

The INDEPENDENT

Vol. 23, No. 2

"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

January 17, 2008

Winter song



A redwing blackbird colors the winter air at Vernonia Lake with his song.

Vernonia Scout Cabin packed for Sen. Wyden's Town Hall meeting

United States Senator Ron Wyden held a Town Hall meeting in Vernonia, on January 4, to a standing room only crowd. He started off the meeting by saying, "It's great to be with you. Your courage, your deter-

mination, your pluck, with a little help from FEMA...It's clear Vernonia is back." Then, without further ado, Wyden began to field questions from the crowd. The first question was about the 'notch', people on

Social Security who get less than they should. Wyden responded that he's aware of this issue and that many programs have problems that need to be addressed, such as oil subsidies that no longer make sense

Volunteers are still needed to help flood survivors recover

Volunteers are still needed in Columbia County for flood recovery. Flood survivors are currently at many different stages of recovery, some are ready to paint and move back in, while others are just getting dried out and some haven't even started the clean-up.

The Columbia County Flood Relief (CCFR) group continues to work to help all flood victims in Columbia County. CCFR currently has between 650 and 660 households signed up for help. CCFR board member Jim Tierney would like to encourage people affected by the flood, particularly those in St. Helens or Clatskanie, to register their needs by calling 1-503-791-9421.

The distribution center at Lincoln Grade School is still up and running, as is the volunteer center at the old florist shop across from Vernonia City Hall.

CCFR is reaching only about 10 percent of the people who registered for help, probably because of relocated housing. "One of the missions we have is to help people through the FEMA process and with con-

tractors and to at least advise them on whatever they need," said Tierney. What CCFR needs from people who registered to get help is updated telephone numbers. If you signed up with CCFR at the Vernonia Community Learning Center since the flood and you are now at a different telephone number, call them at 1-503-791-9421 to update your information.

Tierney says the greatest need for volunteers now is for skilled tradesmen – electricians, plumbers, siders, sheet-rockers, and HVAC (heating and cooling). Unskilled volunteers are still being put to work and their labors are much appreciated by those in need. Both skilled and unskilled volunteers should call 1-503-791-9629 to register.

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Brookins named Oregon wrestling's Man of the Year

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Kline resigns but stays on payroll

The January 7 Vernonia City Council meeting started with the announcement that a U.S. flag that flew over the Capitol had been presented to Vernonia by U.S. Senator Gordon Smith.

Mayor Harrison read a letter of resignation from current City

Administrator M. R. "Dick" Kline dated January 7, 2008, that said, "I am voluntarily tendering my resignation as City Administrator of the City of Vernonia. This resignation will become effective thirty days from December 18, 2007." The letter went on to say, "I want to reiterate that I am voluntarily resigning my position due to the dire financial circumstances that the City of Vernonia faces," and ended by saying he wishes the council the very best of everything in the future.

Kline is not leaving, however. and the number of people without healthcare. One woman spoke to say that, "Clearcutting has been allowed and that makes it so Vernonia will be flooded again, Please see page 4

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