

## Letters

### Stamp Out Hunger is a wonderful program

To the Editor:

Dear Letter Carriers;

Thank you for running the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive on May 9. Thanks to your efforts and the generosity of the Vernonia people, 1,061 lbs. of food was delivered to this food bank. Thank you so very much for your organization, work, and generosity to make this event happen. Special thanks to Peter O'Leary for taking the lead for this project.

Vernonia Cares Food Bank assists over 450 people per month with three days worth of emergency groceries. We can

only do this through generous donations like the food the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive brought in.

**Sandy Welch**  
Executive Director  
Vernonia Cares FB

### Vernonia is home, in spite of the floods

To the Editor:

Over the past couple weeks, I have been interviewed by both newspapers, and television news stations. In each of these interviews, I have tried to give a true accurate portrayal of what life has been like since the flood of 2007. I hope that to all of those who were directly affected (I believe everyone in our community was affected) by the floods, that I have done justice to the story. I know each of us has our own individual stories of how this has affected us and each of us has most likely handled this crisis in our own ways. Anyhow, during the interviews that I have had, I always get asked if we are going to stay in Vernonia?

This morning I woke up at

4:15 a.m. and headed off to the shop to meet up with the rest of the crew and head in to work. After arriving at the shop I found out that due to some equipment being down, we weren't going to be working today. Since I have a wife and kids who were still in bed, and there is no being quiet in the FEMA trailers, I decided to drive around a little bit until my family's alarms went off and they got up for school and work. I went down to the lake where I sat and watched as a gentleman was fishing in the early hours. I noticed a couple ducks swimming around and two eagles looking for breakfast. As I sat there watching the lake with just a little bit of fog rolling across the top, one of the eagles swooped down and retrieved its breakfast. I took out my binoculars and watched this event and scanned the lake where the fish were starting to jump and the sun was coming up.

I sat there remembering the evening before and the walk that my wife and I took at around 7:30 in the evening with

a wonderful 71 degrees and a town that was getting ready for a new week. We walked up through town, stopping at a couple of the benches that had been built and donated to the city. We took a break and just sat for a few minutes and enjoyed the peacefulness of the town. We strolled by the new park areas that are being worked on, and the whole time we waved at passers by who waved to us.

I have always considered myself a Vernonian, but the truth is I didn't move here until I was in the 6th grade (1971), and my family moved us away in 1976 to Forest Grove where I graduated High School in '78. I moved back to Vernonia in 1979 after an attempt at college, only to leave in 1981 to try my hand at school again. I returned in late 1981 and married my wife, Robin, in 1982. We left Vernonia again in 1985 to start our careers and a family. After our son was born and was ready to start school, we decided that we wanted him to experience Vernonia and to attend schools that may not have all

the bells and whistles, but where every teacher knows every kid, and very few ever slip through the cracks.

We arrived back in Vernonia in late 1995, just in time to have our brand new manufactured home destroyed by the '96 floods before we could even close on our loan. We rebuilt and we made sure that our home was above that record flood level, so we would never experience that kind of disaster again. Well, as most of you know, I should have gone a couple feet higher, and now here we sit, waiting for our next adventure. After the floods of '07, we have experienced so much love and friendship from everyone we know and many that we don't know. We are not sure if we will be rebuilding on our property, or if the buy-out will go through and we will build or buy another home in another location. I do know that we love this community that works so well together, doesn't give up, and is determined to not just rebuild, but to be an even better place to live.

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### Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters that include personal attacks on private citizens. Because of space limitations, preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address or phone number.

### Where to Find Them

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### Salem Scene

By Representative Brad Witt  
Oregon District 31



Last week, the House passed one of the more contentious bills so far this session, HB 2186A. The vote was 32-28, reflecting the divided feelings about this legislation, even though the scope of the bill had been substantially narrowed since its introduction. The measure authorizes the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) to adopt standards and requirements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Oregon has been a leader in this area for quite some time. Back in 1992, our state adopted CO2 benchmarks for the Oregon Progress Board, which sought to keep emissions at 1990 levels. It was not until 2003 that the Governors of Oregon, California and Washington created the West Coast Governors' Global Warming Initiative to develop joint regional strategies to address the growing alarm over the effects of carbon emissions on our environment. Since then, the Governor and the Legislature have taken small bites at this apple, with the 2007 Legislature adopting greenhouse gas reduction goals in statute.

HB 2186A is an attempt to implement these goals by addressing tire efficiency, engine idling reduction, low-emission fuels, product composi-

tion and truck aerodynamics. At the outset, almost everyone, including yours truly, had problems with this bill. Many questioned why Oregon should take the lead; why not just wait for the federal government to set uniform standards for everyone? The fact is that those of us in the West have traditionally set the standard for the rest of the nation when it comes to the environment, not the other way around.

Having said that, HB 2186A will not be implemented immediately. The bill gives the EQC rule writing authority; but the rules will not take effect until July 1, 2011, so the Legislature can review the rules in the next session before they go into effect. I supported this bill because this issue is not something that we can continue to put off, waiting for the perfect moment to arrive. The time to begin is now.

Part of this beginning is the placement of sideboards around some of the key provisions of the bill. Doing so will preserve the bill's environmental protections, while protecting consumers and businesses from possible over-regulation.

As an example, the typical tires that many of us purchase at such tire distributors as Les Schwab, etc., will likely meet the "roll-resistance" provisions of HB 2186A. The same cannot be said, unfortunately, for the bulk of present-day "original equipment" tires.

It is therefore incumbent upon the Legislature to make sure that HB 2186A targets any inferior new tires, rather than technologically advanced after-market tires. In this way, consumer savings

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