

Business Notes

UPSP says "We Deliver"

by Janet Wedgworth, Postmaster
Vernonia Post Office

Having served as Postmaster in Vernonia since January of 2007, I am grateful to share my first experience as Postmaster in this community. It has been a pleasure working in Vernonia and I want to thank everyone for their patience during the flood, as our facility is still under construction. Your post office is in a leased building which is not owned by the Postal Service.

I also want to take this opportunity to let you know about Forever Stamps. Forever stamps are something new to the Postal Service and we are currently selling them for 41 cents each. Soon, on May 12th, the price of a first-class letter will be 42 cents. The Forever stamps will then cost 42 cents.

Now is the time to purchase your Forever Stamps at the lower rate because, when the rate increases, you will not need to add one-cent stamps to the Forever Stamps. The

price of the Forever Stamp will always be good at the first class rate.

The Postal Service developed the Forever Stamp to ease the transition during pricing changes. The Vernonia Post Office will not run out of Forever Stamps as I have ordered enough stamps to meet the needs of the community. You may purchase the stamps here at the Vernonia Post Office, online at usps.com or by phone at 1-800-STAMP-24.

In addition to increases in First-Class Mail, international letter prices will also change on May 12. For a one-ounce letter going to Canada or Mexico, the new price will be 72 cents; to all other countries, the price will be 94 cents. All other price increases for shipping can be found on usps.com/prices.

If you would like additional information on rates, or if you have any other questions, please stop by the Post Office. Again, thank you for your patience with our still unfinished facility.

Chamber declines suggestion by Howard to "suppress" newspaper

Vernonia Interim City Administrator Aldie Howard sent a letter, dated April 16, to Donna Webb, President of the Vernonia Area Chamber of Commerce, using slanderous language and suggesting the chamber suppress *The Independent* as a negative element and suggested they should, instead, support *Vernonia's Voice*. Howard asked that the letter be presented to the chamber Board of Directors.

Webb called a meeting of the Directors who, with no dissenting votes, instructed Webb to respond with a letter, on April 25, stating, "It is not our position to tell a business how they should operate their business. Furthermore, a newspaper has certain constitutionally protected rights and we do not feel we are the appropriate channel for monitoring whether or not these rights have been exceeded."

The Independent has been a member of the Vernonia Area Chamber of Commerce for

over 20 years.

Asked if she was aware of the letter Howard sent, Mayor Sally Harrison responded, "Someone should box his ears and you can quote me." If Howard has a problem with *The Independent*, she added, it's not his place to bring the chamber into it. Harrison said there would be an emergency executive session, on April 28.

The April 28 executive session was held under ORS 192.660(2)(i) to "Review and evaluate the performance of an officer..." As the session held was lawful, *The Independent* will not report details of the meeting. No final decision is allowed in executive session and there has been no decision announced in an open session.

"We, the people" has no meaning unless we, the people, exercise our right to vote.

Meet the Columbia County candidates

Columbia County voters will be picking a sheriff and two commissioner candidates in the May 20 primary election. If one of the candidates for sheriff receives a simple majority (50% plus one of ballots cast), there will be no run-off in November. If no candidate receives a simple majority, the top two vote getters will face each other in the November general election. Commissioner positions are partisan, so the top vote getter in each party will be in the November election.

The Independent interviewed the candidates for Columbia County Sheriff – Robert Crain, Jeff Dickerson and Gerry Simmons – asking the same questions of each one. Here are the questions and the candidates' responses. The responses are in alphabetical order.

1. How do you plan to use available funds?

Crain – I would go in and pull apart the whole budget and reallocate money, as I did in Animal Control. Get rid of deputies taking vehicles home, unless they need them. Use volunteer or donated space to locate sub-stations in Vernonia, Clatskanie, etc. so deputies would be readily available, rather than having to be called out from home. Use more reserve deputies for jobs like jail transports. Do more community policing.

Dickerson – I believe it's very important that before you go to voters saying "we need more money," that we make the most of the money we have. There are efficiencies that can be found in the Sheriff's Office.

SBA session on small business financing

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Portland District Office, will be holding a briefing on Financing a Small Business. The session is free and will be held on Thursday, May 15, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at 601 S.W. Second Ave., Suite 2030, Portland.

The loan briefing is presented by a SBA Loan Specialist and will cover financing options to start or grow a small business. Topics will include: SBA Loan Guarantee Program, credit requirements, use of proceeds, how to approach a lender and loan proposal assistance. Time permitting, there will be a mini-tour of the Business Resource Center.

No early registration is required. For additional information, call 503-326-2682.


Look at the hours when most calls come in and most crimes occur, and stagger the deputies' hours to cover those times. The other way I'd use current resources is to divide deputies into different areas of the county and, ideally, work into having resident deputies. In the meantime, assign deputies to different areas and start building partnerships and knowledge of the area and its needs.

Simmons – We have only so much money to do our job and will use them to do the best we can, just as we have always done.

2. Is the jail self-supporting? Why does it need to be expanded?


Crain – No, it's not self-supporting, in the current situation with less deputies and less arrests. In Clackamas County they brought in federal facilities.

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