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The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

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What rain?



Jim Kennedy has been coming from Portland for many years to fish at Vernonia Lake. Before the handicapped accessible dock was installed, Miller would wedge his wheelchair against a park bench so he wouldn't roll into the lake. From there he would have to drag any fish he caught across the bank. This was not only difficult but also caused him to lose some fish. Miller stated his appreciation for the dock and the beauty of the lake, even though he was fishing with Kennedy to Sarah Miller, also from Portland.

Help needed for 4-mile B-V trail cleanup

Volunteers will be gratefully accepted Saturday as the Vernonia Chamber of Commerce tackles cleaning up four miles of the Banks-Vernonia Linear State Park.

Workers will meet at Anderson Park at 9:00 a.m., to get their assignments. Individuals and groups are all welcome.

Tools needed are brooms, rakes, gas blowers, shovels and wheelbarrows. Aside from one area where drainage is a problem, the rest of the work consists mostly of removing a

winter's worth of natural and man-made debris, particularly along the part of the trail that is adjacent to Highway 47.

Workers should bring their own gloves. The chamber will provide bags for debris and

Park Ranger Mike Shannon will make arrangements to dispose of the trash. Transportation will be provided to areas farther away from town and, because of the distance, there will be one checking workers' needs.

New Police Chief will start in Vernonia

Mike Cahill, former Junction City Police Chief and presently an enforcement officer for the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, has accepted the top position in the Vernonia Police Department. Cahill was one of

four candidates interviewed from among approximately 30 applicants for the position.

He is in Vernonia this weekend, but he will finish his job with the OLCC before reporting for full-time duty.

Banks, Vernonia get state report cards

By Schann Nelson

The Banks and Vernonia School Districts received markedly different state report cards. Also markedly different was presentation of the information to the school boards by their respective superintendents. Superintendent Mike Funderburg delivered a firm message, at last month's Vernonia board meeting, that the district must begin immediately to improve attendance and performance in mathematics. In contrast, Superintendent Marilyn McGlasson told the Banks board this week that, in spite of financial challenges, the Banks district continues to provide excellent opportunities.

Unlike individual schools, districts do not receive an overall rating. Instead, district report cards provide financial data and overall combined statistics for each area of evaluation. District numbers are compared to statewide averages, and the reports also include ratings for each school in the district.

Spending per student

A summary of general fund expenditures shows the dollars spent per student for the 2000-2001 school year. While both districts are funded below the state average of \$6310, Banks under-spent Vernonia in every area, but particularly in classroom support, with \$733 per student to Vernonia's \$1278. Total expenditures in Banks were nearly \$800 less per student, with general fund expenditures of \$5400 compared to Vernonia's \$6197 per student. The report cards do not evaluate the reasons for differences in per-student expenditures.

Writing and math

District report cards include a graph showing the percentage of students meeting the

state standards in reading, writing, math knowledge and skills and problem solving. Each district's overall statistics are compared with statewide averages. While writing is an area of strength in the Vernonia district, with percentages at or above state average at every level, in Banks the percentage of students at nearly every grade level and in most areas of evaluation exceed the comparable statewide statistic. Both districts appear to have some difficulty at the eighth grade level, where the percentage of students meeting state standards drops below the state average in some areas. However, more Banks students are meeting the tenth grade standards than state averages, in most areas, whereas an increasing percentage of Vernonia students fail to meet the state standard in all areas except writing.

School Report Cards

The last legislative session produced changes in the school report cards. The opening message on the front of each report card says, "because of the rating changes, comparisons are not valid between this year's school ratings and school ratings from previous years." Nevertheless, additional graphic information is included about improvement over time, and comparison figures from the 2000-2001 school year. 2003 report cards base overall ratings for the school year 2001-2002 on a combination of ratings for School Characteristics, Student Performance, Student Behavior, and Improvement.

The titles for these areas of evaluation are misleading. Each area is a narrow, statistically defined parameter that can be used for all schools across the state. The new lay-

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