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THE INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

June 5, 2003

Helping Hands...



Vernonia High School students really put their best efforts into cleaning up and preparing the school grounds for more plantings. In addition to working at VHS, Washington and Lincoln Grade Schools also benefited from the students' efforts. Instructor Dennis DeWitt and Joe Batty supervised the effort and Lorna Poetter, of Farmwoman's Nursery, donated many shrubs and flowers for the beautification effort.

National rally car race in Vernonia area

It has been four years since the Sports Car Club of America's rally series made a visit to Columbia County roads. In that time the organizers, Oregon Rally Group, have grown their premier event into a national level championship rally. After three years on SCCA's national schedule in April, Oregon Trail SCCA Rally returns to Vernonia on Saturday, July 12.

Upwards of 80 rally teams will be coming to northwest Oregon from all over North America, just two weeks after they compete at the world famous Pike's Peak Hillclimb and Rally in Colorado.

Manufacturers' teams will be arriving in the area a week

ahead of the rally weekend, to prepare their cars for top performance. ProDrive manages Subaru's rally efforts in the U.S., just as they do on the world rally stage in the World Rally Championship. Mitsubishi is now bringing in the famous Lancer Evo rally car to the U.S. auto market, and their drivers are at the top of the standings this season. Ford Focus is a rally inspired European Ford creation and it, too, will be present, backed by the U.S. Air Force Reserves. Mazda, Dodge Neon, Audi will all be present in rally livery when the teams set up the service park at Vernonia school grounds on Saturday morning. Fans will be welcome

to walk the grounds and watch the teams at work as the cars come in for service stops throughout the afternoon.

From a 10 a.m. start at Hillsboro Stadium, teams will go west to forest roads in the Tillamook State Forest. After a few grueling stages, the cars will make their way to Vernonia for the first service opportunity of the day. With 80 cars arriving at two minute intervals, the service park should be busy all afternoon.

Fans can witness the rally action at locations specified by rally organizers for both viewer safety and viewing vantages. Organizers hope to complete

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Senior and disabled programs in flux

The Columbia County Council of Seniors has lost its funding and, as of July 1, will no longer be providing transportation, advocacy, nutrition or recreation programs for senior and disabled residents of Columbia County. Those programs include meals in the senior centers and meals on wheels; they also include transportation.

Charges and counter-charges have been exchanged between those who want a changing of the guard and those who want to retain the

Transportation needs will be meeting topic

County residents are invited to participate in a discussion about public transportation needs of Columbia County.

Community meetings will discuss the results of a county-wide survey on mobility needs of Columbia County residents. Specific community-level data will be available for citizen review. The forums will provide a platform for more in-depth discussion of data findings.

Meetings are scheduled as follows:

- June 10, 12:00-1:00 p.m. – St. Helens - Scappoose Chamber of Commerce, 2194 Columbia Boulevard
- June 10, 6:00-8:00 p.m. – Scappoose City Hall, 33568 E. Columbia Avenue
- June 11, 6:00-8:00 p.m. – Vernonia City Hall, 1001 Bridge Street.

Meetings have been held in Rainier and Clatskanie.

For more information about the CCCTP planning process and survey, go to <www.co.co.columbia.or.us/transit> or call the CCCTP Comment Line at 1-888-403-8344.

status quo, but a state notice of decertification will effectively remove the council from publicly funded activities.

Community Action Team is being considered as the umbrella organization for most of the programs, but apparently not transportation – which is a major concern to seniors and disabled in Vernonia.

On June 30, most of the Colco Transportation vans and buses will be turned over to Columbia County. When asked how seniors in Vernonia will get to their doctor appointments in Hillsboro or Portland, there have been no answers forthcoming from county or state officials except: "We're trying to find another provider."

This could be complicated by the fact that most Colco driver are paid minimum wage. As of Tuesday, the county had no interim provider and had not sent out any requests for proposals (RFPs). According to the assistant county counsel, Cynthia Zemaitis, the county is working with the public transportation division of ODOT in seeking service, and with a transportation planner (see article on left).

47J Budget plan includes full year

In his 26 years as an educator, Vernonia School District Superintendent Mike Funderburg said, as the district Budget Committee met May 15, nothing has been as confusing, hurtful and devastating to the system as the current level of education funding. The budget document presented to the committee was based on projected enrollment and revenues available as of May 1, but Funderburg explained that projected funding for the 2003-05

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