

# The INDEPENDENT

Vol. 19, No. 17

"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

September 2, 2004

## Ready for salmon



When heavy rains induced salmon to start upstream earlier than usual, OYCC members Brian Cook, Christopher Richardson and Keri Anne Johnson moved quickly to remove the planks that help dam Rock Creek for the swimming pool.

## Area schools varied in state/U.S. evaluations

By Schann Nelson

NCLB! AYP! Not Met! Meets or Exceeds!

What do these mean?

Why are state and federal reports so different and what do they mean?

State and federal governments tell us that all this testing and reporting will improve our children's education — but is it working?

How do you find this information?

Beginning in August, results of statewide assessments (i.e. tests) and preliminary designations under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act became available on the Internet. The database for federal ratings derives from state testing results.

However, recognizing the diversity among states, the NCLB allows states to control almost forty separate issues that affect results, including the definition of standards and assessments, the elements of the AYP definition, and state accountability systems. States set the academic standards and report student success at meeting those standards in grades 3,5 and 8, plus at least once between grades 10 and 12. The goal of NCLB is to have all students successfully meet the standards set by their state, by 2014.

Oregon's standards correspond to the benchmarks for the Certificate of Initial Mastery at grades 3,5,8, and 10 in English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Also used to determine AYP in Oregon is the percentage of students participating in testing, their academic growth, attendance and graduation rate. Students are assessed in the benchmark

grades in reading, writing and speaking; mathematics knowledge and problem solving, and science. However, while writing, math problem solving and science are displayed on the state report cards, these results are included only in participation ratings and are generally excluded from performance ratings for AYP for 2003-2004.

Targets for meeting AYP goals are measured by the percentage of students meeting (or exceeding) the state standard, and are currently set remarkably low. However, the first scheduled increase in target percentages will take place during the current school year. Targets for the 2003-2004 AYP report are for 40 percent of students to meet the standard in ELA and 39 percent in mathematics, with 95 percent participating in testing, plus 92 percent attendance in elementary and junior high schools, and 68.1 percent high school graduation rate. Academic growth is also used to determine AYP status, with targets based on the change in percentage of students meeting the standard.

Much of the emphasis of federal AYP reports, and a critical factor in determining the overall rating of a particular school or district, is the breakdown of assessment data by subgroups. Failure of any subgroup to meet the target in any area results in the school not meeting AYP goals. As a result, many schools, which thought they were doing a great job based on previously used indicators such as SAT scores or the percentage of students going on to college, do not meet federal standards.

In Oregon student assessment results are reported for

## OYCC provides jobs, helps city

Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC) members worked with Vernonia Public Works again this summer — a win/win situation for the city

and the participants. This year's program in Vernonia started with four boys and one girl on June 28 and finished August 31 with four of the

original five (Brian Cook, Christopher Richardson, Keri Anne Johnson and Adam Randall). A sampling of the projects that the OYCC youth worked on included the following:

- Helping install the toilet by the campground at Vernonia Lake,
- Mowing, weedeating, general clean-up at all parks,
- Painting curbs,
- Staining the docks at Vernonia Lake, the play structure at Anderson Park, and the downtown garbage receptacles,
- Pressure washing downtown sidewalks before Jamboree,
- Placing river rock around

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## Community Yard Sale on Saturday

It's not too late to sign up for the sixth annual Community-Wide Yard and Sidewalk Sale, taking place on September 18.

If you have some good items you would like to clear out of your garage or closets, but don't want to run your own sale, at least two of the sales will benefit Vernonia Cares and donations will be gladly accepted.

Donated items may be taken to the American Legion Hall on Adams Avenue, starting at 5:00 p.m. Friday, Sept. 17, or they

may be taken to the parking lot next to Vernonia Realty on Saturday, September 18, starting at 7:00 a.m. Pick-up of donated items may also be arranged for Friday, Sept. 17, by calling Sharon Gibson, 503-429-0942.

To participate, or for more details, call Helen Bateman at Vernonia Realty & Insurance, 503-429-6203. If you are shopping instead of selling, Vernonia Realty & Insurance is also the place to get maps of the participating locations.