

The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

October 6, 2005

Pumpkin Fun



A lot of youthful energy and concentration was expended on carving those pumpkins just exactly right. More Salmon Festival photos may be found on page 24.

Superintendent resigns from 47J; Kingsley is acting superintendent

The resignation of Vernonia School District Superintendent Michael Funderburg was unanimously accepted by the district's Board of Directors at an emergency meeting on Friday, September 30. The resignation became effective on October 1.

When board chairman Randy Hansen requested a motion to appoint an acting superintendent, Dick Brunsmann nominated retiring administrator Anne Kingsley. The board

appointed Mrs. Kingsley by a vote of 3 to 2, with Kim Wallace and Angie Taylor joining Brunsmann. Cari Levenseller and Debbie Brown opposed the appointment and Hansen abstained. Board member, Tim Titus, was not present.

Kingsley was scheduled to retire from 47J district on October 1. She will serve while the board works through the process of hiring a new superintendent.

Public help needed to combat knotweed in Nehalem watershed

The Upper Nehalem Watershed Council needs the public's help to identify locations of Japanese and Giant Knotweed infestations and to assist in plant eradication to the greatest extent possible.

Japanese and Giant Knotweed are invading Washington, Columbia, Clatsop and Tillamook County's Nehalem River and streams. It spreads quickly and grows fast. A patch can double in size every year. Once it starts growing, it shades out all other plants, leaving bare ground underneath. Knotweed dies back in the winter leaving bare soil on river and stream banks that can easily erode. Because it overshadows all other plants, even blackberries, it is impossible to get native plants re-established in a knotweed patch. Eventually the knotweed will displace native vegetation and new riparian trees and shrubs will be unable to establish themselves alongside this highly aggressive non-native species.

The result will be a significant decline in streamside forests that naturally provide shade, habitat and forage for native fish and wildlife, stream temperatures will continue to rise and salmon will continue to decline.

Since the 1996 flood, the knotweed infestation has exploded in the Nehalem River and surrounding basins... such as Scappoose Bay and Lower Columbia watershed basins. Numerous small patches exist in Timber, Vernonia, Mist, Birkenfeld, Jewell and Elsie. Downstream of Elsie the infestation becomes continuous on both sides of the Ne-

to stop this threat to the natural ecosystem.

The Upper Nehalem Watershed Council extensively surveyed and inventoried knotweed patches on the banks of the Nehalem during April, May and June of 2004 and 2005. The survey has given the council a general idea of the extent of the infestation and how much time, money and effort is



Japanese Knotweed

halem and explodes out onto the Nehalem Bay and North Fork Nehalem flood plain. Knotweed was able to colonize in areas scoured out by the flood waters and continues to spread. Action is needed now

needed to eradicate this noxious weed.

In late June of 2004 and 2005 the council began treating smaller patches close to the water. A licensed herbicide ap-

Please see page 4

Emergency responders now have updated mobile wireless system

Columbia County's first responders are now using a wireless mobile data system, an important new communications tool made possible through Homeland Security grant awards.

The new system, built upon the Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District microwave

backbone, provides public safety call information to law enforcement patrol vehicles and to fire and emergency medical apparatus via wireless data transmission.

"The system provides important supplemental communications to the countywide voice

Please see page 5



Vernonia High School athletic fields looked like a hive of big bumblebees, September 16, when tents were erected for 2,000 Cycle Oregon participants and support personnel.