

**Business Notes**

# Business buys new flag for city; Council reinstates police funds

The July 2 Vernonia City Council meeting started off with citizen Helen Hudson telling council that Vernonia Hardware had purchased a flag and replaced the one at City Hall. They also provided lights to keep the flag lit. Mayor Sally Harrison responded by saying, "I would like a thank you sent to Vernonia Hardware."

Vernonia Police Sergeant Mike Kay spoke to council about a group of citizens who have been complaining about 'selective enforcement' and about Chief of Police Mat Workman. Kay offered his support of the chief and said, "He leads by example and has all seven habits of effective people." He went on to list accomplishments of the current force, such as a reduced crime rate, the successful Night Out celebration, the staff volunteering hundreds of hours, all the police training taking place in Vernonia because of the good reputation of our police force. Kay finished by saying, "So this 'selective enforcement' is true - because we do it in effective ways."

Scott Laird told council that the groundbreaking for the bicycle skills park took place on Saturday and there is now one trail.

Kevin Hudson told council he believes the budget needs to be increased to get more police officers on the street. He

went on a ride-along this past weekend and told council he "wouldn't want to use the police car he was in to commute to Hillsboro, let alone in a police chase, and that cutting the police budget is ludicrous." The police, that night, spent most of their time on drunks and while two officers were kept busy booking two drunks, there were other things going on in town that didn't get attention, Hudson concluded.

Cindy Ball told council that the pothole on Riverside Drive had been patched but that one-third of the street was still gravel, and asked for a timeframe for completion of the work. Harrison told here that she has been trying to get hold of Jeff (Burch) to get a timetable.

Chief Workman told council that the amount discussed during the budget process (\$16,600) for two leased cars with camera systems was for the 'deal' they put together then. After being asked to see what he could find now, he found two 5-year leases on cars, that with equipment, cameras and shipping (from Illinois), would cost \$18,594. City Administrator M.R. "Dick" Kline added that there are no capital replacement plans in the budget and, "We are always scrambling due to crisis instead of planning ahead. We are starting the fiscal year with cash in the bank," and we could get

these cars but it would leave only \$5,000-\$10,000 in the General Fund for contingencies for the whole year. Kline went on to say, "I didn't find an extra \$20,000 but we could purchase the cars if council makes it the priority. My two cents worth is I think it's a necessity." Kline also said, "It will take us two years to get our of this [budget problems] and this is the first year. We need alternative revenues for the General Fund. Mr. Tony Hyde has said you cannot fund municipal government on property taxes." Council consensus was to lease the two police cars.

During Kline's city administrator report, he told council that, "I will be working continually to get our year-end figures to you. I recommend we have a press conference or open town hall meeting so everyone can hear and close out that year. I want to give a comprehensive report on that." Kline also reported that the primary thing, in addition to that already mentioned, he would be working on this month is to be sure the committee meetings get up and running appropriately. He then reiterated, "We are in a serious financial position."

Harrison reported that she thinks, "it is time we start inspecting businesses to be sure they are up to code."

In other business, council (with councilor Steve Whiteman

absent);

- approved a housekeeping issue correcting the new schedule of park fees,

- approved the first reading of an ordinance amending the reimbursement district ordinance due to errors in the original,

- set a public hearing date of August 6, at 7:00 p.m. for the public to learn more about a reimbursement district being formed to extend water lines north along Mist Drive,

- approved the signing of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Department of Administrative Services (the city leas-

es vehicles from DAS),

- okayed street closures and a beer garden (for the Lyon's Den) for Jamboree weekend,

- heard from Randy Parrow (as a Jamboree committee representative) that Shirlee Daughtry has been named Citizen of the Year (for the second time),

- was told that the county has approved Indigo Rescue, a dog kennel on Airport Way. Harrison said the council wanted more information so they could decide whether to appeal, but was told (by the audience) that the city had already missed the appeal deadline.

## Campfire safety is vital in the forests

The Keep Oregon Green Association is cautioning Oregonians to use extreme caution when visiting the forests this summer. More than 200 wildfires have been caused by humans since January 1.

Many Oregonians love the outdoors and sitting around a campfire is one of the special times. In the last five years, however, 681 campfires built on state and private lands burned 11,253 acres and cost taxpayers \$1,710,370 to suppress. Abandoning fires is the fourth-leading human cause of wildfires in Oregon. Here's what you can do to help:

Call the local fire district to assure that fires are allowed where you plan to camp. If they

are allowed, and you choose to camp in an undeveloped campground, here are a few suggestions to ensure safe campfires.

- When selecting a site for a campfire, avoid areas near buildings, fallen trees, tree trunks, or low overhanging branches.

- Scrape all leaves and litter away down to bare earth for at least five feet on all sides of the fire. Dig a pit in the center of this circle and surround it with rocks.

- Build your campfire downwind and at a safe distance from your tent, never leave it unattended, and after you light it, thrown your match into the fire. Have a shovel or rake handy to suppress sparks.

When it's time to leave and head to bed or back to town, be sure your campfire is DEAD OUT!

- Drown all embers, sticks, and coals; look for any that may have fallen under rocks,
- Stir coals to make sure all heat has been removed,
- Drown the area again.

Wildfire prevention is the responsibility of everyone who visits forests. Be alert to weather conditions, especially wind, and ALWAYS be careful with fire. Keep your bucket full of water and your shovel near by. Smokey Bear and the Keep Oregon Green Association thank you for taking that responsibility.

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