

Letters

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league this year we are not going to offer spring soccer. Instead, we are going to offer a summer soccer camp in late June or early July.

Our objective is to get everyone ready for our fall soccer season. It is also our goal to improve the competitiveness and maximize the resources of our fall soccer program. We feel that moving away from spring soccer and putting that emphasis on fall will do this. By design, the Vernonia Youth soccer program is in place to serve youth from ages 5 to 10 who, up until now, have not had an alternate fall sports opportunity, especially girls. Providing youth a productive, fun and healthy activity is what it is all about.

Currently the club is seeking anyone interested in coaching for the camp or fall soccer. We would like to get the coaches trained with some Oregon Youth Soccer Clinics this spring and early summer. All of us are very excited about some new changes happening this fall and can't wait to get others involved. Remember, Soccer is a Kick in the Grass!

For information, call 429-0700.

**Joel Glass
Katie Poetter**

Vernonia Youth Soccer Club

Collect depletion fee, don't tax log trucks

To the Editor:

Columbia County Commissioners have decided to single out the logging industry. The commissioners hope to implement a NEW TAX directed at the log trucks that use county roads. The commissioners must have forgotten that the log trucks pay a license fee, a gas tax, timber tax which a portion comes back to the county, and supports an economy that supplies good wages, and contributes to the local community.

The commissioners forget that this industry is a industry that supplies jobs now, will supply jobs in the future, and will be a continuing industry that is self sustainable through replanting, thinning timber stands, harvesting blow downs, chipping the non marketable wood. The commissioners also forget that the loggers are often called to help fight forest fires

around the state.

The logging industry is a renewable industry that Columbia County has counted on for about 150 years, employing many local families, generation after generation. I myself come from a logging family from both sides of the family tree, dating back to the 1870s.

With so many logging families trying to make a decent living in these tough times, with diesel prices up and wood prices down, can this industry afford a duplicated road tax?

In Columbia County the depletion fee ordinance is a legal and binding order, the depletion fee ordinance was created in the beginning to level an even playing field to local miners from outside the county miners, and to help maintain county roads damaged by heavy rock trucks. The fee is aimed at an industry (surface mining) that depletes the county's natural resource of rock, and other industries that use mined materials, there is no re-planting of rock to insure the next generation of miners a job, when this resource is mined out, the miners will be gone. Unlike surface miners who can automatically increase the price of rock to their buyers, the loggers are stuck to a different market; Surface miners are allowed to deduct the depletion fee off their income taxes while they pass the fee onto their buyers.

Why has the county commissioners refunded depletion fee taxes to some mining companies? Why has the county been lax in collecting depletion fees to the amount of approximately \$250,000.00 or more per year! When the county roads are in such need of repair? Why has

the county commissioners FAILED to ENFORCE the Depletion Fee Ordinance On All Parties Who Fall Under Its Provisions?

In 1996 the voters of Columbia County passed a new depletion fee ordinance and amendment, the county adopted the new Depletion Fee with the amendment. In short the amendment reads that any naturally mined material that is mined in Columbia County or brought into Columbia County is subject to the Depletion Fee Ordinance.

The commissioners have at their fingertips, a way to collect taxes, that would solve the county road problem but refuse to carry Out The Vote Of The People!

Since 1996 Columbia County has had the POWER to collect depletion fees from several major industries in the county, which used naturally mined materials in their product process. Columbia County Commissioners has REFUSED to enforce the Depletion Fee for almost 11 years, Boise Cascade (used clay); US Gypsum (uses gypsum) all naturally mined, the loss of revenue to the County Road Department is incalculable, while the prospect of a coal generation plant coming to Port Westward, near Clatskanie the monies that could be collected, is again incalculable. County commissioner Tony Hyde has said publicly and adamantly that the county would not collect from the coal delivered to the generation plant.

While the county deliberately loses millions in revenue from BIG Corporations they find no problem in assessing and col-

lecting a projected tax on the local loggers.

Tony Hyde claims to have been a logger for 20 years, Hyde claims to know and understand the hardships of the logging industry, and Hyde claims to be a friend to the loggers,

Tony Hyde is NO FRIEND to the loggers, He is a friend to the huge corporations. That have sited in Columbia County.

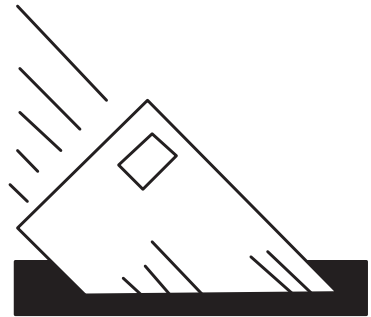
The Corporations that the commissioners refuse to collect on, are industries that receive HUGE TAX BREAKS, these corporations receive Enterprise Zone, Urban Renewal tax breaks, these go on for years and years. AND DIMINISH THEIR FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN THEIR very expensive and exclusive LAWYERS FEIGN FAILURES, LOSS OF JOBS, ETC.

It is apparent that the county commissioners find favor with these multi billion dollar corporations, by not collecting monies owed to the people of Columbia County. It is apparent that the commissioners do not hold the loggers in the same regard, as that of multi billion dollar corporations. It is apparent that the commissioners find it easy to create and enforce a new tax to make up the short fall of the corporations on the little guy.

Why create a duplicate tax for the roads, when there is a sufficient order on the books, if enforced, would create enough revenue to keep Columbia

County roads in great shape.

**Tammy Maygra
Deer Island**



Did You Know . . .

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companion pamphlet on "Dangerous Situations" for parents, and a very informative brochure called "The First 48 Hours: Steps for finding a missing child." All of these pamphlets and brochures are available free-of-charge at the VPD.

A quick reminder that Columbia River Fire & Rescue will be conducting a FREE Child Safety Seat Check Up Clinic on Saturday, May 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the St. Helens Wal-Mart (2295 Gable Rd). On average, 85 percent of seats checked need correction. If you or family members utilize a child safety seat or booster seat, you should consider stopping by the clinic to have the seat checked and receive helpful advice on proper use. The clinic is free and the information is priceless!

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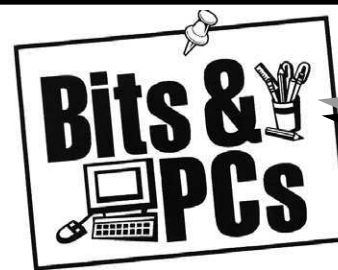
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