

**Business Notes**

# New business is offering technical services, supplies, cell phones, and more

Bits and PCs, a new business in Vernonia, is open and offering a wealth of services and supplies that area residents haven't had available in town.

The one-stop services at Bits and PCs include computer repair and service, Cingular cell phone service plans, sales of cellphones and accessories, office and shipping supplies, and printer cartridge refill services. Oh, yes, you can even sign up for Agalis.net internet service.

Owners, Jim Gooch and Jeff Hopkins, already were offering some of these services, including internet services by Agalis.net, computer service and repair. But you had to contact them, you could not just walk in and talk to them.

The idea for Bits and PCs started when Hopkins was looking to extend his internet service territory and Gooch offered his house as a relay point. They kept talking and the store grew out of those discussions, additionally many people had mentioned to one or both of them that the city needed a source of office supplies.

Future plans to expand include moving to a new, larger

site on Bridge St. as soon as possible, then growing their inventory and the services they offer. One idea is to be able to weigh printer cartridges to determine by weight if they are truly empty – if they aren't empty, the problem may be the printer, not just a need for ink.

Both Gooch and Hopkins live in Vernonia, and Gooch is glad to leave the commute behind and mind the store. Gooch was looking for an alternative to high-tech work while still making use of his technical knowledge and Hopkins was looking to expand services, so the timing was right for a partnership. "I like meeting people and being able to help them out," said Gooch.

Bits and PCs is here and waiting for you to bring in empty printer cartridges for replacement, get or change cell phone service, buy supplies and accessories, get help with computer troubles, or have them put together a new computer. Find what you need at Bits and PCs, 842 Madison Ave., Vernonia, Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., or call them at 503-429-TECH (8324).

## Keith new Fire Cost administrator

Former Oregon Department of Forestry official Tim Keith took over September 1, as administrator of the Emergency Fire Cost Committee. He replaced Tom Lane as head of the four-member panel that oversees the Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund. The fund serves as a revenue safety net that covers firefighting costs for large wildfires.

Recently retired as assistant state forester for the department's Forest Protection Division, Keith is no stranger to wildfire. He served 16 years as a commander for the department's incident management teams. Made up of skilled firefighting personnel, the teams manage the suppression effort on large wildfires.

Established by the Oregon Legislature in 1946 following the huge Tillamook fire of the previous year, the Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund pays firefighting costs whenever a wildfire exceeds the budget of the department district in which it occurs. Acreage assessments paid by forest landowners, minimum lot assessments, a surcharge on improved forest lots and a timber harvest tax finance the fund.

The Emergency Fire Cost Committee supervises and controls the distribution of monies from the fund, to balance protection costs from region to region.

Keith can be reached at Oregon Department of Forestry headquarters in Salem.



Friends of the Vernonia Library are \$500 richer thanks to a September 18 donation from US Bank's corporate giving program. Offering the donation are (l-r) US Bank personnel Jonathan Farmer, Julie Allen, and Vernonia Branch Assistant Manager Sarah Norburg, while Claudine East and Joann Glass happily accept the check on behalf of the library support group.

## Whipple, Sikora elected as co-chairs of OFRI

The board of directors of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) has elected Carol Whipple, owner and manager of the Rocking C Ranch, a family forage and timber growing operation near Elkton, to a one-year term as its chair. The board also elected Pete Sikora, lands manager for Giustina Resources in Eugene, as co-chair.

OFRI is funded by a portion of Oregon's tax on timber harvests. Its board includes representatives of small (Class 1), medium (Class 2) and large (Class 3) producers, small woodland owners and employees, each appointed by the Oregon State Forester. A public member and the dean of the Oregon State University College of Forestry serve as ex-officio members.

Whipple, who was first appointed to OFRI's board in 2001, represents Class 1 producers (those who pay the harvest tax on less than 20 million board feet of timber annually).

Sikora was appointed to the board in 2005 and represents Class 2 producers (those who pay the harvest tax on more than 20 million board feet of timber annually but less than 100 million board feet).

The Oregon Legislature cre-

ated OFRI in 1991 to improve forest resources and to encourage understanding of the state's age sound forest management.

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