

Letters to the Editor

From page 15

schools open, our prison doors locked and our elderly and disabled safe and cared for. That will be our opportunity to decide what kind of Oregon we want. In the meantime, on behalf of Riverside, I want to publicly thank Representative Johnson and Senator Dukes for their leadership and hard work in the session just ended.

Sincerely,
Al Soenneker
Warren

County needs Yes vote on Sheriff's levy

To the Editor:

Did you know that we have fewer sheriff patrol deputies on the road now than we did 20 years ago? If 9-11 showed us anything, it is that we need to adequately staff our local law enforcement. Our safety depends on it.

The calls to the Sheriff's Office have nearly doubled in just the last five years to about 15,000 a year or 40 a day. Population has increased 21% in 12 years. Yet we still have fewer deputies to answer calls than we did 20

years ago.

In 1983-84, the Board on Police Standards and Training said that Columbia County should have 24-26 deputies. In 2002, we have less than half of that. Only five are patrol deputies.

Deputies answer calls for help, both emergency and non-emergency, to the Sheriff's Office. These include everything from murder to child abuse to domestic violence to burglary.

Patrol deputies almost always work alone covering the county's 657 miles from Scappoose to Westport to Vernonia with minimal backup.

The impending cuts in Oregon State Patrol troopers in Columbia County will only make this situation more critical. Twenty years ago, Columbia County had 13 troopers. We now have seven. In January, we will likely only have four.

Our deputies work hard trying to keep us safe, but it's pretty darn hard to do when they can hardly get any time off because they are so short staffed.

The Sheriff's Office is asking for a very small tax increase. The average homeowner will pay only \$7.75 a month.

This very small tax increase will make us safer. Please vote yes on Measure 5-109.

Sincerely,
Tony Weaver
Columbia City

Deputies must work too many hours

To the Editor:

I'm a Columbia County Sheriff's Deputy. Being one of only five patrol deputies covering the county's 657 square miles is challenging.

The days are long, the nights are longer. Our department is so short staffed that if I'm not on duty, I'm on call - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And, sometimes, I'm called a lot.

During one recent 3-1/2 day period, I worked over fifty hours. I started at 6:00 p.m., got off at 2:00 a.m., was called back at 3:04 a.m. and got off at 7:00 a.m. I answered seven calls, including looking for and finding a child molester with 12 counts against him.

After a few hours of sleep, I went back in at 6:00 p.m. and answered eight calls. Four minutes before my shift ended, I responded

ed to a call - stolen car, assault, criminal trespass, unlawful entry, criminal mischief. There were five suspects. I was alone. I got off at 3:30 a.m.

I reported to duty at 6:00 p.m. and worked until 4:08 a.m. After a ten-hour shift, I headed home. On my way home, I was called back at 4:39 a.m. A male suspect shot five rounds at a female. We got a search warrant and finished the call at 3:30 p.m. A 21-1/2 hour day.

The following day, I started at 12:08 p.m. and ended my shift at 2:00 a.m. the next day. I responded to 11 calls, including a 10-person fight in Clatskanie and a domestic abuse call in Scappoose. I did manage to get one day off during the week.

I wish I could tell you this was unusual, but it's not. It's like this almost all the time. I'm not complaining about the working conditions. I knew it might be like this going in.

It's about public safety - yours and ours. We need Measure 5-109 to serve you and keep you safe. Please vote yes.

Sincerely,
Richard "Mort" Frazier
Columbia City

ROCK CREEK
Join us for
"Great Dancing Music"
at J's Place

in
Birkenfeld
Saturday
Nov. 2nd
9 pm

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF COUNCIL WORKSHOP

The Vernonia City Council, in conjunction with the Vernonia Parks Committee will be holding a workshop regarding Parks use policies and fees on Monday, October 21, 2002, at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1001 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.

The public is welcome to attend the workshop; however, public comment will not be accepted during the workshop.

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours prior to public hearing to Janelle De Laittre, at least 48 hours prior to workshop at 503-429-5291, TTY 1-800-735-2900 or City Hall, 1001 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR.

The City of Vernonia is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Robyn Bassett
Director of Public Works

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FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES

☒ 24-Hour Patrol Coverage

☒ Securely Staffed Jail

☒ Homeland Security Training

☒ Resident Deputy in Vernonia

It will cost the average homeowner only \$7.75 a month—a small price to pay for public safety!

Please join Sheriff Phil Derby, former Sheriff Bruce Oester, and your Vernonia neighbors:

Gene & Teri Baska
Jim Gaskins
Fred Oviatt
Andy Roy
Darrell Wolfe

Ray, Shelley & William Cota
Tony & Dana Hyde
Steven Poetter
Tony & Ethel Weaver
Joseph & Agnes Wuest

Brian Cutright
Claudia Johnson
Stephen Roberts
Donald Webb
Jim Walters

Pat & Brenda Dean
Dolly & Leslie Keenon
Frazier Rohm
Stephen Weller

VOTE YES ON MEASURE 5-109
Five Year Local Option Levy for Law Enforcement

Authorized by the Community Safety Committee, 29993 Maple Drive, Rainier, OR 97048 • 503-556-0939