

Business Notes

New agency takes over insurance business from Vernonia Realty

Arthur Strand Insurance, Inc. is the new insurance agency in Vernonia, since taking over the insurance part of Vernonia Realty & Insurance on January 1, 2006.

Strand Insurance has been offering insurance products to Oregon and Washington customers since 1925, and now offers Vernonians an expanded insurance market with more companies and more specialized coverages available.

Arthur Strand Agent Jim Jansen, who is now available at the Vernonia office (same location as Vernonia Realty) said, "We specialize in small communities like Vernonia. Now Vernonians don't have to leave town to get all their insurance needs met."

Arthur Strand has people who specialize in health, auto, homeowner, business, personal, life and annuities, and most anything else that might need

insuring. Now, when calling the insurance office, help will be provided by one of seven agents – Debbie, Carole, Marla, Kelley, Carrie, Jennifer, or Jim.

"We wanted to sell to a company that was a major player, a large agency that will keep an office in Vernonia," said Ken Bateman, "Arthur Strand Insurance met these criteria."

"We want to thank everyone for the 18 years of support when we operated the agency," Ken and Helen Bateman added. "We will continue to own and operate Vernonia Realty and we will be available during the transition."

If you have insurance needs that Vernonia Insurance hasn't been able to help you with in the past, or if you want to change your insurance to a local agency, give the agents of Arthur Strand Insurance a call at 503-429-2010.



Left to right, Ken and Helen Bateman, owners of Vernonia Realty and Insurance, with Jim Jansen, an agent for Arthur Strand Insurance. Arthur Strand Insurance just purchased the insurance part of the business from the Batemans.

Builders Board expands content of web site to help consumers

The Oregon Construction Contractors Board (CCB) rolled out its new website, <www.oregon.gov/ccb>, last week. The new consumer help page offers a more user-friendly layout, helpful tips on hiring a contractor and an enhanced contractor license search.

Board members put together a task force last October to review the information consumers receive from the website when searching the complaint history of a construction contractor. At their December meeting, board members approved the task force's recommendations for the website.

One of the biggest changes — aside from the layout — is when checking a contractor's license, the website now offers the dispute (complaint) history that a consumer could have ordered by mail, as well as disciplinary actions taken by the CCB. Personal information of complainants is not listed on the website for privacy reasons. The agency licenses more

than 42,000 contractors and most construction projects are successful and problem-free.

The improved CCB website, Consumer Help page has been under production over the last three months and is an important part of the agency's effort to provide consumers with the tools they need to make informed buying decisions.

"We believe that it is our job to increase consumer awareness, educate consumers and provide information needed to make wise decisions," said Craig P. Smith, Administrator for the CCB.

The old CCB website at www.ccb.state.or.us continues to be available during the transition of information. In the next several days, users will be automatically redirected to the new site.

Anyone who is paid to repair, improve or build a home must be licensed by the CCB.

Consumers can verify a contractor's license at www.oregon.gov/ccb or by calling 503-378-4621.

Need home repairs? Check C.A.T. loans

Does your home need repairs? Perhaps the roof needs to be replaced, faulty wiring or plumbing needs to be upgraded, or a new furnace installed. Low-to-moderate income homeowners may qualify for loans with no interest and no monthly payments for various structural repairs, foundation work, or energy saving measures.

Homeowners living in the City of Vernonia and throughout Columbia County may apply for the loan program to rehabilitate homes and perform critical health and safety repairs.

Community Action Team, Inc. (CAT) is seeking applicants from the City of Vernonia and throughout Columbia County for zero percent, deferred payment loans. No payments!

Contact Katie Lewis at CAT, 125 N 3rd St., St. Helens OR 97051 or call 503-397-1675 or toll free at 1-800-955-1675 for more information or to apply.

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* Members of WFCU only. Qualified borrowers only. Rate shown as an Annual Percentage Rate, is subject to change and is valid as of 09/01/05. Your rate may be different based upon your pre-existing credit performance. Not all applicants will qualify for this rate. This rate applies only to an existing balance transferred from some other institutions credit card. The regular APR will be assessed to the existing balance. 30 days or more delinquent, balance transfer discount rate will be revoked and adjusted to the regular APR. Offer expires on January 31, 2006.

