

Rail study begins along Hwy 30 in Columbia County

Columbia County will begin the U.S. Hwy 30 Lower Columbia River Rail Corridor Study on

Tuesday, July 8, at the Columbia 911 Center, 58611 McNulty Way, St. Helens. The kickoff meeting will start at 1:00 p.m.

The County has hired the consulting firm of HDR, Inc, to work with local communities along the corridor to assess the impacts of roadway/railroad conflicts due to new and increased industrial development, provide an assessment of safety issues that will affect motor traffic on U.S. Hwy 30, and police and emergency issues. The study area addresses rail issues from the Columbia County line at the south end of Scappoose to Tongue Point in Clatsop County.

The purpose of the study is to unite the communities along the rail corridor to support a coherent vision for improvements to safety and mobility where roadway and railroad routes conflict. The impetus for the study was provided by the opening of the newly construct-

ed Cascade Grain Ethanol Plant, at Port Westward. The plant requires 110-car unit trains to bring in corn for the production of ethanol.

The planning process will look at existing conditions, including current operational characteristics of the roadways and highway/rail grade crossings and provide a prioritized list of projects for each community that will improve safety and access across the rail corridor.

Funding for this planning effort has been provided by a \$50,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, and matched by \$25,000, each, from Columbia County and Clatsop County. The planning process is expected to take approximately six months, ending in December of 2008. Anyone interested in participating in this planning effort is welcome to attend the meeting.

Fire Season and fireworks danger

From page 1

With the July 4th weekend coming up, add the additional risk of fireworks-related fires. "It's a definite concern this time of year and the message should be clear – use fireworks responsibly, exercising extreme caution, and that means no use in areas of dry grass, brush or forest vegetation," said Simek. Fires resulting from fireworks can result in significant liabilities, consider the following:

- Start a fire with fireworks and you can be held responsible to reimburse the landowner for the value of real property losses and timber damaged or destroyed.
- If the fire occurs on private forestlands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry, you can be billed for the entire cost of putting out the fire.
- Parents are legally responsible for at least \$5,000 of the costs to put out fires caused by

their child's use of fireworks.

• Using fireworks on federal forestland can get you arrested and jailed.

Fire officials urge everyone to use good fire prevention practices, whether working or playing in the forests or other areas of flammable vegetation

For information regarding current public and industrial regulations in effect in our local forests, contact the Columbia City office, Oregon Department of Forestry at 503-397-2636.

Widening causes Jackson School Road closures

Jackson School Road will be closed between Evergreen Road and Meek Road from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. daily, July 7 through July 21 for road widening. Signs advising of the upcoming daytime closures are posted.

The closure will allow Washington County's contractor, Baker Rock, to widen the road shoulders. After the road has been widened, it will be paved and restriped. All work is expected to be complete by July 28. This schedule may change due to weather, work schedules, or availability of materials. For a current schedule, check www.wc-roads.com.

Free SBA briefing on small business loans

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Portland district office will hold a briefing on Financing a Small Business. The session is free and will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 17, at 601 S.W. Second Ave., Suite 2030, Portland.

Community Calendar

VERNONIA			MIST-BIRKENFELD		
Alcoholics Anonymous	Monday	6:30 p.m., 410 North Street	M-BRFPD Board Business Mtg.	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
American Legion Post #119	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m., 627 Adams Avenue	M-BRFPD Board Workshop	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Arts & Crafts Society	2nd Thursday	2:00 p.m., City Library	M-B Ambulance Drill	1st & 2nd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Booster Club	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., VHS Library	M-B Fire Drill	1st & 2nd Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Boy Scout Troop 201	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., Scout Cabin	M-B Helping Circle	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Boy Scout Troop 860	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., LDS Church	M-B SAR Drill	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Cemetery Beautification Comm.	2nd Thursday	6:30 p.m., City Hall	M-B Volunteer Assoc.	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
CERT	4th Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-3018	Natal Grange	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Natal Grange Hall
Chamber of Commerce	2nd Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-6081	T.O.P.S.	Mondays	6:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Community Coalition	2nd Monday	12:30 p.m. School District Ofc.	Upr Nehalem Watershed Council	For date call 429-2401	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Cub Scout Pack 201	Scout Cabin	For Info Call 503-429-4250			
Friends of the Library	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Vernonia Library			
Girl Scouts, Neighborhood 4-2		For Info Call 503-819-0143			
Hands On Art Committee	1st & 3rd Thursdays	4:00 p.m., City Hall	BANKS	Fridays	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
Izaak Walton League	3rd Thursday	For location call 503-429-7193	Alcoholics Anonymous	Wednesdays	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Tuesdays	6:30 p.m., Buckhorn Restaurant	Alcoholics Anonymous	Wednesdays	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
Municipal Airport Committee	4th Thursday	7:00 p.m., City Hall	American Legion Post #90	2nd Tuesdays	7:30 p.m., Main Street Post
Narcotics Anonymous	Saturdays	7:00 p.m., 410 North Street	Banks City Council	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., City Hall
Pioneer Museum		For Info Call 503-429-3713	Banks Fire District #13	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Station 13
Public Works Committee	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall	Banks Library Commission	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Vernonia Cares Directors		For Info call 503-429-1414	Banks Planning Commission	Last Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia City Council	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., City Hall	Banks School Board	2nd Monday	7:30 p.m., Jr. High Library
Vernonia Community PTA	3rd Thursday	7:00 p.m., WGS Library	Banks Youth Group	Sundays, Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., UMC Youth Bldg.
Vernonia Grange	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., Grange Hall	Chamber of Commerce	1st Thursday	12:30 p.m., Fire District Office
Vernonia Health Center	2nd Monday	6:00 p.m., 510 Bridge St.	CPO 14	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Vernonia Learning Center	1st Wednesday	6:00 p.m., VLC	Friends of the Library	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Vernonia Parks Committee	3rd Wednesday	6:30 p.m., City Hall	Lions Club	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., Brown Derby
Vernonia Planning Comm.	1st & 3rd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., City Hall	Sunset Park Assoc.	3rd Wednesday	8:00 p.m., Gun Club
Vernonia Pride	3rd Thursday	1:00 p.m., City Hall	T.O.P.S.	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Administration Bldg.
Vernonia Ridge Riders	Last Thursday	7:00 p.m., Senior Center			
Vernonia RFPD Board	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station	COLUMBIA COUNTY (All meet in St. Helens unless otherwise noted.)		
Vernonia School Board	2nd Thursday	6:00 p.m., District Office	Board of Commissioners	Wednesdays	10 a.m., Courthouse
Vernonia Sr. Center Board	2nd Friday	1:00 p.m., Senior Center	Citizens for Senior Justice	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Sunset Park Church
Vernonia Transfer Station	2nd & 4th Saturdays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.	Behind VHS	Columbia Soil & Water District	3rd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., NRCS, 2514 Sykes
Vern. Volunteer Ambulance Assoc.	1st Thursday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station	County Fair Board	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fairgrounds 4-H Bldg.
Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station	County Parks Commission	3rd Monday	6:00 p.m., 1054 Oregon St.
WOEC Directors	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., WOEC	Mental Health Advisory Comm.	Quarterly	For Info call 503-397-7211
			Comm. on Children & Families	3rd Thursday	5:30 p.m. OSU Ext., 505 N. Hwy. 30
			Local Alcohol & Drug Plann. Comm.	Quarterly	For Info call 503-397-7211

Organizations and meeting dates not listed may be included by calling 429-9410 or by mail to The INDEPENDENT, 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.