

# FEMA changes will benefit more Vernonia homes, Council told

Jim Tierney, from the Columbia County Unmet Needs Committee, gave Vernonia's City Council some good news at their May 18 meeting. Tierney told council that FEMA has determined that homes that were not 'substantially damaged' in the Flood of 2007 but have a Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) of 1.0 or above should be able to receive funds to elevate. According to Tierney, the BCAs are now based on the premise that the Flood of 2007 was a 44-45 year event, rather than what's termed a "100 year event" (which doesn't mean it won't happen again for 100 years).

"We thought we could lift 20-25 houses, now we could probably lift every house in town," said Tierney. As a result, he asked for and received council approval on a cap of \$10,000 per home from CDBG (grant funds) to help pay the 25 per-

cent that FEMA doesn't fund for these elevations. Tierney also received approval from council to set \$40,000 as the cap for CDBG funds for acquisitions (buyouts). This is an increase from the amount previously approved.

Howard Webb, Director of the American Council on Criminal Justice Training (ACCJT), reported to council on his investigation (on behalf of the city's insurance company) into the Taser use by Vernonia Police on March 20. He said one person "jumped up, became combative, made threats, was cuffed, then uncuffed to use the bathroom, then became combative and a Taser was used." Webb said the Taser use was within guidelines and his only criticism would be of the younger officer who removed the handcuffs. "That allowed the subject to become combative again, but it's better to err in

trying to help a person," said Webb. "If anything, they used less force than they could have, they used great restraint. I would have used more control," Webb concluded. Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson said that a report from another source will be coming in about two weeks. The reason for two use of force reviews wasn't stated, but the fact that Interim Police Chief Mike Kay referred to himself on several websites as an ACCJT Asst. Director, as recently as July 2008, may have played a role in the decision.

Johnson also asked council to think about reorganizing the police department so they can discuss the matter further at a future meeting. He suggested that hiring an 'administrator' chief part-time while having a captain, sergeant and two patrol officers might be a better use of funds and resources

than hiring a 'patrol' chief.

In other business, council:

- Approved fireworks to be held June 20 across from Hawkins Park in conjunction with the KUPL event;
- received a plaque from Metro West Ambulance in thanks for allowing them to serve Vernonia;
- gave consensus to the Mayor who then appointed Grant Williams to the Planning Commission. Williams recently sent a letter to the city expressing his interest and willingness to serve on the commission;
- accepted the only bid offered (\$300) for the Public Works truck surplus about three months ago. Usually Council would not be involved in surplus sales, but was asked for approval because the sole bid was from the son of a city employee;
- unanimously approved the second reading of an ordinance

removing the requirement for citizens to obtain a permit from City Hall before holding garage sales;

• held a budget meeting. The next budget meeting (open to public comment) will be May 21, starting at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall.

The next council meeting is scheduled for June 1.

## Blog and Twitter add to county disaster communications

Columbia County Emergency Management is reaching out to citizens using new forms of media.

The agency, which deals with local disaster preparedness and response planning, has recently started a blog that it will use to provide updated information about preparedness and disaster information to the citizens of Columbia County.

See **BLOG**, page 5

# Community Calendar

VERNONIA			MIST-BIRKENFELD		
Alcoholics Anonymous	Monday	6:30 p.m., 410 North Street	M-BRFPD Board Business Mtg.	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
American Legion Post #119	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m., 627 Adams Avenue	M-BRFPD Board Workshop	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Booster Club	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., VHS Library	M-B Ambulance Drill	1st & 2nd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Boy Scout Troop 201	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., Scout Cabin	M-B Fire Drill	1st & 2nd Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Boy Scout Troop 860	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., LDS Church	M-B Helping Circle	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Cemetery Beautification Comm.	2nd Thursday	6:30 p.m., City Hall	M-B SAR Drill	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
CERT	4th Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-3018	M-B Volunteer Assoc.	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Chamber of Commerce	2nd Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-6081	Natal Grange	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Natal Grange Hall
Community Coalition	2nd Monday	12:30 p.m. School District Ofc.	T.O.P.S.	Mondays	9:00 a.m., Main Fire Station
Cub Scout Pack 201	Scout Cabin	For Info Call 503-429-4250	Upr Nehalem Watershed Council	For date call 429-0869	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
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	<b>BANKS</b>		
Izaak Walton League	3rd Thursday	For location call 503-429-7193	Alcoholics Anonymous	Fridays	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Tuesdays	6:30 p.m., Buckhorn Restaurant	Alcoholics Anonymous	Wednesdays	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
Municipal Airport Committee	4th Thursday	7:00 p.m., City Hall	American Legion Post #90	2nd Tuesdays	7:30 p.m., Main Street Post
Narcotics Anonymous	Saturdays	7:00 p.m., 410 North Street	Banks City Council	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., City Hall
Pioneer Museum		For Info Call 503-429-3713	Banks Fire District #13	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Station 13
Public Works Committee	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall	Banks Library Commission	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Vernonia Cares Directors		For Info call 503-429-1414	Banks Planning Commission	Last Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia City Council	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., City Hall	Banks School Board	2nd Monday	7:30 p.m., Jr. High Library
Vernonia Community PTA	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., WGS Library	Banks Youth Group	Sundays, Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., UMC Youth Bldg.
Vernonia Grange	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., Grange Hall	Chamber of Commerce	1st Thursday	12:30 p.m., Fire District Office
Vernonia Health Center	2nd Monday	6:00 p.m., 510 Bridge St.	CPO 14	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Vernonia Learning Center	1st Wednesday	6:00 p.m., VLC	Friends of the Library	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Vernonia Parks Committee	3rd Wednesday	6:30 p.m., City Hall	Lions Club	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., Brown Derby
Vernonia Planning Comm.	1st & 3rd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., City Hall	Sunset Park Assoc.	3rd Wednesday	8:00 p.m., Gun Club
Vernonia Pride	2nd Thursday	1:00 p.m., City Hall	T.O.P.S.	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Administration Bldg.
Vernonia Ridge Riders	Last Thursday	7:00 p.m., Senior Center			
Vernonia RFPD Board	2nd Tuesday	6:00 p.m., Fire Station	<b>COLUMBIA COUNTY</b> (All meet in St. Helens unless otherwise noted.)		
Vernonia School Board	2nd Thursday	6:00 p.m., District Office	Board of Commissioners	Wednesdays	1:00 p.m., Courthouse
Vernonia Sr. Center Board	2nd Friday	1:00 p.m., Senior Center	Citizens for Senior Justice	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Sunset Park Church
Vernonia Transfer Station	2nd & 4th Saturdays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.	Behind VHS	Columbia Soil & Water District	3rd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., NRCS, 2514 Sykes
Vern. Volunteer Ambulance Assoc.	1st, 3rd & 4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station	County Fair Board	2nd Monday	6:00 p.m., Fairgrounds 4-H Bldg.
Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station	County Parks Commission	3rd Tuesday	Times vary, 1054 Oregon St.
Upper Nehalem Watershed Council		For Info Call 503-429-0869	Mental Health Advisory Comm.	Quarterly	For Info call 503-397-7211
WOEC Directors	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., WOEC	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.