

The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

July 19, 2007

A Grand Opening



Happy throngs turned out for the opening of Stub Stewart State Park, July 7, and have kept the park full much of the time since the opening.

Burn season restrictions in place for forest areas

"We're into that part of the fire season where fire starts are more likely in our forests, on our own properties and within or adjacent to our communities," Mike Simek, Unit Forester with the Oregon Department of Forestry reports. With high temperatures and low relative humidity predicted, grass, brush and forest fuels will dry quickly and burn readily. The risk of an ignition source starting a fire goes up dramatically with hot and dry conditions. Conditions have been relatively dry during the months of May and June leading up to this year's fire season. This lack of precipitation in the preceding

months may indicate an above average fire season locally, explained Simek. Residents and forest users will see our fluorescent orange regulated use signs being posted. These reflect public use restrictions now in effect on all forest, brush, grass and other flammable cover lands. Simek also noted that private timberlands may have tighter restrictions or even closures, so it's always best to check with landowners and the local ODF office about current restrictions and closures. All residents and visitors are asked to use extreme caution when recreating, traveling, and working in grass, brush and forested areas.

The following public use restrictions went into effect on Monday, July 9, and apply to all private, state and federal lands

protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry within the Northwest Oregon Forest Program. Please see page 5

Motorcycle crash takes life of Delmar Jepson

Delmar L. Jepson, age 75, of Banks, died July 8 from injuries suffered when his motorcycle struck the side of a turning vehicle on Hwy. 47 in Cove Orchard. Jepson, who grew up in Clatskanie, was well-known and well-liked in timber communities from the Nehalem Valley to the ocean, as he operated L. Jepson & Sons Logging Company, the family business started by his father.

According to Oregon State Police, at approximately 1:00 p.m. on July 8, a GMC Denali sport utility vehicle towing a 25-foot RV trailer, driven by Ryan Spang of Cornelius, was south-

Water rate increase adds to Vernonia utility charges

The Vernonia City Council unanimously approved a water rate increase of \$11.50 starting with the August 2007 billings and continuing until such time as that amount adds up to \$119,000, the amount City Administrator M.R. "Dick" Kline told council members is needed to establish necessary loan reserves in the Water Fund. This is expected to take approximately one year, at which time the \$11.50 amount will be removed from billings.

A public hearing was held on the 20 acre parcel the city recently declared surplus. There was no testimony in favor of selling the property, but one letter of opposition was received from Derl Roberts. Roberts said that there are many subdivisions and additions already that are not yet developed and that the city should hold this parcel for the future, when revenues from its sale would be higher. After hearing one neutral opinion, the hearing was closed.

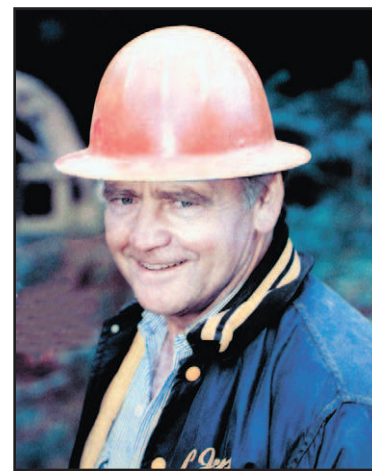
Vernonia Police Sergeant Mike Kay, on behalf of the

American Council on Criminal Justice Training (ACCJT) presented Thor, a police dog puppy, to K-9 Officer Doug Asboe from Fairview. On hand for the presentation were Ken Johnson, the Fairview Chief of Police and Fairview City Administrator Joseph Gall. Members of the ACCJT K-9 grant committee present were Cindy Ball, Shirlee Daughtry, Clatskanie Mayor Diane Pohl, Helen Hudson, Vernonia Chief of Police Mat Workman and Clatskanie Chief of Police Marvin Hoover.

Topics from the Floor ranged from a request to get more complete council packets online, to a question about whether the city has a policy about horse riders picking up their horse's waste (yes, but enforcement is difficult).

Noni Andersen told council that several months ago she brought to the Parks Committee's attention the fact that the flagpole at Vernonia Lake is not being taken care when the flag is supposed to be lowered to half staff at appropriate times.

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Delmar Jepson

bound on Hwy. 47. Spang signaled for a left turn onto Graham Road and began the turn

as Jepson's southbound Harley Davidson began to pass another vehicle, then Spang's SUV. The motorcycle crashed into the GMC's left front side.

Jepson was ejected from the motorcycle and landed about 75 feet from the point of impact. He was wearing a helmet. Jepson was treated at the scene, and transported to Oregon Health Science University by LifeFlight helicopter, where he died at 6:00 p.m.

Spang, his wife and two children, all using seatbelts, were transported to Providence Hospital in Newberg, treated for minor injuries and released.

Article regarding Vernonia Principal Aaron Miller may be found on page 11, with other school news.