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The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

April 1, 2004

Yes! 75 degrees in March!



Unusually warm weather last Monday let folks shed jackets and enjoy the warmth of the sun. It also brought 4 year-old Matea Tait and her dad, Ben, over the hill from Scappoose to do a little fishing at Vernonia Lake.

Vernonia River Fest will debut May first

Get ready for Vernonia River Fest, Saturday, May 1, for a full day of fun for all ages and many interests. Rock Creek, the Nehalem River and two city parks located on their banks will be the focus of activity. Scappoose Bay Kayaking and Andy and Bax will provide demonstrations and rentals so, if you don't have your own kayak or raft, you will still be able to float down river from Anderson Park to Big Eddy Park, about a three-hour float. There will also be a take-out point at approximately the halfway mark. Transportation for boaters will be provided back to Vernonia from the two take-out points. Reservations for water equipment can be made through Mark or Debbie Hall at 429-8382 or <haldeb@verizon.net>.

While Dad or Mom is floating or paddling down the river and enjoying the scenery, there will be many activities and events for everyone else to do in town. Kids games and activities will be set up throughout Anderson Park. Hawkins Park will be full to bursting with River Fest activities and the Vernonia Country Market. Several events operated by the VRF committee will be used to fund the increased costs of holding multi-

ple events and to benefit local projects, particularly a proposed skate park.

Plastic ducks will race (okay, float) down Rock Creek in three separate classes. Big spenders who want a chance to win 40 percent of the purse, can purchase a Blue Duck for \$25.00. A \$5.00 Pink Duck will net 30 percent for first place and 10 percent for second place. Kids will be delighted with the \$1.00 Yellow Duck, earning prizes for first, second and third places. Ducks may be purchased in advance at Vernonia Mercantile, Triple S Saw Shop, or by contacting Mark or Debbie Hall at the numbers above. They will also be available at River Fest.

Several festive Maypoles will be erected in Hawkins Park. Participants will have fun with this traditional springtime activity, making wreaths or crowns and dancing to decorate the pole.

Do you make great chili? The River Fest Chili Cookoff will give you an opportunity to see who agrees with you. For information, contact coordinator Nancy Dailey at <www.newmoonllamas.com>. The INDEPENDENT doesn't know if fire extinguishers will be provided.

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Nebraskan accepts contract as Vernonia Police Chief

Mathew Workman, the top pick of the Vernonia City Council to head the local police department, has accepted a contract with the city and will assume the position of police chief on May first.

Workman comes to Vernonia with 13 years of law enforcement experience with the Hastings, Neb., Police Department. Hastings, with a population of

24,000, has 37 officers in its police department.

Since starting as a patrol officer in 1991, Workman has progressed to increasingly responsible positions, including supervision and/or training of both regular and reserve officers. He also has extensive experience with the many elements of community policing. His current position is with the

department's Office of Professional Standards.

Workman has a Bachelors degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Nebraska, and a Masters in Organizational Management from the University of Phoenix.

"I am an advocate for community involvement as well as youth programs, and look forward to serving the citizens of

the City of Vernonia," Workman told The INDEPENDENT.

"During our short visit to Vernonia," Workman said of a family visit last month, "we were able to meet several people and look forward to being able to interact with even more,"

Workman and his wife, Tess, have two children, 10 year-old Bethany, and Brenton, who is

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**Kids! Meet the
Easter Bunny
at the Vernonia
Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday, April 10
10 AM SHARP!
Hawkins Park**

Sponsored by the Vernonia
Chamber of Commerce