

Columbia County Parks meeting on Jan. 8

The Columbia County Parks Advisory Commission will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, January 8, at 6:00 p.m., in the Columbia County Parks Department office, 1054 Oregon Street, St. Helens.

New minimum wage is \$6.90 per hour

Effective January 1, 2003, Oregon's minimum wage rose to \$6.90 per hour.

In November, Oregon voters passed a ballot initiative to increase the minimum wage. The initiative also indexed the minimum wage to inflation, which means it will continue to grow each year.

"Over the long-term, Oregon's minimum wage has not kept up with inflation," said Jeff Thompson, economist and analyst with the Oregon Center for Public Policy. "Each year families working at or close to the minimum wage find it harder to make ends meet because prices go up. Indexing the minimum wage to inflation stops

the erosion of its value."

A full-time worker at the new minimum wage will earn about \$14,300, which is below the poverty level for families of three or more. "Many families with full time workers will continue to struggle to make ends meet," said Thompson. "Raising the minimum wage eases that burden, and indexing it means families won't have to work more hours each year just to stay in place."

In Oregon, housing costs continue to be high relative to income. "Landlords don't wait to increase rents just because their tenants haven't had a raise," Thompson said. In Oregon, over 150,000 renters are paying more than 35% of their income as rent.

Thompson noted that Oregon has likely the highest hunger rate in the nation, and that work does not necessarily prevent hunger. "Raising the minimum wage makes it easier for thousands of Oregon families to put food on the table.

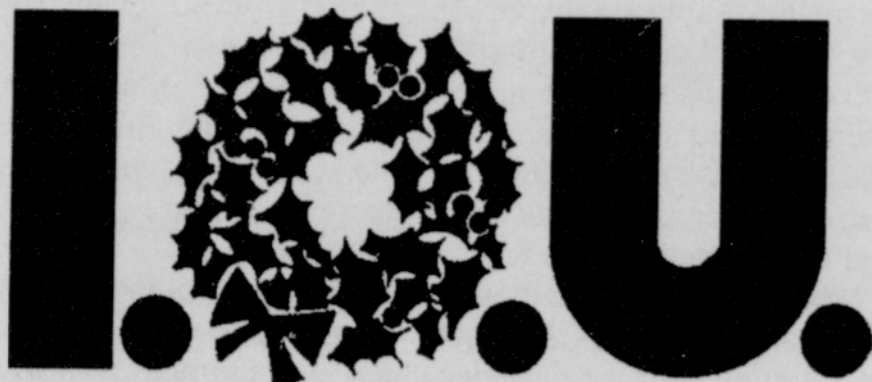
Making sure the minimum wage keeps up with inflation ensures that the amount of food on the table doesn't get smaller."

Many workers with incomes above, but close to the minimum wage, will also likely see increases as employers revise their wage schedules. "Increasing the minimum wage doesn't just help those at the very bottom," said Thompson, "but it boosts others on the income ladder."

Thousands of Oregon families depend on incomes near the minimum wage. "Minimum wage employment isn't just for teenagers earning spending money," said Thompson. "It is for the waitress with the child at home, the fast food worker supporting his family or the janitor who left welfare for work."

"Oregonians have chosen not just to raise the minimum wage, but to improve it, to help ensure that low-income families aren't falling behind," said Thompson.

Pay those Christmas bills...



with a GU bill payer loan

Don't let high credit card interest ruin the new year.

Call or come in to see how we can help.

VERNONIA FEDERAL CREDIT UNION



622 Bridge Street, Vernonia
503 429-8031

UNLIMITED 56K INTERNET
For information call
503-429-2701
www.agalis.net

Community Calendar

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH							
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
			1	2	3	4					1	2	3	4						1	2
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
														30	31						

VERNONIA

Alcoholics Anonymous	Mondays	6:30 p.m., Head Start Bldg.
Alcoholics Anonymous	Saturdays	7:00 p.m., Head Start Bldg.
American Legion Post #119	2nd Thursday	627 Adams Ave./ 503-429-4000
Arts & Crafts Society	2nd Thursday	2:00 p.m., City Library
Boosters	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., VHS Library
Boy Scout Troop 201	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., Head Start Bldg.
Boy Scout Troop 860	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., LDS Church
Cemetery Beautification Comm.	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m., Leonetti's Grill
Chamber of Commerce	2nd Wednesday	Noon, Lew's Place
Cub Scout Pack 201	Scout Cabin	For Info Call 503-429-0188
Doll Club	4th Tuesday	1:00 p.m., Senior Center
Friends of the Library	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Vernonia Library
Izaak Walton League	3rd Thursday	For location call 503-429-7193
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Tuesdays	6:30 p.m., Lew's Place
Nehalem Valley Car Club		For Info Call 503-429-4074
Preschool Story Hour	Mondays	10:30 a.m., City Library
T.O.P.S.	Wednesdays	6:30 p.m., First Baptist Church
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	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Comm. Dev. Corp.	2nd Tuesday	Noon, City Hall
Vernonia Grange	4th Saturday	10:30 a.m., Grange Hall
Vernonia Health Center	2nd Monday	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
Vern. Volunteer Ambulance Assoc.	1st Thursday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
WOEC Directors	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., WOEC

MIST-BIRKENFELD

M-BRFPD Board Business Mtg.	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-BRFPD Board Workshop	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Ambulance Assoc.	1st & 2nd Thurs.	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Firefighters Assoc.	1st & 2nd Wed.	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Rescue	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Helping Circle	2nd Wednesday	10:00 am, 755-2346 for info.
Natal Grange	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Grange Hall
T.O.P.S.	Sundays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station

BANKS

Alcoholics Anonymous	Fridays	8:00 p.m., Methodist Church
Banks City Council	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., City Hall
Banks Planning Commission	Last Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Banks School Board	2nd Monday	7:30 p.m., Jr. High Library
Banks Youth Group	Sundays, Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., UMC Youth Bldg.
Chamber of Commerce	1st Thursday	12:30 p.m., Brown Derby
CPO 14	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Friends of the Library	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., Schlegel Hall
Sunset Park Assoc.	3rd Wednesday	8:00 p.m., Gun Club
T.O.P.S.	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Administration Bldg.
Tri-City RFPD Board	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Station 13
Women's Aglow	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m., City Library

COLUMBIA COUNTY (All meet in St. Helens unless otherwise noted.)

Board of Commissioners	Wednesdays	10 a.m., Courthouse
Citizens for Senior Justice	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Sunset Park Church
COLCO Transportation	2nd Friday	10:30 a.m., Courthouse
County Council of Seniors	2nd Friday	1:00 p.m., Courthouse
County Fair Board	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fairgrounds 4-H Bldg.
County Parks Commission	3rd Monday	6:00 p.m., 1054 Oregon St.
Historical Society	4th Wednesday	Noon, location call 429-3713

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.