

# The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

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## The modular mash...



The removal of Vernonia School District's water-damaged modular classrooms is one of many jobs made necessary by last December's flood.

## Post-flood town hall on mitigation process, more

The first of a series of Town Hall meetings in Vernonia was held August 19, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Scout Cabin.

The meeting started with an hour of information provided by Bill Haack (ColPac), Dr. Ken Cox (Vernonia Schools), Dan Brown (Columbia County Flood Plain Manager), Jim Tierney (Columbia County Flood Relief Director) and Columbia County Commissioner Tony Hyde.

Presentations included process information with examples of hazard mitigation. The focus was on substantially damaged homes (50 percent or more damaged) and gave an idea of the complexities involved in each possible decision; lifting homes, buy-outs and moves.

Tierney stressed that each situation is being reviewed on an individual basis since so many factors, such as whether the home had flood insurance, can affect each home.

Dr. Cox provided an overview of the work of the Oregon Solutions team, which was put together by Governor Kulon-goski, to help with siting and funding of new schools, and re-

ferred to the informational letter each home in the school district received this week with similar information.

Commissioner Hyde reminded those in attendance that, after the 1996 flood, it took two years for federal money to start flowing into the community so homes could be lifted, and that only about 16 homes were lifted then. This time, more homes are affected and money is starting to flow already.

This meeting kicked off a series of monthly informational meetings expected to run for the next six to 12 months. Compared with town hall meetings held soon after the 2007 flood, which ran to packed houses in the grade school gymnasium, only 35-45 people were at this meeting and the questions and comments from the audience were much less emotionally charged than those

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## Council accepts offer for old City Hall

At a special meeting of the Vernonia City Council on August 6, according to a press release from Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson, councilors decided to accept an offer from Samuel and Elenora Semerjian to purchase the old city hall building, located at 919 Bridge Street in Vernonia for a \$67,000 cash offer.

the guide for the Historic Walking Tour of Vernonia, the building was the Safeway grocery store from 1935 until sometime in the 1950s. The guide says, "We believe the first store here might have been Skagg's United Store in 1924." Old city hall also housed the police station and the city's library.

In recent years the building has deteriorated. The roof

leaks, the plumbing has problems, the electrical systems need to be upgraded, and the rear of the building is in need of structural repair work.

The building and land were recently appraised by independent appraiser Jeff Benham. He valued the property at \$85,000.

According to Mayor Sally Harrison, the City decided to accept an offer of less than the appraised value for a number of reasons. The mayor said the City was worried about the expense of making roof repairs as winter approaches, and Councilors wanted to get the property back into private hands and back on the tax rolls as quickly as possible. The sale has the added benefit of filling up an

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## Golf tourney for Summer Baseball

The 3rd annual Vernonia Youth Summer Baseball Association Golf Tournament will be held Saturday, August 23, starting at 9:30 a.m., at the Vernonia Golf Course.

enter is \$60 per person (tax deductible) and includes the greens fee and lunch. Club and cart rentals are available. Play will take place rain or shine.

This is a fundraiser for Vernonia Youth Baseball. To reserve your place, call Melissa at 503-429-0969 or Brent at 503-429-9352.

**Hwy. 47 will close  
for culvert work.  
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## School starting so drive carefully

Be prepared for a longer commute due to the addition of school buses being out and about, and increased vehicular traffic as a result of teenagers driving to school.

Expect the unexpected,  
**Blood Drive Aug. 5th**

A Red Cross Blood Drive will be held at the Vernonia Community Church, 957 State Ave., on Wednesday, August 27, from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Identification is required in order to donate. To schedule an appointment, or for more information, call the American Red Cross at 503-528-5593.

watch for children darting out into the street or children riding their bicycles, especially during the dark hours of the morning.

Be patient and observe the law when approaching or following a school bus that activates its stop arm for loading and unloading children.

Be very mindful of intersections where children are prone to gather for the bus or at designated bus stops.

When traveling in or around areas where schools are located, be aware that the speed limit has been reduced. The speed in a school zone is 20 mph.