

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Almost time for Jamboree!

Vernonia's Friendship Jamboree will be here August 1, 2 and 3. If you've never been to a Jamboree, here's your chance to take in a small town America summer festival. North Plains has the Elephant Garlic Festival, Banks has a Barbeque and Truck/Tractor Pull (including the amazing Combine Demolition Derby). In Scappoose, it's a Sauerkraut Festival. In Vernonia it's a full blown Jamboree, which is defined as a noisy party.

This year's Jamboree also allows Vernonia an opportunity to stop being that "flooded town" and get back to being that friendly little town in the woods that we all love.

Originally started as a town party to bring friends and relatives back to Vernonia after the mill closed in 1957, Jamboree has continued ever since in the same vein. Even in a small town like Vernonia, you can see people on the streets at Jamboree that you haven't seen in a year. At times, it's troublesome to get down the street because of all the groups of happy people meeting and greeting each other. What a wonderful trouble to have.

Some events have been part of Jamboree since the first Jamboree. There is still a Logging Show, still a Horsegaming Show, still a parade. Other events come and go with the years; sometimes there is a carnival with rides, sometimes just games for the kids. Oh, another constant is music; there is always a concert or D.J. or Teen Dance or at least a small stage (sometimes at the Grange) set up for open mike. Somebody is going to sell food that you can't get in Vernonia most of the time and lots of people will end up with stomach aches from too much cotton candy (okay, one of us on the editorial board of the paper will anyway).

Many people have watched The Axmen on the History Channel and seen loggers from Vernonia and the surrounding area at work. But, long before The Axmen, there was the Vernonia Logging Show at Jamboree. If you've never seen a real, live Logging Show, take the time to come to the grandstands in Hawkins Park from noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 3 and watch as real, live loggers show you their prowess with saws, or on logs, or with axes. It's really fun and the crowd really gets into it, with hoorays and groans.

Come enjoy the Vernonia Friendship Jamboree and visit Vernonia: the Heart of Northwest Logging. Hope to see you there!

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Out of My Mind . . .

by Noni Andersen

I'm astounded, although I shouldn't be, that anyone thinks that lifting the offshore drilling ban will reduce fuel prices.

Depending on the results of such drilling, it may, or may not, increase oil supply, but there is no shortage of oil. If oil companies really want to increase the supply, which is questionable, they would already be drilling on the thousands of offshore leases that they haven't yet touched.

According to the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI)'s office of Offshore Energy & Minerals Management (OEMM), the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) areas of the U.S. contain "significant quantities of resources in yet-to-be-discovered fields." The OEMM currently leases 43 million acres which "generally" account for "about" 15 percent of America's domestic natural gas production and "about" 27 percent of the domestic oil production.

The DOI's required 5-year program specifies the size, timing and location of areas to be assessed for offshore natural gas and oil leasing. The lease sales are held annually in the Central and Western Gulf of Mexico with less frequent sales in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico and offshore Alaska. The program operates along all the coasts of the U.S., with production occurring on the Gulf of Mexico, Pacific and Alaska OCS.

The OEMM must use imprecise words like "generally" and "about" because a lease cannot guarantee the existence of recoverable resources, or whether they are cost-effective. Of course, when the price is high, more areas be-

come cost-effective.

The offshore lands are not put out to lease without geological studies indicating that there is reason to think they contain adequate resources. After acquiring a good lease, it takes at least five years to complete permits, exploration and development. After successful drilling, it takes about 18 years before the product (gasoline, diesel, home heating fuel, etc.) is available.

This is why offshore drilling won't reduce prices and can't guarantee an increased domestic supply.

The steep increase in petroleum prices resulted not from a supply shortage, but from unregulated commodity futures markets. That sounds complicated, but it's more like high stakes gambling. Traders in futures offer a guaranteed amount per wholesale unit for future production of a specified commodity, in this case crude oil. Their gamble is that they will be able to pass it on to the next market level for more than they paid. Producers who accept the offer are gambling that they will be able to produce the commodity for less than they're being paid.

What has been feeding the gamble is the knowledge that Americans don't want to make substantial changes in their use of petroleum products, whether it's our overuse of plastics or our unwillingness to change our driving habits.

Deregulating the commodities markets was the brainchild of former Congressman Phil Gramm, close friend and economic advisor to John McCain. But the key to reducing gas prices is to reduce our use of petroleum products.