

# Life Saving Awards top Council Agenda

# Town Hall on school sites



The meritorious efforts of St. Helens Police Officer José Castillia, St. Helens Detective Jeremy Howell, Columbia County Sheriff's Deputy Troy Caldwell, and Vernonia Police Officers Jeff Dalrymple and Mike Connor were recognized by the City of Vernonia with Life Saving Awards, at a March 2 ceremony.

Vernonia Interim Police Chief Mike Kay presented Life Saving Awards at the Vernonia City Council meeting, March 2, to five law enforcement officers, because of an action that started as a welfare check, then turned into a multi-agency law enforcement effort with a good outcome. The Vernonia Police Department received a call from a mother from out of town who was worried because her five-year-old son was with his father in Vernonia and the father had called her, apparently threatening to kill himself and perhaps kill someone else, too. When Officers Mike Connor and Jeff Dalrymple responded, they found that the man had the boy and was armed, so they withdrew and called the county multi-agency team. St. Helens Detective Jeremy Howell and Officer José Castillia, both trained crisis negotiators, and Columbia County Deputy Sheriff Troy Caldwell responded. While Howell and Castillia talked with the father, who was threatening to shoot, Deputy Caldwell crawled around the house, listening and reporting where the man was. After much effort by Howell and Castillia, the man surrendered without harm and was taken into custody. The child, who wasn't harmed, was sound asleep when officers entered the house.

Many understandably proud family members attended the

awards ceremony.

During the regular meeting, Council discussed citizens' concerns about some consequences of the state smoking ban in businesses. One concern is the need to walk through clouds of smoke generated by smokers who congregate on sidewalks because they must now go outside to smoke; others are the accumulation of cigarette butts on sidewalks and, because of downtown's many old wooden buildings, the increased potential for fire from carelessly discarded cigarettes. After considering several approaches, Council agreed with a citizen's suggestion that they send a letter to the owners of businesses that generate the problem, asking for ways to help alleviate the situation.

Another citizen sent a request to the Council that the city ban sex offenders from living within 5,000 feet of schools, homes, or other places where children gather. Chief Kay said that state laws take precedent regarding sex offenders.

In other business, Council:

- Approved Mayor Sally Harrison's appointment of Neil Lloyd to the Library Board;
- Reviewed the minutes from meetings of the Vernonia Economic Development Committee, Planning Commission, Parks Committee, Cemetery Committee and Library Board;
- Approved a request from

the Parks Committee for a public meeting to hear from citizens about possible uses of Vernonia Lake, as a part of developing a plan for the lake;

- Unanimously approved the renewal of liquor licenses for Black Bear Coffee Co., Bridge Street Mini Mart, Cedar Side Inn, Tice Inc (Buckhorn Restaurant), and the Lyon's Den. Also approved for renewal were liquor licenses for the Blue House Cafe, with Councilor Brett Costley abstaining, and Vernonia Sentry Market, with Councilor Randy Parrow abstaining;

- Approved a timeline for recruiting a new city administrator, contingent upon Interim Administrator Jim Johnson's answer about whether he would continue working with the city as a consultant;

- Received an update on the Youth Service Team;

- Reviewed forms being used to track police officers' frequency, time and types of activities and responses;

- Approved a contract, not to exceed \$31,000, for development of a Storm Drainage Master Plan. The cost will come from storm water system development charges.

**Daylight Savings Time**  
starts at 2:00 a.m. Sunday, March 8. Move your clocks forward one hour.

From page 1

pared with the original concept drawing that would have required 30-40 acres.

Superintendent Dr. Ken Cox talked to the crowd about the concept of the school's being the "greenest" in the nation with help from donors and stimulus dollars. Cox went on to bring up a bond for November. Ever since the flood, in all discussions about the schools, it has been clear that the community will need to help fund some part of the new schools. How much that bond may be for is up in the air and depends on many cost factors, including cost of the site, cost of infrastructure, cost of building, cost of equipment. Some of the

equipment costs will be taken care of by the \$381,000 that was recently announced as part of a government bill sponsored in part by Representative Wu.

The next steps include the board's siting decision, the selection of one of 10 architectural firms that recently replied to a request for proposal (RFP) put out by the district, and the procurement of the site so site preparation can begin.

In the meantime, community input is still being sought via an online survey at [www.vernonia.k12.or.us](http://www.vernonia.k12.or.us). Additional information about each site and the decision process is also available on the district's website.

**Color photo on Page 24**



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