

The INDEPENDENT

Published on the first and third Thursdays of each month by The Independent, LLC, 725 Bridge St., Vernonia, OR 97064. Phone/Fax: 503-429-9410. Publisher Clark McGaugh, clark@the-independent.net Editor Rebecca McGaugh, rebecca@the-independent.net Mentor Noni Andersen

Opinion

No columns from the City

Here's the update on the library and Did You Know... columns from the City of Vernonia. Vernonia's Voice gets their police column via email directly from Chief of Police Workman (as we always did before we angered Interim City Administrator Aldie Howard). We received the police blotter, which is public record, but we did not receive the Did You Know...column. In fact, Howard recently handed us a bill for the time it takes the Chief and the librarian to write the columns, the total was \$52.30 (hmmm...do you think the Voice received a bill?). What Howard doesn't seem to understand is that we provide the space for these columns (free of charge) to facilitate communications between the city and the citizens.

Now the important stuff

Enough about the petty actions of petty bureaucrats. What's troubling us this issue is the cost of war versus the cost of infrastructure. The amount of money spent so far (as of 8:00 p.m. April 2) was \$507,883,300,000. That's \$507 billion. According to http://www.nationalpriorities.org/costofwar_home another way to look at that \$507 billion is as \$341.4 million per day.

So, Vernonia needs new schools for \$50 million, and a new sewer system out of the flood plain for \$10 million. Let's throw in another \$50 million so each of the approximately 350 household affected by the flood can have \$142,857 to build a new house out of the flood plain. That adds up to \$110 million. The war would only have to stop for about eight hours or one third of a day and Vernonia could be re-built, safe from future floods.

Then there's the human cost. Vernonia lost no lives in the flood, but 4,012 Americans have lost their lives in the Iraq war as of March 31. Another 29,496 have been wounded. 1,196,514 Iraqis have lost their lives since the war began.

Wouldn't it be nice if our government thought investing in infrastructure, healthcare, and education in this country was more important than investing in death and destruction in Iraq?

On to this issues "Something Great". It's great to see DEQ and EPA show up to help with the cleanup of hazardous materials that wandered around during the flood. See information on page 1 if you know where any containers of unknown substances came to rest.



Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member
Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



Well, I sit here writing this article with a blanket of snow on the ground. Interesting bit of weather we have had this year. I know for a fact that I have had my pickup in 4-wheel drive far more times this year than any year since I started working at the

Wauna Mill back in '90. I took a look at the Snowtel site for South Saddle Mountain (further south than Saddle Mt.) and, at 3100 feet in elevation, there is 82 inches of snow, with an equivalent of 28.6 inches of water. That is flat amazing.

With all the water we have flowing down our rivers or sitting on the ground waiting to flow down the rivers, one would think that this would be good news for fish. The answer is yes and no, the flood of '07 likely destroyed most of the Chinook run and some of the early Coho runs. Fish eggs are delicate things that are not robust enough to resist being crushed by moving gravel and, yes, the gravel beds moved a lot. For the fish that survived, the news is probably better, because there is new habitat that has now formed in the rivers. There is probably less competition for food, but there may also be less food to begin with. I remember that the local Cut-throat trout fishery was tremendous in the fishing

season following the '96 flood. There were plenty of large fat trout. Winter Steelhead should be in better shape since most of them came in after the flood, their offspring will have little competition for food when they emerge from the gravels.

Andy Bryant, senior hydrologist for the National Weather Service out of Portland, has made a power point presentation about the '07 flood to help people understand what happened as far as the weather was concerned. I heard many people comment that the Nehalem River was far worse than in '96, but people living on Rock Creek stated the opposite. In Andy's presentation there is a slide of the estimated rainfall amounts during the '07 flood event which is overlaid on a land map. The rainfall map was created from rainfall measurements taken by radar sweeps over our area, then compiling all of the measurements to create a total. This rainfall map makes clear what happened and why there was a difference between the two drainages. The most rain fell in the Nehalem drainage, while a lesser amount fell in the Rock Creek drainage. The most significant rainfall was in the headwaters of the Nehalem River, down the Nehalem Valley from Timber, skirting off to the South and East of Vernonia and then heading more North. All the eastern tributaries of the Nehalem took the full brunt of the storm – Beaver Creek, Pebble Creek, Oak Ranch Creek and maybe Fishhawk Creek. Speaking of Fishhawk Creek, did you know that there was a time during the flood when there was concern that the dam was going

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