

The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

July 6, 2006

What so proudly we hail...



Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts proudly carry the nation's colors as they lead the 4th of July parade in Vernonia.

City accepts resignation of administrator Bassett

The June 19, Vernonia City Council held a Special Meeting prior to the regularly scheduled meeting to discuss the current employment status of City Administrator Robyn Bassett. Mayor Sally Harrison opened the meeting by saying, "This meeting is, as I understand it, to discuss Robyn Bassett's terminating her services to the City. Due to public meeting laws, it has been difficult for us all to get information and so we have this meeting."

Jeff Bennett, the City's attorney from Jordan Schrader PC, told council the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the affects of the City Administrator quitting her job. The letter from Bassett, dated June 19, 2006, to Mayor Harrison and City Council, was described by Bennett as "just a view of the prior City Administrator of the events of the last few days."

Council agreed to have City Staff contact the League of Oregon Cities for a list of possi-

ble interim City Administrators to interview, and to hire an interim person until the formal process of hiring a new City Administrator can be accomplished. Council also agreed to hold a Special Meeting on June 23 to hear the status of projects from department heads.

Council approved the budget (with Steve Whiteman voting Nay) after hearing more concerns about the wastewater project from various citizens. During the June 23 meeting, the wastewater project was discussed again and the consensus at that point was to have Mayor Harrison and a representative from the engineering firm, Kennedy/Jenks, meet with DEQ to discuss options that would have the community's support, as Phase II of the current plan does not. Phase I of the current plan, it was agreed, needs to happen in any scenario and the cost for this part is just under \$2 million.

Please see page 4

Fire season starts, no outdoor burning

"Fire Season" officially began on June 29, for Northwest Oregon. Fire season is declared by the State Forester when weather conditions and dry vegetation cause fire danger hazards. The fire season designation includes all private

and public lands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) within Columbia, Clatsop, Washington, Multnomah, Tillamook and Yamhill counties. Commercial operations on forestlands, such as timber harvesting, are required to follow Industrial Fire Precaution Level 1 regulations. Fire suppression equipment must be on the job site at all times and a fire security watch provided following shutdown of activities. When the level of fire danger increases in the weeks and months ahead, ODF will

impose further fire prevention regulations. These regulations are designed to regulate fire ignition risks and thereby reduce the potential of a wildfire.

With the designation of fire season, the Columbia County Fire Defense Board has implemented a ban on debris burning throughout Columbia County. This ban remains in effect until significant rains occur in the fall.

Fire officials want to alert all landowners to check areas where burning has been con-

Please see page 5

School zone speed laws changed again

In 2003, Oregon Legislature passed a law making 24-hour school speed zones. The 2005 state legislature passed a bill simplifying the state's school speed zone policy.

The new law, which took effect on July 1, limits traffic regulations adjacent to schools to two options.

In most locations (such as Vernonia), the 20 mph speed limit applies only between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on school days.

At 43 other sites around Oregon, drivers must slow down only when yellow lights near the school zone signs are flashing.

Please see page 5

Pipeline work may cause traffic delays

Starting today, NW Natural will begin work on moving two pipelines that follow Hwy. 47 through the Battle Creek area a few miles east of Mist. In 2007, ODOT will straighten out a curve along this stretch of road and build a new bridge across Battle Creek. The NW Natural project will be done by September 1, so ODOT's project can get started as early as possible in the 2007 construction sea-

son. NW Natural will be moving about 850 feet of 24-inch pipe and 660 feet of 16-inch pipe. Both pipelines are part of their Mist storage project, allowing movement of natural gas from Mist to their customers. The pipelines, which now cross Battle Creek immediately adjacent to the bridge, will be placed beneath the creek about 100 feet away from the bridge. The

Please see page 4

Ka-Boom!



Vernonia's fireworks display was enjoyed by both residents and visitors.