

Policy expert will head Merkley's staff

Senator-Elect Jeff Merkley announced the appointment of several individuals to serve in senior positions in his Senate office. His new Chief of Staff, Michael Zamore, is considered one of the top policy minds on the Hill. Zamore served for seven years as Policy Advisor to Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-RI). He also created the House 21st Century Health Care Caucus, helped build bipartisan majorities in support of landmark mental health parity legislation, and was recognized as a leading House staff person on issues of health care reform.

"I'm looking forward to immediately getting down to the hard task of putting our nation back on track as soon as I am sworn in," said Merkley. "It is critically important to have a strong team in place to serve the people of our state. I'm very excited that Mike Zamore will be heading up my staff, he will

be an effective and knowledgeable advocate for Oregon."

Zamore most recently served as Policy Director at the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. He was also the DSCC's primary liaison to the Senate leadership.

Merkley also announced several other members of his Senate team:

Maribeth Healey will serve as Merkley's Deputy State Director. Currently Executive Director of Oregonians for Health Security, she is the 2008 recipient of the Families USA Consumer Health Advocate of the Year Award and was appointed in 2006 to the Oregon Senate Commission on Health Care Access and Affordability.

Claire Griffin will serve as Constituent Services Director. Griffin was Merkley's Legislative Aide for eight years and served the last two years as his Special Assistant in the Speak-

er's office.

Jessica Adamson, currently with the Associated General Contractors Oregon-Columbia Chapter, will be Business Liaison. Before joining AGC, Adamson was Chief of Staff to Representative Lynn Lundquist (R-Powell Butte) and Legislative Assistant for Senator Jeanette Hamby (R-Hillsboro).

Two of Merkley's transition staffers will continue with the Senator-Elect. Jon Isaacs will serve as the Oregon State Director and Julie Edwards will be Communications Director.

City starts administrator hiring anew

Vernonia's City Council held a special executive session and meeting on December 26, at 10:30 a.m. in City Hall. After the executive session, held to consider employment of a public officer, council announced that none of the applicants they

Storm: Food and heat appreciated

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"The coordinated response between military and emergency management was phenomenal," said Vicki Harguth, Director of Emergency Management for Columbia County.

A shelter was set up at Vernonia Middle School on December 24. Only three people stayed all night at the shelter, though a number of people came down for warmth and hot food. Beginning on the afternoon of Christmas day, the shelter saw a steady flow of over 100 people, for dinner and warmth. As of 8:00 p.m. Christ-

mas night, a handful of people were bedding down at the shelter, though most were going home to bundle up under as many blankets as they could find.

Eric Urban, a teacher at Washington Grade School, visited the shelter on Christmas for a hot dinner. He said friends told him to put in a supply of wood in case of power outages. He bought enough for a few hours, not knowing that outages can last for three days or more. "I'll be looking to get a cord of wood, now that I know," Urban said. He found out about the shelter after seeing lights there when he ventured out to see if any stores were open in town. A good Samaritan gave him enough wood to get through a couple of days.

The shelter closed the evening of Sunday, December 28, after power had been restored to most homes.

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.