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The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

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The Spirit of Christmas



Enthusiastic performers warmed up a chilly December evening as students from Washington and Lincoln Grade Schools presented their annual winter program. For more photos, please see page 8.

Hyde will head Oregon Counties group

Columbia County Commissioner Tony Hyde was elected president of the Association of Oregon Counties at the organization's annual conference in November. Hyde succeeds Lake County Commissioner Jane O'Keeffe as leader of the Salem-based association, which represents all 36 Oregon counties.

Hyde is joined by a leadership team elected by conference participants to serve for the next year, including Klamath County Commissioner Al Switzer, who will serve as AOC's first vice president, Clackamas County Commissioner Michael Jordan, second vice president and Lincoln County Commissioner Jean Cowan, treasurer.

Hyde was first elected to the Columbia County Board of

Commissioners in 1996. Before then, he served seven years as mayor and city councilor in Vernonia.

Hyde unhurt in wreck

Among the drivers who had problems on the extremely slick roads last Wednesday morning was Columbia County Commissioner Tony Hyde, who was late getting to the weekly Board of Commissioners meeting because he had to wait for a tow truck.

A resident of Vernonia, Hyde was not the only driver who encountered problems on unsanded Scappoose-Vernonia Road. When his car slipped off the road, Hyde said, he was traveling slowly enough to avoid injury.

"Oregon is facing tough times, but by working together with our state and federal partners across the urban-rural divide, and among our local community organizations and businesses, we can get Oregon back on track," said Hyde. "Collectively, as an executive committee, we look forward to working with the governor-elect and legislative leadership to help guide the state through our current financial and economic challenges. County governments are trusted settings for forging these partnerships."

County officials also voted to support a resolution requesting that the federal government implement a timber salvaging program to restore habitat on public lands affected by wildfires earlier this year.

Education goes way beyond the three Rs

Education has changed a lot since many who are reading this have been in grade school. Even elementary students engage in multidiscipline learning activities that cover a broad range of curriculum—and the students have fun because the activities are structured as games. Washington Grade School students Samantha Lee and Rebecca Young were introduced by WGS Principal Kirk Sherrill at the Vernonia school board meeting, December 12, to talk about the "games" they are playing in their sixth grade classes.

"Spanish Galleons," a game just completed, has been used for several years. As Lee explained it, the sixth grade class is divided into teams or "ships" which must leave their home-port and complete a trade journey without being captured by pirates. Students learn map and navigational skills and must complete a journal, research project, hands-on project and a presentation speech. The climax of the game was a treasure hunt that ended in Sherrill's office with a treasure chest full of goodies.

Young told the board about a new game that will soon be played for the first time. Called "Caravans," the game will focus on the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of various locations around the world. Like "Spanish Galleons," students will be required to complete a paper, a project and a speech. In addition to the reading, writing and research skills, students also learn teamwork. Young agreed with Lee when she said that playing the games was "a lot funner than reading a social studies book."

Futures Committee

Board chair Carla Strand told the board that a newly

formed "Futures Committee" met recently to begin exploring how to obtain community support for a bond measure to replace aging school facilities. Michelle Blum, Marie Botchie, Mike Funderburg, Cari Levenseller and Strand attended the initial meeting.

Compliance with ODE

Though the district has been reported by Oregon Department of Education (ODE) as in compliance with the Standards for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, it lacks many of the policies or plans that should be in place, according to superintendent Mike Funderburg. Work to develop the policies has been divided among the administrative team and will be included as part of the January consent agenda. The consent agenda is a portion of the board meeting where business items are grouped together and voted on with a single motion in order to conserve time and allow the board to "focus on less routine matters," according to the printed agenda. Funderburg recommended that the board approve all of the policies and make revisions in the future as necessary. The Career Development Program will be voted on in January, along with other policies presented as part of the consent agenda.

Policy for Career Development Program

As an example, Funderburg included a policy for a K-12 Career Development Program which will "recognize the ODE requirements and reflect individual needs as developed in the student's Personal Education Plan (PEP)." Elementary and middle school curriculum will include activities that support career-related learning ex-

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