

## Peyton to serve again on OYCCAC

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Youth with strong work skills, positive future education and employment goals are more likely to achieve two important Oregon Benchmarks:

- completion of high school; and
- avoidance of juvenile crime delinquency.

OYCC has a nine-member Advisory Committee, three members appointed by the Governor, three appointed by the Senate President and three appointed by the House Speaker.

Peyton is also the coordinator for the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council (UNWC), a nonprofit, volunteer organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, enhancement and restoration of the Nehalem Watershed. The council was formed to share information, reduce duplication of activities, help address watershed management issues in the upper Nehalem watershed and provide a framework for coordination and cooperation among key interests.

## 20 Years Ago This Month

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the city's sewage collection and treatment system.

Though the hearing had been scheduled in advance, the city staff was unable to answer questions about the new system because HGE hadn't yet submitted any plans. City council members hadn't seen it, either, and could neither ask nor answer questions based on the plans.

Barbara Burton, a DEQ construction grant specialist, made it clear that neither the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency nor the DEQ will continue to allow the overflow of raw sewage into the Nehalem River. However, Vernonia can be certain to qualify for whatever funding there is, she added, if they get their application in by August. Burton couldn't say how much money the city would qualify for

or whether the plan met funding requirements because she hadn't seen the plan yet, either.

Vernonia is now number 8 on the State of Oregon's priority list for corrective action, and the city has no choice about whether it will improve its sewage facilities, only how it will pay for the improvements.

If the city accepts federal or state grant money, it will also be required to operate and maintain the facilities on a new rate structure that will not allow sewer revenues to mix with revenues of any other project or facility.

Vernonia presently collects about \$35,000 per year from sewer fees, but it spends little of that on the sewer system. Approximately \$30,000 of sewer revenue is now spent to defray costs of the water department.

Operating costs for the water department are about \$120,000 per year, though its revenues amount to only \$90,000. If the revenue from sewer receipts can't be used in the water department, rates will have to be raised in both departments.

The total estimated cost for the sewer system repairs is around \$3 million, with about \$2.5 million available from grants and low interest loans. The city would have to find from \$6-800,000 in matching funds in order to qualify for the remainder.

Ed Crane of HGE estimated that the new sewer rates would range from \$12-16 per month, a 300-400% increase. He also said he would provide the city with plans by next Monday.

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## Emergency responses reviewed, cont.

From page 1

cy and requested mutual aid from other counties, the State of Oregon, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Columbia County Emergency Operations Center was activated at various times, as well, to help coordinate and manage resources and information. Public infrastructure damages and response costs added up to several million dollars, and local businesses were impacted by snow- and water-covered roadways. The costs of responding to these emergencies may impact budgets throughout Columbia County.

In late January, representatives from the cities, Columbia County, emergency services

agencies, non-profit groups and state agencies met in Clatskanie to discuss what went well during the response to the storms and what things could be improved upon. The issues presented help emergency management officials and elected leaders see if emergency planning and training are working properly and what more can be done to enhance response to future events. After-action review sessions such as these are typically held after any major emergency or disaster drill.

The major strengths identified during the storms were as follows:

- Road and utility crews worked very well together, going to incident areas in teams to make sure roads were clear and that power lines could be quickly restored.

- Citizen Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) from Clatskanie, Vernonia and St. Helens were extremely useful

in assisting jurisdictions with checking on citizens and answering phone calls from the public.

- Multiple agencies stated that WebEOCC®, an incident management computer program used during the January storms, was especially helpful in coordinating information and actions taken.

- There was prudent use of the Columbia Alert Network (CAN), an emergency notification system operated by Columbia 911, to alert citizens of possible mudslides and actual flooding situations.

- Assistance from the Oregon National Guard in the form of Humvee four-wheel drive vehicles was invaluable, allowing emergency responders to assist rural residents during the heavy snowfall.

Throughout the storms, several opportunities for improvement in Columbia County's ability to respond to the in-

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## Tickets now available for play

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ducing stage performances in Columbia County for 28 years. Formed from a group of dedicated individuals of the Reader's Theater Group, SSCP was officially founded in 1982. It is

a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, relying on volunteers for every aspect of operations. Their mission is to support theater and arts through successful productions and participation by the entire community.

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