

Letters

From page 3
 say to those that question this rate increase, waste not; want not! To the City Council I can only parlay that you really "bungled" this one. For shame! The next time let the townsfolk have the facts and figures so that a "timely" decision can be made.

Mark J. Akers
Vernonia

(Ed. note: Waste Management has asked the City of Vernonia to keep dollar/usage/cost numbers confidential. That agreement does not prevent Waste Management from disseminating information.)

School buses have a purpose: Kids' safety

To the Editor:
 Once again, school is in session. Kids everywhere, school buses everywhere. And the in-

evitable will happen more than once this school year. The event you dread. You get stuck behind the school bus. Fingers start tapping with impatience, annoyance sets in. Tempted to speed up and zip around the bus? Think that STOP arm and the red flashing lights don't apply to you? Sitting there fuming? Consider this:



School buses transport some of the most precious live cargo in the world—our children and the children of our

friends, relatives and neighbors. They are our future, and they are on their way to and from school and school events. On their way to and from learning, growing, expanding their knowledge and their world, gaining skills that will shape who they are and consequently, the future of our world.

When large buses pick up groups of children at a bus stop, it will take a few minutes to process all of those children. They need to get on the bus, remove jackets and backpacks, get settled in their seats. Buses don't move until all are safely seated. Little buses pick up children in front of their homes, in areas such as cul-de-sacs, streets with restricted turn-arounds, and on routes which have smaller numbers of chil-

Small buses have seat belts and ALL children must be buckled up before the bus will move. Often, smaller buses have mostly younger children. And yes, it does take a few long minutes for all of them to remove backpacks and coats, perhaps crawl over each other, find the right seat belts and get buckled up. I've seen kindergartners who can barely make it up the tall bus steps, and have to climb up onto the seats. Special needs children may take longer, needing help with jackets and seat belts.

If children are goofing around, the driver will tell them to speed it up. But drivers are not going to tell a little child who can barely climb up on the seat to hurry it up. 90 percent of the children are doing the best that they can, and that will just have

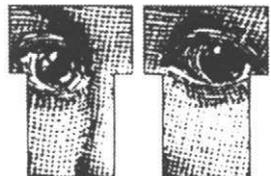
to be good enough for those of you stuck behind the bus.

Parents and guardians can greatly speed up the process by making sure the child is ready a few minutes before the bus is due. Be sure they understand the safety rules for riding the bus. Take time to see that they eat a decent breakfast. With little kids, have them dressed appropriately for the weather, their shoes tied, faces wiped, backpacks, homework and lunches ready. Tuck in their shirts, give them a hug and a kiss. Start their day with "I love you" and a smile.

Drivers often see little ones with untied shoes, mouths and noses that need to be wiped, coats on inside-out, shirts hanging out, backpacks spilling their contents. We listen to tum

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not just when children are present.