

Re-done FEMA flood map may change approach to raising/buy-outs of damaged homes

The second in a series of Vernonia Town Hall meetings on flood information was held September 22 at the Scout Cabin. The meeting was not well attended, with only nine people in the audience who were not speakers at the meeting, families of speakers, or from Columbia County Flood Relief.

The low attendance could be because the meeting was not well publicized, or may indicate that many people who suffered damage from the flood feel they already have the information they need.

Vernonia School District Superintendent Ken Cox gave an overview of the schools, and announced that the next community work party will be October 11, from 8:00 a.m. to noon, to clean bricks. Cox also said that the gym may be ready to use in time for homecoming week, October 13-17.

Dan Brown and Jim Tierney,

from Columbia County Flood Relief (CCFR), said that CDBG grants have been awarded but can't be spend or committed to projects until sometime this month. They suggested that even people who are raising their homes on their own dollar could benefit from the knowledge base at CCFR and invited that contact.

Tierney said that FEMA now seems to prefer buy-outs to lifts and that, because FEMA has re-done the flood map to take into account possible snow load, it is now saying lifts would need to be 2-3 feet higher than previously thought. This will put some lifts at 9-10 feet which makes buy-outs look more attractive. CCFR is very close to finalizing the purchase of land that could be used for four new homes for buy-out moves. CCFR's goal for those buy-outs is to leave people in close to the same financial situation they were in before the flood.

Dale Merrill, city engineer, spoke about the waste water lagoons, saying that only one lagoon needs to have sludge hauled out, a job that will start in the next few weeks. Merrill also said that innovative alternatives to replace Phase II of the waste water treatment plan are being reviewed in an effort to find something that this community can afford and that will meet the city's needs.

Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson talked about the recruitment process for a new city administrator, saying that the process may be completed as soon as January. Johnson announced that Vernonia Police Sergeant Mike Kay will be the Interim Chief of Police and that hiring a new chief should probably wait until the new city administrator is in place to have a say in the hiring.

Carole Connell was announced as the new Planning Consultant, replacing Aldie



Interim Vernonia Police Chief Mike Kay

Howard who resigned in August. Connell will attend her first Planning Commission meeting tonight at 7:00 p.m. in

City Hall. Connell is currently the planner for North Plains and Gaston, Johnson explained, so is used to the planning needs of small cities in this part of Oregon.

Mayor Sally Harrison ended the evenings presentations by reminding everyone that high water is possible this winter and asking everyone to look around their yards, garages and sheds, to try to minimize potential water damage.

The next Town Hall is scheduled for October 22, at 7:00 p.m. The location has not yet been determined and will be announced later.

Governor authorizes 47J project

From page 1

safe facilities above the flood plain.

In April, Governor Kulongoski authorized an Oregon Solutions Project for Vernonia Schools, focusing on a site for

new schools and a way to fund them. Everyone involved is fully aware that the people in this small school district cannot raise the \$30-50 million that will from FEMA, but the district is

Please see page 5

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	2nd Wednesday	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.