

Market value, assessments increased at approximately same rate

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in the bonded debt levy for the Clatskanie School District. Residential properties in rural Rainier saw bills that were 2.83 percent higher than last year, slightly less than three percent due to small decreases in the rate for Columbia County's bonded debt levy and the local option levy for Columbia 9-1-1.

A total of \$38,642,111 in property taxes was billed for the county, cities, schools and special districts. That amount was 2.11 percent more than was billed last year. In addition, a total of \$1,082,416 was collected for such things as drainage districts assessments and the Oregon Department of Forestry's fire patrol special assessments.

County wide, the market value of all taxable property increased from \$3.58 billion to \$3.65 billion, an increase of only 1.88 percent. Throughout the county, most residential property market values, based on sales prior to January 1, 2003, saw no increase this year. The exceptions were a

one percent increase inside the City of St. Helens, a four percent increase inside the City of Columbia City, and a three percent increase inside the City of Clatskanie. Residential properties in rural areas also stayed the same except in Vernonia, where they increased three percent. The market value of commercial properties increased nine percent in St. Helens, was unchanged in Scappoose, and decreased two percent in Vernonia, Clatskanie and Rainier.

However, Linhares pointed out that property taxes are based on assessed values. Measure 50 created a new value, "maximum assessed value," for each piece of property. The maximum assessed value was established in 1997-98 by taking the 1995-96 market value and reducing it 10 percent. The assessed value is the lower of real market value or the maximum assessed value.

The county's total assessed value this year is \$2,983,801,023, or 2.67 percent higher than last year. The

increase is made up of the three percent due to reductions in non-residential property value. County wide, industrial property decreased by \$28.69 million, due largely to an \$18.71 million reduction in Boise Paper Solutions' paper mill in St. Helens. Forest land also decreased in value by over \$19 million due to a recent appraisal by the Oregon Department of Revenue of all forest land in the state.

Operating revenue for taxing districts is directly tied to assessed value under Measure 50's rate based system. Prior to Measure 50 in 1997, taxing districts had a "tax base" that was allowed to increase an automatic six percent per year. If values went up or down in the district, the tax rate per thousand of assessed value was adjusted to raise that amount of money. Under the current system, taxing districts only receive an increase in operating funds if the assessed value in their district goes up, unless voters have passed a local option levy for operating purposes.

At the same time, if values in a particular taxing district go down, the district will receive less operating money from property taxes.

"I am asked all the time if districts are getting more money because of all the new houses that are being built," Linhares said. "My answer is yes, but it takes a whole bunch of new houses to really impact revenue. At the same time, changes in industrial or utility value can have a huge impact simply because the values are so much greater," he continued.

Of the 36 taxing districts which levy a permanent operating rate, only 12 will see revenue increase by more than three percent and one, Clatskanie School District, will actually see operating revenue decline by nearly two percent.

Payment dates

The due date for at least one third of property taxes is November 15, however, since that is a Saturday, the date is ex-

tended until Monday, November 17. Property owners will receive a three percent discount if the entire amount is paid by Nov. 17. If two thirds of the bill is paid by the 17th, there will be a two percent discount of that amount. Payments that are mailed must be post marked by Nov. 17. See your property tax bill for additional installment dates.

Property taxes may be paid at the Vernonia and Clatskanie branches of Wauna Federal Credit Union, all branches of St. Helens Federal Credit Union, and at Bank of the West in St. Helens. However, if there are taxes owing from previous years, payment can not be taken by the banks.

Property owners may appeal the value of their property as in past years. However, if the appeal results in a lower market value there would be a reduction in the taxes due only if the market value falls below the assessed value. The deadline for filing an appeal is December 31, 2003. Appeal forms are available from the county.

Community Calendar

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

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., Scout Cabin
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
Hands On Art Committee	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Head Start Bldg.
Home Extension Club	3rd Thursday	10:30 a.m., Christian Church
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
Pioneer Museum		For Info Call 503-429-8134
Preschool Story Hour	Mondays	10:30 a.m., City Library
Upper Nehalem C.P.A.C.	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
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 Garden Group	1st Thursday	7:00 p.m., Pioneer Museum
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	3rd 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 Drill	1st & 2nd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Fire Drill	1st & 2nd Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Helping Circle	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B SAR Drill	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Volunteer Assoc.	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Natal Grange	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Main Fire Station
T.O.P.S.	Mondays	6:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Upr Nehalem Watershed Council	For date call 429-2401	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
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.
Mental Health Advisory Comm.	3rd Tuesday	10 a.m., 2nd Floor, Courthouse
Comm. on Children & Families	3rd Thursday	5:30 p.m. OSU Ext., 550 N. Hwy. 30
Local Alcohol & Drug Plann. Comm.	2nd Tuesday	3:00 p.m., 2nd Floor, Courthouse

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.