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THE INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

March 6, 2002

A good read...



The latest recipient of funds earned by the Vernonia Friendship Jamboree Committee was the Friends of the Library, which will use the \$500 donation to help supply materials or activities the public library can't afford. Jamboree Committee President Randy Parrow presented the check to Friends President Jennifer Butcher. Looking on, left to right, are Librarian Nancy Burch, Jamboree Vice-president Glenda DeLemos, EIDonna Williams (in back), Enid Parrow, Randy Parrow, Myron Lane (in back), Butcher and Joann Glass. Another donation, for \$250, went to Echoing Evergreens Youth Camp.

Council adopts design guidelines

Vernonia City Council Adopted Design Guidelines for the downtown commercial area at their March 4 meeting, and made appointments to three committees that will be dealing with different aspects of the city's future.

The purpose of the Design Guidelines is to acknowledge Vernonia's historic heritage while providing a framework within which to improve the appearance, economic vitality, and livability of downtown through future changes. The guidelines consider building materials, sign placement, size and design; building heights

and facades, awnings and much more. They will be applied to remodeling projects, as well as new construction.

A committee appointed to develop plans for utilizing the recently completed Vernonia Marketing Analysis, included Marcie Gwin, Kerry Lyon, Gil Tavares, Isabelle McDaniel, Janelle Serafin, Royce Hagelstein, Jerry Keenon and Councilor Shirlee Daughtry.

A group appointed to study requirements for a Technology Center, possibly in the old city hall, included Darlene McLeod, LV Schoonover, Margaret Dena, Councilor Cindy Ball and

City Administrator Mike Sykes.

The third group of appointees will be studying how to incorporate Smart Development principles into the city's zoning and development codes. This will require a review of existing codes and recommendations for changes.

Smart Development committee appointees include Carol Sawyer, Matt Davis, Lisa Edgar, Susi Siote, Nancy Dailley, Don Wallace, Jay Nesmith, Noni Andersen and Councilor Ball.

The next council meeting will be March 18 at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall.

Difficult decisions facing school board

Who? and How? dominated the Vernonia School District Board of Directors, at their workshop and meeting February 27. Chair Carla Strand and directors Randy Hansen, Cari Levenseller, Leslie O'Leary and Jim Krahn focused on two high-pressure items of business — the search for a new superintendent and setting budget priorities. Director Tim Titus was unable to attend.

In January, the board discussed alternatives to the current administrative structure (superintendent/principal/vice-principal, etc.) with the present administrative team. At that time, the board determined that it would probably be best to hire an interim superintendent until a permanent superintendent is selected. In this way, the district could save money and retain experienced leadership until the transition is complete.

Interim superintendents generally are retired superintendents who agree to work with a district for a specific period of time, usually one year. They bring with them a wealth of experience and are able to take a fresh look at whatever issues and difficulties a district may be facing.

Vernonia used the services of an interim superintendent, Jim Ulum, during the 1996-'97 school year. Ulum guided the district through the FEMA maze after the flood, helped conduct a superintendent search at the same time, and started repairing problems left over from previous administrations.

John Young, of the Oregon School Boards Association, explained the executive search services provided by OSBA. As director of the executive search staff, Young's goal is "to handle the details so board members are free to concentrate on choosing the best per-

son for the job." OSBA can facilitate a search for a superintendent and also maintains a roster of qualified people who are interested in serving as interim superintendents. The cost for an interim search is deducted from the fee for a superintendent search.

A full superintendent search may be a six-to-twelve month process. When selecting a superintendent, the board is required, by statute, to get input from the community at large in determining the selection criteria. Though this is not required for interim superintendents, the OSBA's interim search is a four-to-six week mini-search process that would require community meetings and special board meetings to secure the best candidate for the district.

Questioned by the board about the availability of qualified superintendent candidates, Young indicated that a district of Vernonia's size should receive applications from about 25 to 30 candidates for permanent positions. About 30 candidates are on the current list of those seeking interim positions.

Because they were in a workshop, not a business meeting, directors could not vote on a course of action. Because the retirement of Superintendent Larry McClellan will take effect this summer, the board will make a decision at their regular board meeting on March 14.

Budget priorities and fiscal restraint

In spite of the dominance of school funding issues in the news, and even though it is the board's responsibility to provide the superintendent and other administrators with specific priorities for development of the

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