

The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

April 5, 2007

Wearing o' the green



Former owner and co-founder of *The Independent*, Noni Andersen, was honored as the Grand Marshall of the 2007 Vernonia St. Patrick's Day parade. More parade pictures are on page 24.

Fund transfers backfill shortfall in city budget

At the March 19 Vernonia City Council meeting, during a public hearing on the city's supplemental budget, City Administrator Dick Kline outlined the fund transfers that were adopted at the April 2 council meeting. Interfund transfers of up to \$200,000 and \$65,000 from the Sewer Rehab Fund to the General and Sewer Funds, respectively; and up to \$30,000 from the Water SDC Fund to the Water Fund were necessary to cover the \$384,000 shortfall in the Community Development Fund and the loan reserves that were required but were not in place. The amounts 'borrowed' from one fund to another will need to be replaced during the next fiscal year, and will be included in the regular budget process. The amounts moved represent just under five percent of the total city budget of over \$7 million.

Waste Management sent a letter to the city with new rates to be effective at the Vernonia Transfer Station starting in April. The minimum charge will now be \$23.00 for the first cubic yard and \$16.00 for each additional cubic yard. Tires off rim will be \$5.50 while tires on rim will increase to \$11.00. Semi tires off rim will cost \$12.00 and on rim will be \$24.00. Appliances will be accepted at a cost of \$15.00 and automotive batteries goes up to \$3.00 each.

The April 2 meeting started

with a Town Hall on lowering the speed limit on Bridge Street in the business district (Rose to Adams) from 25 mph to 20 mph. Five citizens spoke in favor of lowering the speed limit, three spoke against and two spoke who were neutral. Councilor Steve Whiteman said he drove the section numerous times at both speeds and found that, if he didn't have to stop or slow down for pedestrians or traffic, it took 17 seconds longer to go from the flashing light to the Rock Creek Bridge at 20 mph than at 25 mph. No final decision was made at this meeting.

In other business, council:

- gave approval for an amateur botanist who collects specimens for Oregon State University to collect plants in the Vernonia area to increase the collection;
- approved increases in cemetery fees;
- accepted resignations from Gina Lende (budget committee) and Michael Dickey (planning commission);
- heard that Triad is approximately two months behind schedule on construction of phase I of the wastewater treatment upgrades;
- approved Larry Snethen's request to place a second temporary structure by the Old Sawmill Eatery at Vernonia Lake to be used as a shaded rest area;

Please see page 5

Open house set on ODOT plans for Staley's Junction, Hwy 47 interchange

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) will hold its fourth project open house for a new interchange at Staley's Junction on Thursday, April 12, from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. at Banks Public Library Community Room, 111 Market St., Banks.

ODOT and consultant staff will be available to answer questions about the project and discuss the latest interchange concept and access to local roads – particularly Fisher Road. This is an informal drop-in meeting.

ODOT began the planning phase for the Staley's Junction interchange in 2006. Construction is currently slated for 2009. For more information about the project, call 503-731-8247 or email Lili.D.Gordon @odot.state.or.us.

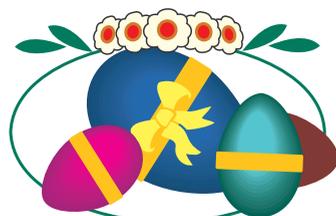
Vanpooling may work to ease commute fuel costs

On Tuesday, April 24, at 7:00 p.m., the Vernonia Community Learning Center will host an informational meeting about vanpooling options that are available to commuters in Vernonia who work in Portland or Washington County. The presentation will be given by Mary Ann Aschenbrenner from Metro, and will offer possible options included in the DriveLess/SaveMore campaign.

A vanpool is a group of five to 15 commuters with a similar origin, work destination and shift, who ride to work together each day. Vanpooling is a highly efficient and cost effective way to ride to work, particularly over long distances. Commuters who ride in vanpools save money by reducing the cost of maintenance on their own vehicles and splitting the cost of gasoline with other riders. Vanpool riders from Ver-

nonia could save as much as \$200 a month. There are also savings in time. An average commuter spends eight hours each week behind the wheel of a car – equivalent to working an extra day each week. Vanpool riders can relax, read, work on their laptop, or take a nap. As a member of a vanpool you will also be doing your part to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality, all while saving money.

More information about Metro's vanpooling program will be presented at the informational meeting.



Happy Easter

Easter Egg hunt will be Saturday

Don't miss the annual Easter Egg Hunt in Hawkins Park, Vernonia, presented by the Vernonia Community PTA.

Children up to 10 years of age are invited to hunt for eggs on Saturday, April 7, starting at

10:00 a.m. (don't be late, they really do start on time). There will be separate areas for specific age groups.

The Easter Bunny will be available for pictures with the children so bring your camera.