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# THE INDEPENDENT

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## For the Community...



The activity in this photo is typical of the work done by approximately 150 people during Vernonia's annual clean-up day. More photos are on pages 10 and 11.

## No info yet on advertising police cars

Vernonia Police Chief Mike Cahill and City Administrator Mike Sykes, at the April 21 city council meeting, reported finding very little about the program to fund police cars with sponsor advertising on the cars.

The program was presented

### Local Budgets 101

Because a lot of current news, locally, countywide, statewide or federal is about budgets, *The Independent* has prepared a sort of Basic Budget outline for local governments, which includes cities, school and fire districts, and counties.

Those who are interested will find it on page 21. Those who are not interested, may easily ignore it.

to the council previously, with the explanation that the cars are paid for by a company that sells advertising rights on the cars. The lack of information about results of the program is because nobody in Oregon, in fact, in the U.S., according to Chief Cahill, has one of the cars yet. Phoenix, Oregon, signed with the company in November, but there is no car yet.

Director of Public Works Robyn Basset reported that the sidewalk and bike lane project has been approved, though a firm date has not been set. The project is to install pedestrian and bicycle improvements, i.e., sidewalks and bike lanes, on East Bridge Street from Texas Avenue to the green bridge.

The \$453,000 project will

cost the city approximately \$46,500 in cash, plus whatever work the city contributes.

Council approved changes in the fee schedule for the library meeting room. The changes will allow non-profit organizations to either pay a flat fee of \$10.00 for each use, or commit to an amount of volunteer work for the library that would be equal to the \$10 fee.

Dan Titus asked Council for permission to establish a business, initially using a temporary building. Mr. Titus plans to start an equipment rental business at Bridge Street and Rose Avenue. The property is surrounded with a cyclone fence, but doesn't have a building. The council approved the request with conditions.

## Big cuts for 47J; full year remains so far

"The current loss of state revenue is devastating to the infrastructure of Oregon and destroying K-12 education," said Vernonia School District Superintendent Mike Funderburg, at the April 24 budget committee meeting, adding that the state school fund has been reduced by over a half billion (\$501.9 million) dollars since schools adopted their budgets for the present fiscal year (2002-2003).

Budget adjustments in Vernonia have included absorbing positions reduced by attrition, reduction in force, elimination of six school days, reduced program offerings, and freezing all non-required expenditures. Funderburg told the committee that the district is still in the process of completing the budget for the current year while, at the same time, building a budget for 2003-2004.

As he presented the budget message to a well-attended budget committee meeting April 24, Funderburg left no doubt that the budget process for the 2003-04 fiscal year would be both grim and difficult.

The budget adopted last spring, for the current fiscal year, was \$5,194,730. Based on latest state projections, Funderburg told the committee that they must develop a budget at \$4,610,006, reflecting both loss of state revenue and declining enrollment. "The task before this committee is monumental," Funderburg emphasized.

The Vernonia School District Budget Committee is composed of the seven school board members plus seven community members appointed by the board. A Budget Assistance Team composed of staff, three board members and three community budget committee members has been working with preliminary figures for several weeks.)

After delivering the budget message, Funderburg reviewed the district's motto, vision statement, and guiding principles. (Copies available in the district office.) He then gave a detailed presentation of the work of the Budget Assistance Team (BAT), which used these philosophical statements of purpose to develop budget goals for the 2003-2005 biennium. Budget goals establish a framework within which budget decisions can be made that support the underlying philosophy of education in the district. Goals set by BAT are:

- The district will provide the necessary instructional resources to ensure student success. Instructional resources include adequate numbers of current state-adopted textbooks and updated technology to compete in a global society.

- The district will maintain safe and healthy physical facilities that provide an environment for a quality learning experience.

- The district will offer professional development opportunities for all employees. Through training, the staff will be expected to lead students to higher levels of achievement.

### Declining enrollment

Funderburg also presented the committee with current enrollment figures. Enrollment has dropped in Vernonia since 1996 when the district had 842 students. Many factors contribute to decreased enrollment, including the graduation of the children from the "mini-baby boom" (children whose parents were Baby Boomers), and increased enrollment in home and private school settings. Current district enrollment is 698 students, including special education students, some of whom are served

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