

# The INDEPENDENT

Vol. 20, No. 24

"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

December 15, 2005

## Santa brings smiles...



These youngsters are delighted to have their picture taken with Santa Claus during his visit at Jim's Market in Banks

## No interest in city's hazard mitigation plan

Former council member Shirley Goodman was presented with a plaque in appreciation of her service to the city at the opening of the Vernonia City Council meeting, December 5.

The meeting was then re-

cessed for a public hearing on the Hazard Mitigation Plan draft. City Recorder Kate Conley presented the highlights of the plan using a powerpoint presentation.

The two largest potential

hazards for this area, as determined by the committee working on the plan, are flood and earthquake. The committee then identified ways to mitigate (or make less severe) the potential for damages. Mitigation measures for flooding, for example, might include higher levees on the sewer ponds, improved drainage, and relocation or elevation of essential structures. There being no testimony regarding the plan draft, the public hearing was ended, the regular meeting resumed and the Hazard Mitigation Plan was adopted.

Please see page 5

## Free concert Saturday at Banks

A free holiday concert will be presented December 17 at Schlegel Hall in Banks' Sunset Park from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Headlining the event will be Alena Sheldon. Other performers will include "Everybody's Favorite Home Town Band" and the choir from the Banks

Community United Methodist Church.

The audience can enjoy a community sing-along, as well, and Santa Claus will make an appearance. Hot beverages and homemade cookies will drive away the chill, too.

Please see page 16

## The Music of Christmas...



Vernonia Middle School Band entertained families and friends at the annual holiday concert.

## OLCC compliance test finds flaws

Four of nine licensed businesses in Columbia County sold alcohol to a minor during recent compliance testing by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

According to the OLCC, the following licensees sold to the minor: Buckhorn Restaurant & Pub in Vernonia; Goble Tavern; Lucky Inn and Zatterberg's Grocery in St. Helens.

Two OLCC inspectors and a minor volunteer did the compliance testing November 18. During the checks, volunteers attempt to buy alcohol from licensees or their employees to

determine if they are properly examining identification and obeying state law prohibiting alcohol sales to anyone under 21. The minors are supervised by OLCC inspectors or other law officers, carry their own legal ID and are advised not to disguise their age or encourage the sale of alcohol.

Compliance checks are a key regulatory component of OLCC's mission to prevent underage drinking, which is a critical problem in Oregon and across the nation, said Teresa Kaiser, executive director. Dur-

Please see page 23

## Vernonia Cares needs meat for Christmas food boxes

Turkeys and hams are still needed to round out the Christmas food boxes provided by Vernonia Cares.

Vernonia Cares is currently helping an average of more than 300 area residents per month with supplemental groceries. One third of those are children. The demand has been high all year long and the food pantry's budget is stretched thin in order to provide a "Special Holiday" meal

for these families.

There are still several ways to donate before Christmas. You can purchase a turkey or ham at Vernonia Sentry and donate it when you check out. You can also donate \$20 for a "Christmas food box" at Vernonia Sentry, that includes a turkey or ham.

Breaktime is accepting meat donations Mondays through Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and Fridays and Satur-

days from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Donations may also be taken to Vernonia Cares, at 627 Adams Avenue, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Please see page 23

## Transfer Station Holiday Closure

Vernonia Transfer Station will be closed Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24.