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The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

September 18, 2003

It's that time, again



School has started and the 20 mile per hour speed limit is in effect for many blocks in Vernonia. It's easy to remember when the crossing guards are on duty, but the speed also applies at any time students may be around. Please be patient.

VRFPD board re-signs Chief Paul Epler

When Vernonia Fire Chief Paul Epler turned in his resignation at the fire district meeting Sept. 9, most of the directors were both surprised and dismayed.

Nevertheless, they met again, Sept. 12, to start looking for someone to replace Epler, who agreed to stay as assistant fire chief until someone could be found. Several of the volunteers firefighters said they could arrange time off from their jobs to help with daytime coverage and administrative duties.

Three officers were interviewed, but not all of the officers could attend the meeting so they recessed until the following Monday, Sept. 15.

In the meantime, board members talked with Epler about what would be needed for him to stay on. When the meeting started, Director Joe Batty (who attended the meet-

ing by speaker phone from eastern Oregon) received approval to suspend the rules, then asked Epler, "If we enforce policy under the conditions recommended, will you stay and withdraw your resignation?"

Epler said "yes," and was reinstated with no loss of benefits. Terms of the reinstatement will be made public, probably at the board's October 14 meeting.

Rain may not be sufficient to avoid water curtailment measures

In spite of the rain, this very dry summer has reduced stream flow in Rock Creek sufficiently so that level one of Vernonia ordinance is in effect. Level one is voluntary, and merely asks citizens to be careful about unnecessary water usage, such as watering lawns or washing sidewalks.

The board then set another meeting, for Sept. 22, to start interviewing every volunteer (unless they choose not to be interviewed) in an effort to eliminate problems that have interfered with operations in the district.

"This board will follow state statutes, district regulations and board policies," said chair Steve Weller, "because we are responsible" to the people of the district.

Other voluntary actions should include eliminating any leaking faucets, or not letting water run while brushing teeth. These seem to be minor considerations, but they actually make a big difference when practiced by a whole community. Salmon need water, it's true, but so do we.

Full day of events at Fall Salmon Festival

Watch as salmon leap up Rock Creek Falls at Vernonia during the first annual Fall Salmon Festival on Saturday, October 4. A fish-themed parade will begin the festivities at 11 a.m. and the merriment will continue until 7:00 p.m.

This festival celebrates the return of the salmon thru a variety of activities that are fun for the whole family. The city celebrates the unique combination of mountains, lakes, trees and streams that make Vernonia such a wonderful place to live and work. Come join us as we celebrate the magic that makes Vernonia a special place where people care. Salmon Festival is a unique event, in a unique and wonderful place.

Visitors may sample wines at the wine-tasting while browsing among art contest entries and silent auction items. The best bakers in Vernonia will bake two pies – one for judging and a second pie to auction to the public. Northwest commercial artists will be displaying and selling their art along Adams Street. In addition, Grey Dawn Gallery will be opening a new exhibit of Christopher Burkett photographs. Savory barbecued salmon, juicy bratwurst and hot apple cider will be among some of the delicious foods that will appeal to your senses. Live entertainment will be provided by Cindy Lou Banks, Diana and the Song Dogs, and the Vernonia Community Orchestra.

A Cowboy Mounted Shooting Competition will feature riders dressed in authentic turn-of-the-century costumes. The cowboys will be firing 1890 style guns from horseback while maneuvering through the courses at Anderson Park.

An additional attraction is a stream discovery exhibit sponsored by the Upper Nehalem

Watershed Council. Participants may view organisms in the water thru microscopes and learn about water insects. An Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist will explain the water cycle. Children may fish for trout in our wading pool or create artwork on the sidewalk with chalk. This is an event for everyone.

A scarecrow-building contest will be underway from noon to 2:00 p.m. Sponsored by Vernonia Pride, materials will be provided for a small fee, and visitors may decorate their scarecrows during the festival. Alternatively, contestants may enter a scarecrow they made at home to. Prizes will be awarded and completed scarecrows may be either donated to help decorate the city or taken home.

Two art contests will be sponsored by Hands on Art. For the smaller children, coloring contest sheets are available at Sentry Market. In addition, a contest for all ages and all mediums will be themed "Life of a Salmon." Entries will be judged by age groups and prizes will be awarded. For more information call Gina Dixon at Vernonia Head Start, (503) 429-9243.

**Town Hall on
Law Enforcement
Monday, Sept. 22
7:00 p.m. at the
Scout Cabin**

This is the time for citizens to explain their expectations, to say what they want and what they don't want.

If you care, be there!