

From the City

By Jim Johnson
Interim Vernonia City Administrator

The Opinion on the Vernonia Bicycle Skills Park, in the August 7th issue of *The Independent*, interested me because the proposed park will be owned by the City. After reading the Opinion piece, I think it might be beneficial to share a few more facts with readers.

Being new to Vernonia, I interviewed City Recorder Joann Glass, Mayor Sally Harrison, and Scott Laird, chair of the City's Parks Committee, for help with this article.

As I understand it, the Bicycle Skills Park project was started three years ago. The idea is to create a local attraction and help make Vernonia a bicycling destination. A consulting firm called Ric Balfour and Associates was hired to create a Master Plan – a vision of what the park would be like when complete. The Balfour firm also helped prepare the application for the city's land use process (a Conditional Use Permit). At the public hearing, 13 local citizens spoke in favor of the project and one against. The consultant also helped make a presentation to Vernonia Middle School and High School students, after which about forty students signed up to be involved in the project.

Last summer, local volunteers began building

trails on the site. Two local residents volunteered use of their tractors and mowed designated areas for trails. Two other citizens offered use of their ATVs which were used to drag tractor wheels to remove surface vegetation along the trails. A group of local youth spent a day on dirt bikes to help break-in the trails. Another citizen volunteered his time and a bulldozer to clear the areas for the Skateboard Park and Dirt Jump Park. Roughly 27 volunteers logged about 200 hours of time on trailbuilding alone during 2007; over 300 volunteer hours have been spent on planning the project so far. Finally, Columbia River Youth Corp, an alternative school program in St. Helens, was hired as trail builders for eight work days, and did the finish work of cutting in the trails, a decision an expenditure approved by the Vernonia Parks Committee and the City Council.

This year, the project has not moved forward as quickly as was hoped. Spring and fall are traditionally trailbuilding seasons, with little construction done during summer months. The flood last December has left community members with other important priorities. Many of the city's volunteers have been working on flood-related issues. But, more work is planned for the park.

Please see page 22

Hwy. 47 N. to close Aug. 27 to Sept. 10

A contractor for the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) plans to begin work soon on a culvert replacement project on Highway 47. During the two-week project, Highway 47 will be closed to all vehicles

Offer accepted for sale of old City Hall

From page 1

other storefront along the city's main street. And, the mayor said, "We're glad that the new owners plan on opening a new business and employing more Vernonia residents."

The transaction should close by the end of August. Within six months the City will remove the building's small addition, currently housing a real estate office. Then it will possible to connect the courtyard behind it to Bridge Street.

Ed. note: See Vernonia City Council meeting article for additional information.

24 hours/day at mile post 1.25, just south of Clatskanie. The highway closure is anticipated to begin on Wednesday, August 27, and is scheduled to re-open 15 days later (Wednesday, September 10).

Electronic Message Signs will be placed at the intersections of U.S. 30 (Lower Columbia River Highway) and Highway 47, and at Highway 47 and Highway 202 to advise motorists of the closure period.

During the highway closure, Apiary Road will be the detour route for through traffic. Apiary Road connects Highway 47 south of Mist with U.S. 30 via Old Rainier Rd/Larson Rd just west of Rainier.

Workers will be installing a 7-by-19 foot concrete culvert at Fall Creek, a location that experienced flooding earlier this year. The new culvert will allow for fish passage.

Community Calendar

VERNONIA

Alcoholics Anonymous	Monday	6:30 p.m., 410 North Street
American Legion Post #119	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m., 627 Adams Avenue
Arts & Crafts Society	2nd Thursday	2:00 p.m., City Library
Booster Club	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., VHS Library
Boy Scout Troop 201	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., Scout Cabin
Boy Scout Troop 860	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., LDS Church
Cemetery Beautification Comm.	2nd Thursday	6:30 p.m., City Hall
CERT	4th Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-3018
Chamber of Commerce	2nd Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-6081
Community Coalition	2nd Monday	12:30 p.m. School District Ofc.
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
Izaak Walton League	3rd Thursday	For location call 503-429-7193
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Tuesdays	6:30 p.m., Buckhorn Restaurant
Municipal Airport Committee	4th Thursday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Narcotics Anonymous	Saturdays	7:00 p.m., 410 North Street
Pioneer Museum		For Info Call 503-429-3713
Public Works Committee	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Cares Directors		For Info call 503-429-1414
Vernonia City Council	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Community PTA	3rd Thursday	7:00 p.m., WGS Library
Vernonia Grange	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., Grange Hall
Vernonia Health Center	2nd Monday	6:00 p.m., 510 Bridge St.
Vernonia Learning Center	1st Wednesday	6:00 p.m., VLC
Vernonia Parks Committee	3rd Wednesday	6:30 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Planning Comm.	1st & 3rd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Pride	3rd Thursday	1:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Ridge Riders	Last Thursday	7:00 p.m., Senior Center
Vernonia RFPD Board	2nd Tuesday	6:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia School Board	2nd Thursday	6:00 p.m., District Office
Vernonia Sr. Center Board	2nd Friday	1:00 p.m., Senior Center
Vernonia Transfer Station	2nd & 4th Saturdays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.	Behind VHS
Vern. Volunteer Ambulance Assoc.	1st, 3rd & 4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
WOEC Directors	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., WOEC

MIST-BIRKENFELD

M-BRFPD Board Business Mtg.	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-BRFPD Board Workshop	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Ambulance Drill	1st & 2nd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Fire Drill	1st & 2nd Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Helping Circle	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B SAR Drill	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Volunteer Assoc.	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Natal Grange	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Natal Grange Hall
T.O.P.S.	Mondays	6:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Upr Nehalem Watershed Council	For date call 429-2401	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station

BANKS

Alcoholics Anonymous	Fridays	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
Alcoholics Anonymous	Wednesdays	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
American Legion Post #90	2nd Tuesdays	7:30 p.m., Main Street Post
Banks City Council	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., City Hall
Banks Fire District #13	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Station 13
Banks Library Commission	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Banks Planning Commission	Last Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Banks School Board	2nd Monday	7:30 p.m., Jr. High Library
Banks Youth Group	Sundays, Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., UMC Youth Bldg.
Chamber of Commerce	1st Thursday	12:30 p.m., Fire District Office
CPO 14	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Friends of the Library	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., Brown Derby
Sunset Park Assoc.	3rd Wednesday	8:00 p.m., Gun Club
T.O.P.S.	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Administration Bldg.

COLUMBIA COUNTY (All meet in St. Helens unless otherwise noted.)

Board of Commissioners	Wednesdays	10 a.m., Courthouse
Citizens for Senior Justice	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Sunset Park Church
Columbia Soil & Water District	3rd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., NRCS, 2514 Sykes
County Fair Board	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fairgrounds 4-H Bldg.
County Parks Commission	3rd Monday	6:00 p.m., 1054 Oregon St.
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.