

# The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

March 5, 2009

## Blackbirds return...



A male Red-winged Blackbird, left, at Vernonia Lake, attempts to attract the notice of one of the first female Red-wings to arrive for this year's nesting season.

## Large crowd attends town hall meet on school sites

As part of the ongoing process to select a new site for Vernonia schools, the district held a Town Hall style meeting on March 2 in the Middle School cafeteria. About 150 people turned out to hear about the process of selecting a new site for the schools.

Interim Vernonia City Administrator Jim Johnson, also a member of the Oregon Solutions Team Siting Sub-committee, gave a Power Point presentation on the three sites reviewed. Included in the presentation was a re-look at the Knott Street site that was removed from the mix early on in the Oregon Solutions siting project. At the last 47J District Board meeting, board member Ernie Smith had asked for the Knott St. site to be reconsidered.

The Knott Street site had some things going for it, including one owner, already inside the city limits, already accessible and mostly level. Reasons given for the site not being preferred when the Siting Team narrowed the field and started looking closer at just a few sites were that it is not centrally located, is difficult to walk or bike on Hwy. 47 (N. Mist Drive) to and from school, is the only large parcel the city has zoned Light Industrial (stated as important to the city), would be

fully isolated in a flood event, there are wetlands and a creek that would have to be dealt with, and a new city reservoir would be required to get enough water pressure to the site.

After the Site Team narrowed the sites to three; the NW Corner Site (above the cemetery), the Boot Site (above Spencer Park) and the current site, SERA architects came in with a team of specialists to look at each site based on criteria set by the Site Team. Members of the SERA team were at this town hall meeting and, after Johnson's presentation, were available for questions.

When all the site information was presented, the audience was told that the Boot Site is currently the favorite, but the ultimate decision will be made by the Vernonia School Board, perhaps as early as their March 12 meeting.

A new concept drawing for the schools was also presented which calls for one building for K-12 grade classrooms, one administrative building with cafeteria and shared areas, a covered play area, a gymnasium/locker room/shop/physical education building, and track, football and ball fields. All of it would fit on 17 acres, com-

Please see page 5

## Police stop VHS students transporting illegal drugs

Two Vernonia High School students were arrested February 27 while trying to bring Ecstasy, an illegal drug, to Vernonia.

The Vernonia Police Department received tips about the juveniles' activity and, working in conjunction with an informant and others, located the vehicle they were driving, and stopped it on Highway 26. Ecstasy powder was recovered inside the vehicle.

The 16 year-old driver and a 15 year-old passenger were taken into custody at the scene. The vehicle they were

driving was seized and referred to the District Attorney's Office for forfeiture. Officers also seized two cell phones with the names of the suppliers.

Both juveniles are being charged with unlawful possession, unlawful manufacture and unlawful delivery of an illegal substance.

According to Vernonia Interim Police Chief Mike Kay, the amount of Ecstasy recovered was enough for over 60 capsules of the drug, which one suspect said would have been sold at the high school.

"I would like to thank the

community for the information and trust they showed in this department," Chief Kay said.

## Golf club owner Fred Fulmer dies

Fred R. Fulmer, III, longtime manager of the family-owned Vernonia Golf Course, died February 19 at his home.

Before moving to Vernonia to manage the Vernonia Golf Course in 1986, he managed the Seaside Golf Course for 17 years.

The 45.68 acre Vernonia Golf Course, located on Timber Road, started with nine holes

designed by George Junor in 1926. In 1999, the course expanded to 18 holes, with the addition of nine holes designed by Fulmer. The course has a 66.8 rating and a slope rating of 113.

Fulmer's family continues to operate the course, which is open to the public.

A full obituary can be found on page 21.

Join Vernonia's 26th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade on Tuesday, March 17, starting at 5:15 p.m. at State Ave. and Bridge St. There are no entrance fees, and everyone is invited to participate.