

## River Fest and Country Market both off to successful starts

Vernonia's first River Fest celebration enjoyed a successful debut on May 1. Attendance has been estimated at 500 people, getting the celebration is off to a good beginning.

Sixty-four rafts, kayaks, canoes or other vessels were launched from Anderson Park, with 103 people registered.

Only two vessels were removed from the water for violations, one with two juveniles who had removed their life vests and one with a minor in possession of alcohol. The other 100 people had an enjoyable trip downriver. More people would have gone downstream if Scappoose Bay Kayaking

had anticipated that more vessels were needed. The weather was fine, with sunshine and temperatures in the 70s.

Live music and food were enjoyed in both Anderson and Hawkins Parks. Hawkins Park was also the site of the Maypoles, a climbing wall, kids games, beer garden, chili

cookoff, home brew contest, duck races, and crafts.

Out of 11 entries, Erin Scheuerman of Vernonia took top honors in the chili cook-off, for both Best Chili and Most Unusual Chili with her chicken and white bean entry. Natalie Wilder of Vernonia received the award for Hottest Chili.

The king of the home brew contest was Randy King of Deer Island. Brett Costley of Vernonia and his partner, Floyd Goodrich of Portland, won second place and Denny Dennis of Aloha took home third place. Mainstreet Home Brew Supply generously donated gift certificates for the winners.

Ducks, 185 of them, were set loose to race (well, float) downstream from the top of Hawkins Park to the finish line by the kids' wading pool. In the yellow duck race, Val DeWitt's duck was awarded first place, winning DeWitt a supersoaker and a large inflatable duck. Crossing the line in second place was Jessica Butcher's duck, winning a small wading pool and a small inflatable duck. The third place yellow duck was owned by Sandra Rogers, who won two soaker footballs and a small inflatable duck.

In the duck money races, Barry East's pink duck won \$112.50 and Spencer Curl's brought in \$37.50. The big winner, though, was Pat Knight, whose first place blue duck brought home a speedy \$300.

After the races, spectators also had fun watching the duck catchers out in the water with fish nets scooping up all the ducks before they escaped downstream.

The Vernonia Country Market also began on May 1, with 20 vendors offering plants and hand-crafted items. Extra atmosphere was provided by Curtis King-Chamberlain with his ukulele, plus a roving juggler/guitarist who will remain unidentified.

The Country Market was a popular stop between River Fest events, with offerings ranging from perennials (too early for produce) to planters, fused glass items, ceramic gifts, paintings, expert advice from Columbia County Master Gardeners, birdhouses and much, much more.

The Market will continue every first and third Saturday through the Salmon Festival in early October. Vendors can still sign up by calling Etcetera, at 503-429-0335, for an application. Food vendors are also encouraged to participate.



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It's also comforting to know that your 9-1-1 Call Center is staffed with highly trained professionals. Using computer-aided dispatch, they coordinate all public safety and emergency medical agencies throughout the county. With the support of federal grants, the District has enhanced its communications and public safety capabilities with a new microwave radio "backbone" that covers our entire county. The new system is now working for us.

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On May 18th, voters have the opportunity to keep this essential 9-1-1 service working for all of us. **Yes, this is the same measure that was on the ballot last November. While it received an overwhelming majority approval, the measure was invalidated because voter turnout was too low.** As before, this operating levy renewal measure requires 50% voter turn-out in addition to majority approval. Please vote and return your ballot in time for it to count. Thank you. For more information, go to [www.columbia911.com](http://www.columbia911.com) or call 503-397-7255.

