

# The INDEPENDENT

Vol. 20, No. 20

"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

October 20, 2005

## Autumn Beauty



Autumn colors highlight foliage at Vernonia Lake.

## Federal grant will help county linear trail plan

The U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service has awarded a technical assistance grant to the Columbia County Parks Department in support of development of the Crown Zellerbach Logging Road Trail.

"This is the step we have been waiting for," said Commissioner Tony Hyde. "This technical assistance grant will allow us to complete a plan that will address all of the issues and will make this trail a crown jewel for Columbia County."

National Park Service (NPS) assistance will be focused on the planning and development of a trail master plan for the 23-mile logging road from the City of Scappoose to the City of Vernonia, including a public involvement component.

Assistance for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program will be provided during the federal fiscal year ending September 30, 2006. If it is necessary to complete the development plan, the grant may be extended one additional year.

Bryan Bowden, NPS Community Planner has been assigned to the project and county officials have set an initial meeting to familiarize him with

the project and its location within Columbia County.

The trail proposal calls for conversion of the old Crown-Zellerbach logging road to a multipurpose trail for equestrians, bike riders and walkers. As proposed, the trail would start at Chapman Landing, on the Multnomah Channel near Scappoose, then follow the logging road to Pittsburg. From there, it would follow other logging roads into Vernonia and connect with the Banks-Vernonia State Linear Trail.



Ben Shumaker, above, will become familiar to Vernonians. See article on page 4.

## Superintendent search options heard

Vernonia School Board held a workshop on Superintendent Search Options before starting the regular business meeting, October 13.

Greg McKenzie, representing the Oregon School Board Association (OSBA), outlined the steps the board could take to hire a superintendent, starting with establishing the criteria/qualifications desired, up to the selection of the new superintendent. He indicated that the hiring process will take from two to seven months to complete.

The board first needs to decide, McKenzie explained, if they want to hire an interim superintendent, then a permanent superintendent, or just a permanent superintendent, and whether to hire for half time or

full time.

The board must also determine whether they will do the hiring themselves or contract with OSBA to find applicants and/or do the hiring. An interim superintendent may be needed, as most applicants will have to complete existing contracts, so the best pool of applicants may not be available until next spring. One interesting fact mentioned by McKenzie is that, nationwide, the average length of employment for a superintendent is 3-1/2 to 4 years per position.

McKenzie made it clear to the board that in order to hold interviews in executive (closed to the public) session, they must first provide a forum for public input on the criteria/qualifications that should be used

during hiring.

*Editor's Note: A meeting was held last night in the school district office for public input. Acting superintendent Anne Kingsley told The INDEPENDENT that last night's meeting will not be the only opportunity for public comments.*

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## Fall, and tax statements, are here

More than 28,000 property tax bills have been mailed to Columbia County property owners at this time. Although most property owners can expect a predictable three percent increase in their property tax bill each year, there are factors that can change that amount.

There was less than a one percent change in the consolidated tax rates for Clatskanie

and Vernonia, but some other areas weren't so fortunate. Consolidated tax rates include all taxing entities that apply within the county for each property. These may include county, city, school district and special district (for example – fire, library or park districts) property taxes. The consolidated tax rate for the City of Scappoose increased by 5.4 percent this

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**Halloween  
on  
Bridge Street**

**See page 10  
for  
details**

