

**Community**

**Vernonia Cares post- flood update**

Vernonia Cares Food Bank, located at 627 Adams Avenue in Vernonia, has been in operation since 1985 assisting families in the Vernonia area with emergency groceries. Before the flood of December 2007, "Cares" (as it is known by many) provided three days worth of groceries to low income clients on a monthly basis.

On December 3rd, four feet of muddy flood water entered the building, contaminating the offices and main pantry. The food storage trailer was also inundated with three feet of water. The entire operation (pantry, freezers and refrigerators, office, and food storage) of Vernonia Cares was wiped out in one event.

Many volunteers came together to muck out, rinse, and disinfect all areas. Within five days after the flood, the food bank was back in operation. Through the generosity of literally hundreds of donors, food, freezers and computers were re-supplied. Because the need of the Vernonia area was so immediate and so great (over 400 homes flooded and over 200 have been condemned), the usual eight-hour per week schedule was extended in December to ten-hour daily operations.

Free groceries were given to Vernonia area householders who experienced the flood waters in their homes, to those housing flood survivors, and to former Cares clients. Most days in December saw over 50 families a day utilizing the resources of the food bank. Cares also gave out more than 200 Christmas holiday groceries boxes on December 21. The same day, Cares had 97 families utilize the food bank, as Cares staff took a few days off for Christmas.

The food bank staff knew it was vitally important to make food available as quickly as possible after the flood. The need will continue in an ongoing basis, as people rebuild their homes, businesses and lives.

As of January 2008, the food bank hours are Tuesday (from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) and Thursday (from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.). There are no income-based restrictions to receive food at this time and food will be dispensed every 3-4 days, since many people have a food storage problem. (A number of families are living in trailers until their houses are renovated.) Food is available to anyone within the Vernonia area (Vernonia, Mist, and Birkenfeld) who needs this assistance. Former Cares clients who live in Timber and Buxton may continue to receive groceries, as well.

As Cares moves forward, so do the needs. Perishable groceries are the most quickly depleted (milk, cheese, meat, produce, eggs, butter or margarine, yogurt, cooking oil). Laundry soap, fabric softener, and cleaning detergents fly off the shelf nearly as fast as they are donated or purchased. Funds given will also help restore refrigeration and office equipment, software, office paper products and programs. Cares is thankful to the Vernonia American Legion Post 119, which is allowing Vernonia Cares to operate from the main room, which is about ten times larger than the former pantry.

Since Vernonia Cares Food Bank is a non-profit (EIN #93-0901900), all donations are tax deductible. Financial donations may be mailed to Vernonia Cares at P.O. Box 126, Vernonia, OR 97064. Receipts will be issued upon request.

**Senior News**

By Karen Miller  
Senior Advocate



Still trying to dry out some of my information books; one in particular I

picked up at the Cincinnati airport, on 300 incredible things for health on the internet! So, let's begin the new year with this site: <http://www.personalmd.com>. Describes itself as "you deserve your own MD!" This site has a dictionary, encyclopedia, drug database, news and health centers. You can personalize the site for your own needs. But please remember, always check with your doctor first, especially when embarking on anything new!

Our senior center board would like you to know that we welcome the new year in with membership dues – only \$10; George Gans is still doing a great job as Treasurer and would most gladly make a special trip to the bank with your welcomed and needed donation; also, please consider us in any of your donation generosity; any monetary donations are tax deductible, made out to the Vernonia Senior Center, 446 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.

Read this column in *The In-*

dependent for further news on continuing developments on the center; call us for any donation of time, material, etc. you might like to share. Remember, to contact the Unmet Needs Committee at the Learning Center, for your flood relief needs; share this information with others; for any senior concerns you can also call me at 429-9112.

Foot care is back on track; call me on my work phone (429-9112) to sign up. Next date is January 25.

As I continue to observe the damage done around our Vernonia community, I am also continually impressed with the outpouring of volunteer help to people the volunteers may not even know. I am sure many heartwarming stories will continue to evolve.

Need housing? Call Community Action Team at 503-397-3511 to see if you qualify. Or see Jim Tierney at the Vernonia Community Learning Center on Bridge Street. Community Action Team is contin-

uing to serve the community in this time of crisis.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:** The Vernonia Senior Center's annual elections for new officers, including President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, will be held January 31 at 1:00 p.m. at the First Christian Church's gym on North Street behind the Senior Center. Call Carl Holsey at 503-429-5571 for more information.

**INFORMATION NUMBERS**

- Senior Advocate...429-9112
- Senior Center.....429-3912
- Transportation.....429-4304

**Say "I Love You" with a Valentine ad in the Independent's February 7 issue. Call by February 1 to order yours, 503-429-9410.**

**NORTHWEST FLOORING & HOME IMPROVEMENT**

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