENT, 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.