

The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

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We did it!



Tossing their mortarboards in the air, Vernonia High School graduates celebrate after receiving their diplomas on June 10, 2006.

KUPL brings fishing derby, music and fireworks

Catching with KUPL, a fishing derby and more, will begin on Saturday, June 17, with registration starting at 8:00 a.m. at the Vernonia Middle School parking lot. Five dollars and a fishing license are required to register. A shuttle will take participants to Vernonia Lake.

KUPL will be taking live call-in to the station all day long by Rick "Bubba" Taylor. Fishing will continue until 4:00 p.m. Then shuttles will head for Hawkins Park.

Hawkins Park will be the scene of an auction and the fishing derby awards. Grand

prize is a fishing trip to the Canadian Princess Resort in Canada. At 7:00 p.m., there will be a free concert featuring country music star Brian McComas. Bring a chair or blanket and enjoy the music. At dusk, fireworks will finish off the Catching with KUPL day.

City's favorite, Officer Krueger, is back on patrol

Canine Officer Krueger is again patrolling the streets of Vernonia. Krueger began working for Vernonia Police Department in October of 2004, but was removed from service 12 weeks ago due to issues regarding insurance requirements. Everything has been resolved and, as of June 7, the four year-old Czech Border German Shepherd is back, and is accompanying his partner, Officer Mike Kay, on patrol.

Krueger is certified nationally through Drug Beat International and Advanced Canine.

He is a dual purpose canine and can be used for both narcotics detection and tactical patrol. He assists with search and rescue efforts and with tracking, as well as narcotics investigations and criminal arrests.

Krueger has won the hearts and support of many citizens and business owners. At the June 5 City Council meeting, several citizens addressed the council with heartfelt pleas to resolve the issues keeping the canine officer off duty. The City Council declared, April 17, that their "number one priority" was

to return the dog to service. City staff worked to get this community asset back on the police force, and now Krueger is back on patrol.

Attention Pet Owners

There will be two fireworks displays in Vernonia in less than three weeks. One on Saturday, June 17, across Rock Creek from Hawkins Park, then on Tuesday, the 4th of July, at the school grounds.

Many pets become upset at the noise accompanying fireworks and need extra care.

Citizens are negative about proposed Vernonia budget

A full house of citizens at the June 5 Vernonia City Council meeting provided lots of input, much of it negative, beginning with a Hearing on the City's 2006-07 Budget. There was no testimony in favor of the budget presented.

Business owner George Tice spoke in opposition to the budget, saying, "...\$11,000,000 is too much to spend on a sewer for the City of Vernonia. I don't know how the City can do that without raising fees or property taxes. They need to find something else to do." Joel Glass spoke in agreement, saying "It's going overboard to handle the task. It would be ill conceived and poor judgement to continue with that part of the budget."

Speaking neither for nor against the budget, Noni Andersen commented on the process, saying "I question some items that haven't come up in council meetings. When did contract services, legal services and a planner get approved?" Councilor Shirlee Daughtry responded to Andersen by saying, "I don't have an answer for you. I knew we were hiring a planner and legal services. I know the fees are very high and I'm concerned about it."

City Administrator Robyn Bassett said that a focus group would be formed for the sewer and wastewater upgrade project. She added that she hoped Tice and others interested will participate.

Mayor Sally Harrison asked if there was a request to continue the hearing and Tice responded affirmatively. The budget hearing will continue on June 19 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall. It was requested that questions regarding the budget

be given to the city by June 12.

During the Topics from the Floor portion of the meeting, several citizens asked about the status of the K-9 officer, Krueger, and when he would be back on duty. All of the statements indicated strong support for the K-9 program. It was explained that Krueger has not been on the streets for the past 12 weeks due to problems with the city's insurer. (The problems have been resolved, see accompanying article.)

George Bellingham, president of the Vernonia Ridge Riders, told Council that the saddle club wants to cover the Andersen Park horse arena. The club has a donor who will finance the project, Bellingham explained, but not until the Ridge Riders have a long-promised lease with the City. He was assured that the subject would be on the agenda at the next Council meeting, June 19.

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Vernonia 4th of July

Parade @ 7:30 p.m.
Bridge Street, from
Weed to WGS

**Boosters and Scouts
food sales**
start at 6:00 p.m. on
the school grounds

Fireworks
at dusk
behind Vernonia Middle
School & High School