

Did You Know . . .

By Chief Mathew Workman
Vernonia Police Department



The last two weeks have been filled with physical, emotional, and mental highs and lows for all of us in the Upper Nehalem Val-

ley. The Flood of 2007 has come and gone, leaving in its wake massive destruction, tattered lives, and yet an enormous pride watching emergency responders, friends, family, neighbors, and even strangers pull together to try and help each other through this tremendous disaster. Over my three-and-a-half years in Vernonia, I have heard many accounts of the 1996 Flood and numerous people tell me, "You

should have been here in '96 Chief!" Well I was here in 2007 and I was amazed at the community response.

Early in the morning of December 3rd, Fire Chief Paul Epler and I were busy preparing for the impending "wind storm" that was supposed to knock power out like last December. I have to admit there were some strong gusts blowing the 11 inches of rain around, but I don't remember

any mention of impending floods. I kept driving around checking the low-lying areas and soon realized that the water was rising right in front of me. Chief Epler and I opened up the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the fire station, with the Chief as the Incident Commander. I also assigned Sgt. Kay to assist him while I stayed in the field. Chief Epler and Sgt. Kay did a very good job managing the early stages

of this disaster.

As the water continued to rise right in front of my eyes, I went out Timber Road to check a possible slide. I drove through several flooded areas and checked on several people who were trying to evacuate friends and neighbors. After driving into 3 feet of flowing flood waters that ripped the license plate off my rig, I turned back to town. In a matter of an

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