

# The INDEPENDENT

Vol. 24, No. 13

"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

July 2, 2009



Summer is definitely here, and Vernonia's swimmin' hole is being greatly appreciated.



Upon completion, this statue will be bronzed and installed in the Loggers Memorial at Camp 18. See article on page 5.

## County residents need emergency housing funds

In an effort to help the community and those individuals who are having their NOHA housing subsidy cut, United Way of Columbia County is accepting donations from individuals and businesses. These donations are outside of the normal campaign and will be used specifically to assist with this housing emergency in Columbia County.

Please indicate on your donation checks that they are to be used for "housing emergency". These funds will be disbursed to organizations within Columbia County who are currently assisting those in need.

For questions or for more information please call 503-556-3614 or email uwcc@hotmail.com.

## State issues contracts for buying out flooded homes

The Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECDD) issued contracts, June 24, for the last remaining component in the suite of public support planned and developed by Community Action Team to assist flood victims in Columbia County and the City of Vernonia. The contracts, one for the City and one for the County, each represent a \$500,000 award of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The CDBG program is a pass-through of federal funds administered by OECDD in the rural portions of the state.

These two long-awaited grants will be used to match FEMA funds set aside to purchase flooded homes in Vernonia and Columbia County. Homes will be purchased at their pre-flood value as of December 1, 2007. Without the

CDBG funds, homeowners would receive only 75 percent of their homes value. Once transferred into public ownership, permanent deed restrictions will prevent the properties from being developed in the future.

Federally required preliminary grant requirements, including environmental reviews and public notices, are expected to take 2 to 3 months before individual projects can be completed. In the meantime, Community Action Team will work with both the City and County to select a contractor or contractors who will demolish the homes once they have been purchased. This contractor selection process, which will run concurrently with the federal requirements, will help the city and county obtain firm demolition costs prior to making their final funding requests to FEMA for each project.

## Fire Season has started for area

Fire Season has been officially declared for Northwest Oregon and will begin today, July 2. The fire season designation includes lands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry within Columbia, Clatsop, Multnomah, Washington, Tillamook and Yamhill counties. Regulations that affect forest operations and open burning go into effect with the declaration of fire season.

Those working in the woods are required to have fire prevention and fire fighting equipment on the job site. In addition, a fire watch is required to be on the operation site after the shutdown of equipment. The first level of precaution for forestry operations is called an "Industrial Fire Precaution Level 1" This is the first level of a four level system that regulates fire risks associated with industrial equipment operated within the forest protection district.

The declaration of fire season  
**See Fire Season, page 4**

## July 4th Activities Vernonia

Vernonia's 4th of July activities will include a parade, sponsored by Vernonia Pride, starting on Weed Ave. at 7:30 p.m.

Fireworks, funded by donations this year, will be held at the Vernonia school grounds beginning at 10:00 p.m. Booster burgers and more will be available at the school grounds from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

There will also be a private fireworks show on Cherry Street on July 3. This notice is to inform the community so pets can be secured.

## Banks

Banks will celebrate the 4th of July starting at 2:00 p.m. at Sunset Park with a Family Fun Festival.

The Festival will include kids games and rides, other activities and food.

Fireworks start at 10:00 p.m.

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**See page 9 for care of pets during July 4th activities.**

