

The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

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Summer is here!



Vernonia's free-flowing swimming hole on Rock Creek is as popular today as it was decades ago. The kiddy pool is also open, so come on in, the water's fine!

Vernonia woman killed in crash on Highway 47

Tragedy struck a local family as Amber Lynne Varnam-Dahl, 39, of Vernonia, died June 30 at approximately 8:30 p.m., in a crash on Highway 47. According to the Oregon State Police (OSP), Varnam-Dahl lost control of her car and was struck broadside by a full-size pickup, about ten miles south of Vernonia in Washington County.

According to the OSP, Varnam-Dahl was driving a 1999 Subaru Forester station wagon southbound on Highway 47 near milepost 73, and completing the pass of another vehicle in a no pass zone. As the Subaru returned to the southbound lane it drove onto the shoulder and the driver lost control. The Subaru slid broadside into the northbound lane where it was struck on the passenger side by a 1996 Ford F250 pickup driven by Charles G. Davis, age 55, from Vernonia. The

Subaru then dropped over an embankment and plunged 40 feet before striking a large tree.

Oregon State Police troopers from the Banks work site are continuing the investigation with the assistance of an OSP crash re-constructionist. ODOT

and local emergency responders also assisted at the scene.

A memorial fund has been set up at Wauna Federal Credit Union, and some local businesses have cans for donations to help the family with costs. An obituary is on page 14.



Driver of this Ford pickup was not injured in the crash.

Council approves budget with increased permit, park fees

Vernonia City Council held a special meeting June 25 in conjunction with public hearings on changing building permit fees and the city's 2007-08 budget.

City Administrator M.R. "Dick" Kline opened the hearing on building permit fees, saying this was a necessary housekeeping item to bring our fees into line with The Building Department (TBD).

Charlie Kaylor, Manager of TBD, said that fuel costs, alone, would dictate changes and that they hadn't changed their plumbing fees since 1979. Kaylor provided a handout which stated, "We felt the need to ask this modest increase given the cost of fuel and medical insurance. We have requested and been granted similar fees in the other 13 jurisdictions we serve."

No one spoke in favor of the increases. Rebecca McGaugh spoke in opposition, reminding Council that when the building permits were taken over from the county, citizens were told that the fees they paid would

be the same as the county would charge, though the city would get a bigger percentage, and the service would be better. She went on that she had not heard anyone speak favorably of the service, and that she didn't much care that this would give more revenue to the city or help with TBD's fuel and insurance, but that she wanted the costs for citizens of Vernonia to remain the same as all other county citizens.

Councilor Brett Costley replied later, "I appreciate Rebecca's comment, but we don't know if or when Columbia County will be raising their

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Stub Stewart State Park opens Sunday

Stub Stewart State Park will open Sunday, July 8, to the public. Consider taking a Sunday drive to find out what the newest state park has to offer residents of the area. Just head down Hwy. 47 from Vernonia, or up Hwy. 47 from U.S. 26, to see what the newest state park looks like.

Fire Season regulations in effect

Fire Season for Northwest Oregon officially began today at 1:00 am. The fire season designation includes all private and public lands protected by the Department of Forestry within Columbia, Clatsop, Multnomah, Washington, Tillamook and Yamhill counties.

Loggers, landowners and others conducting forest operation activities are required to have fire prevention and fire fighting equipment on the job site. In addition, a fire watch is required to be on the operation site after the shutdown of equipment. Fire season rules also prohibit smoking while in

or traveling through any "operation area," and prohibit the use of fuse and caps for blasting on forest land.

For information regarding current public and industrial regulations in effect on local forests, contact the ODF Columbia City office at 503-397-2636.

The state declaration is also enforced in populated areas served by rural fire districts. For more information, call the district where you reside. Vernonia Fire District, 503-429-8252. Mist-Birkenfeld Fire District, 503-755-2710. Banks Fire District, 503-324-6262.

Fire Season has started - Outdoor burning in now banned