

The INDEPENDENT

Vol. 23, No. 7

"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

April 3, 2008

Flood cleanup continues



EPA and DEQ started arriving Monday, March 31, to begin cleaning up hazardous flood debris. They are currently staging at the end of the parking lot at Vernonia Lake. This picture was taken Tuesday when they were at the Public Works site. See related story this page.

DEQ, EPA plan removal of hazardous flood waste

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are working under a Unified Command to identify, safely remove and dispose of oil and other orphaned hazardous materials and containers that were left in place following the December flood along areas in the Nehalem River Valley in the vicinity of Vernonia and Mist.

Monday, March 31, DEQ and EPA staff identified approximately 40 containers that will need to be removed. Removal of this waste and any additional hazardous materials will start today in and along approximately 30 miles of the Nehalem River.

Local residents can call Vernonia Public Works at 503-429-5291 ext. 105 with information about any hazardous materials along the river that need to be removed or hazardous items that have floated into neighborhoods. This effort is being conducted free of charge to protect the health of residents, clean-up crews and the environment.

Hazardous waste collection contractors will also receive flood-related household hazardous waste. Local residents can bring household hazardous waste (HHW) to 998 Bridge Street across from Vernonia City Hall.

Household hazardous waste includes unused or leftover portions of products used in the home that contain toxic chemicals. Products labeled Caution, Warning, Danger, Poison, Tox-

Please see page 4

**Household Hazardous
Waste Collection
Sat., Sun., Mon.
April 5, 6, 7
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Bring household hazardous waste to Volunteer Center, 998 Bridge Street, across from Vernonia City Hall.

Special Vernonia Council meeting

The Vernonia City Council will hold a special meeting Friday, April 4, at 5:00 p.m. at City Hall to receive information from Oregon Solutions.

Oregon Solutions grew out of the State of Oregon's Sustainability Act of 2001. First inside the executive branch of state government, then, since January 2002, as a program of the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University. Oregon Solutions has promoted a new style of community governance, based on the principles of collaboration, integration, and sustainability.

The mission of Oregon Solutions is to develop sustainable solutions to community problems that support economic, environmental, and community objectives and are built through collaborative efforts of businesses, government, and non-profit organizations.

Donation center was totally volunteer effort

Within days after the December 3, 2007, flood, Vernonia resident Synda Allen asked Bud Dow for the keys to the old Lincoln Grade School building to use as a donation site for whatever might come in. Dow, who bought the building and grounds last year from the school district, handed over the keys and has kept the lights and heat on since then.

Allen and a great group of volunteers set up 'rooms' in the building. There were four rooms upstairs; one with all household linens, one with baby and personal items, one for little girls to grannies, and one for little boys to big grandpas. Downstairs were furniture, shoes, toys and household items. The donation center was

open seven days a week through January, then was closed on Sundays.

And the donations rolled in. Allen got u-haul trucks from Montana, California, even Alaska, with everything from clothes and bedding to furniture. There were even a number of boxes shipped from Illinois. "Thousands of people have been so good, even the people of Vernonia have made donations," said Allen.

Mona Peyton has volunteered at the center every day. According to Allen, Peyton was instrumental in the operations and has also been a great shoulder to lean on. Allen said she, "couldn't say enough about Peyton's contributions. She's changed light bulbs,

moved furniture, probably has moved 27 tons of stuff and just has been helping people." Dow added that Peyton had "killed three vacuum cleaners" in the process of keeping the center clean and tidy.

At first there were piles, large piles, of donated stuff. Then Allen, Peyton and the others started sorting and set up the 'rooms.' In the process, they checked each item of clothing to make sure it was in good repair. They took home loads of laundry. Any item of clothing not deemed suitable went into a container to go to Hope Doll in Portland. Hope Doll, in addition to taking the 'castoffs' also donated large

**Please see page 4
See photos on page 24**