

The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

December 20, 2007

May your holidays be bright...



Tess Aldrich's house was lit up for the holidays in this picture taken Saturday, December 1. Even after the Flood of 2007 on December 3 dimmed many holiday displays, Aldrich's house is still a bright spot on State Avenue in Vernonia.

Disaster relief funds start reaching area

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) continue to help Oregonians recover from severe storms, flooding, landslides and mudslides. Disaster assistance totaling more than \$1.9 million has been approved and more than \$560,000 has already been distributed to residents in Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, Yamhill and Polk counties for storm-related damages and living expenses.

As of close of business Sunday, December 16, more than 1,100 individuals had applied

for assistance.

"People are anxious to get on with their lives after the storms, flooding, landslides and mudslides," said State Coordinating Officer Abby Kershaw.

Individuals who have not yet applied for disaster assistance can begin the disaster application process by registering online at www.fema.gov or by calling the toll-free registration number: 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., seven days a week until further notice.

"We encourage everyone who needs assistance to take advantage of all programs

available by first calling FEMA to register. Although programs are not intended to bring individuals back to their pre-disaster conditions, they can help with the financial impact of the severe weather," said Federal Coordinating Officer Glen R. Sachtleben.

Reception honors Jim Walters on his retirement

Jim Walters, the veteran Vernonia police officer, is retiring. The public is invited to say farewell to Jim, December 29th from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., at the Vernonia Fire Hall. Help thank Jim for his tireless efforts to make our community safer, and for doing it with the big smile that he is known for.

Special events help brighten community

Christmas Concert

Vernonia Christian Church invites the community to come to a special Christmas concert, by Willowbrook Free Methodist Church in Sherwood. The concert will be tonight, December 20, at 410 North Street, at 7:30 p.m.



Candlelight Service

Vernonia Community Church will hold their annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7:00 p.m. All are invited. The church is located at 957 State Avenue.



Christmas Dinner

The Vernonia Senior Center Christmas Dinner will be held on December 25, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., at the Scout Cabin. The dinner is free for all Vernonians.

Vernonia Cares Food Bank tells hours through New Year's Day

Vernonia Cares Food Bank, currently serving all Nehalem Valley residents needing food assistance, has announced operating hours through the rest of 2007.

They will be open Thursday and Friday, December 20 and 21, from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Holiday food boxes will be distributed Friday, December 21.

Cares will be closed Saturday, December 22, through



Goodwill delivers Christmas to town

Tuesday, December 18, a Goodwill truck loaded with hundreds of pounds of Christmas donations left Milwaukie for Vernonia. The truck is now parked at the former 76 station at the corner of Bridge and Jefferson Streets.

Goodwill has a list of flood survivor names and will give one \$25.00 Goodwill gift card per family, to the first 500 people coming to this location.

Each family will also be given a large Goodwill bag to fill from the all-things-Christmas area.

Donated Christmas trees are also available.

The site will be open through Saturday, December 22, during the following hours: Thursday and Friday, noon to 7:00 p.m.; Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Happy New
Year