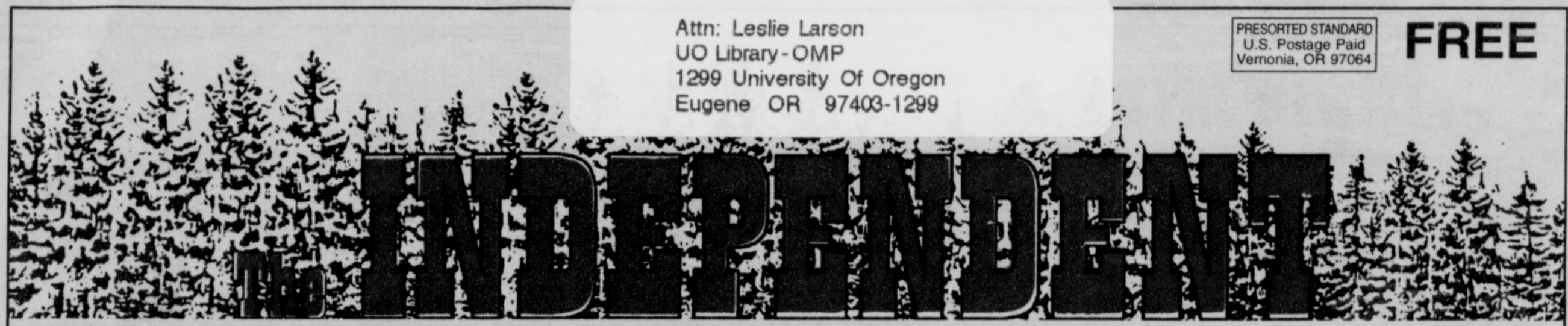


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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

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Crunch time...



One trunk of a multi-trunked cedar tree broke off during heavy winds during the night of Dec. 26, crushing the back half of a van owned by Paul and Elizabeth Pastor of Vernonia. The top of the tree landed across a rear corner of their home at 348 C Street but, fortunately, did no damage. More photos may be found inside.

Vernonia Credit Union will merge with WFCU

Vernonia Federal Credit Union board has agreed to merge into Wauna Federal Credit Union.

Vernonia Federal Credit Union serves the Vernonia community with a base of more than 700 members. VFCU currently offers limited services with limited hours. Wauna Federal Credit Union has expressed a commitment to making the Vernonia Branch, in its current location, a full service branch, with full service hours and an ATM.

According to a press release from Wauna Federal Credit Union, the range of new services that will be offered include, but are not limited to: Checking Accounts, Debit Cards, Visa Card, Internet Banking, 24 hour telephone account access, and 30 year mortgages, in addition to a large variety of low interest

rate loan products. Wauna Federal is rapidly being recognized as the Lender of choice within its communities.

"The VFCU board of directors is pleased with the merger decision because Wauna Federal shares similar values, an ongoing commitment to the community we serve and a wide range of financial services and products," said Randall E. Holce, VFCU manager.

The board and staff of Wauna Federal are excited and honored to have the opportunity to service the community of Vernonia, according to Manager Linda Ray. "We look forward to offering a continued expansion of services," Ray said.

VFCU members will receive more information at the annual meeting in a few weeks, in addition to details of the merger timeline.

Legislators, school officials discuss mutual concerns

The Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRES) held a dinner and forum for school board members and local legislators, in December, to discuss issues to be dealt with in the upcoming legislative session. The twelve legislators attending answered questions about school funding and effective working relationships.

NWRES serves 20 school districts in Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and Washington Counties; these districts serve more than 107,700 students and are represented by 125 school and ESD board members. In turn, the counties are represented at the state level by 21 legislators (8 senators and 13 representatives). With term limits gone, legislators said that they hoped to develop

long-term working relationships between parties.

Bipartisanship needed

The legislators in attendance indicated that bipartisan agreement could be obtained for a multi-faceted approach to solving Oregon's funding crisis. The legislators largely agreed that the budget cuts already taken in school districts may not have been noticed by the public, but that the expected failure of Measure 28 will be an "alarming wake-up call" to the citizens of the state, as Rep. Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose) said. Real cuts with genuine effects of huge magnitude will leave Oregonians "shocked and angry," Johnson continued. Using a phrase that was periodically picked up by other legislators throughout the evening, John-

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High winds cause area power outages

The wind blew hard and trees fell throughout the area served by West Oregon Electric Cooperative - Buxton to Necanicum and Mist to Yamhill, keeping line crews working around the clock for nearly 48 hours to restore service. The crews started removing trees and restoring lines at 3:30 a.m. Friday, Dec. 27, and continued until midnight on Saturday, Dec. 28, according to operations manager Steve Hursh.

Most of the damage was caused by trees falling through power lines, Hursh said, but line crews also had to spend a lot of time removing fallen trees that blocked roads and prevented trucks from getting through.

In some areas, particularly along Johnson Road, falling

trees stripped insulators off of poles. Fallen lines caused two small fires, one at Vernonia Airport, the other in Yamhill County.

Buxton, Timber, Keasey and Elsie had extensive outages caused by the loss of the Bonneville Power Administration

transmission line to the Timber substation, WOEC transmission lines and local distribution lines. The Gaston area was also hard hit.

Power was out in Mist for about an hour, while Chapman, Vernonia and Necanicum had only brief outages.

Council sets two public hearings

After a year of consideration, workshops, discussions and a public hearing, the Vernonia City Council will hold a second public hearing and make a decision Monday, January 6, whether to adopt an ordinance that would finance the city's parks with a \$1 charge added to the monthly water and sewer bills. Most of the people who spoke at the public hearing in

December felt that such a procedure would be the fairest and most efficient way to establish a consistent source of revenue.

Monday's public hearing will be to consider the proposed ordinance. It will start immediately following a 6:30 p.m. public hearing to consider vacating a city-owned portion of Oklahoma Avenue adjacent to Spencer Park.