

No crowd at latest 47J Town Hall

The Vernonia School District held a Town Hall, June 25, so the community could see the latest ideas for the new schools from BOORA, the district's architectural firm, and so BOORA could get feedback from the community for further refinements to the plans.

The only problem with the plan was that the community didn't attend. There were 16 people in the audience; nine board members or employees of the district (plus one board member's spouse and two children), four from the Vernonia Health Board, and three community members.

BOORA did say they got feedback at the staff barbeque that led them to make changes to the conceptual plans, such as placing the small gym and play areas closer to the younger children's classrooms.

One question by a community member was, "What happens if the bond doesn't pass?" Superintendent Ken Cox re-

sponded, "The same thing that's happening now – we teach in mods and the old schools."

To a question about what a regular building would cost versus the highly sustainable version that is slated to cost about \$30 million, the architect responded, "That's hard to say but about 10 percent less, which will be more than offset by the reduced operating costs."

After discussing some recent grants and gifts, such as \$10,000 from Vernonia Sentry and a grant for \$1.5 million that is being written for geothermal uses, Cox mentioned that alumni groups are starting to contribute toward the new schools and that some alumni are giving \$10 a month. Alumni contributions can be made at Wauna Federal Credit Union.

BOORA now goes back to work to have more detailed layout and cost information by the end of July.

Still time to join Art in the Woods

Art in the Woods Music and Art Day Camp is coming to Vernonia the week of July 27 to 31 at the Scout Cabin in Hawkins Park. This year's projects will include learning some historical crafts such as carpentry and sewing, plus watercolor painting and lots of singing, recorder playing, and folk dancing.

The cost is \$75 per child with reduced rates for siblings. Financial aid is available upon request. There are also advanced classes for teens for a cost of \$20 per class. Registration forms are available at the library or by calling Carol Pelster at 503-429-0437. They should be sent in before July 13 to avoid a late fee.

VHS final 2009 Honor Roll called

The following students were named to the Vernonia High School academic Honor Roll for the 2008-09 fourth quarter. Grade Point Averages (GPA) are on a scale of 1-4, with 4 equaling a perfect score.

Principal's Honors, 4.00 – Christopher Dass, Karly DeWitt, Katie Ellington, Laura Hein, Keli Krieger, Samantha Lee, Alex Lende, Tricia Levenseller, Jackson Miller, Savannah Miller, Chelsea Patton, William Ren, Melissa Sandstrom, Natalie Wallace, Katie Wilson, Nicholas Young, and Rebekah Young.

High Honors, 3.50-3.99 – Jacob Alf, Catherine Allen, Christopher Bamburg, Janda Barber, Bonnie Birkmaier, Rachel Brown, Timothy Brown, Kaytee Burghard, Joshua Butcher, Kaitlyn Carr, Crystal-

Ann Carreon, Genesis Castro, Ashley Cavett, Holly Cavett, Jed Douglas, Sarah Dupree, Zachary Dyer, Adrienne East, Cody Eaton, Celene Feijoo, Brandy Fosdick, Danyell Freeman, Brandon Gilbertson, Kristina Halvorson, Melissa Hermet, Quinlan Johansen, Calie Johnston, Kayleigh Johnston, Sarah Miller, Nicole Mitchell, Gia The Nguyen, Tara Ostrander, Ashley Paleck, Tasia Pond, Justin Rainbolt, Amy Rethwill, Parker Roach, Mason Roberts, Sierra Roberts, Travis Rosenstiel, Sicily Scott, Kelly Smith, Sean Solberg, Dalton Stevens, Katy Stevens, and Bethany Workman.

Honors, 3.25-3.49 – David Allen, Jacob Bringman, Justin Caputo, Alexandria Chadek, Gillian Cheney, Jayme Due, Amber Eastlick, Joseph Fer-

Chalk Talk

Chalk Talk is a column of information about Vernonia schools. This column was provided by "Vote Yes For Schools Measure" Vernonia School Bond Committee.

Pass the Bond, Not the Buck

Questions for Superintendent Ken Cox: Why do you think it is important to build a new school campus that uses new energy efficient technologies – so called "green buildings"?

When the school district started looking for architects we learned that 'green construction' and 'sustainable buildings' are pretty much the way building construction is now done in Oregon. So when I met for the first time with the different architectural firms who wanted to bid on our schools, I told them we wanted "the greenest school we could possibly afford." I felt this was important, not only because we wanted to stand out to attract philanthropists to help pay for Vernonia's schools, but also because, in the long run, it would save the most money in operational costs.

Since that first meeting I have found that there are two aspects to green buildings: green construction and sustainability. Green construction uses recycled materials as much as possible in the actual school construction and makes sure any left over building materials are recycled rather than discarded. However, it is in designing a sustainable building that the district would realize the greatest long-term savings. It is possible for us to build a school that uses 50% less heat than a regular building. This would save us thousands of dollars every year, which could be used to help pay down the bond and/or pay for educational improvements for our children. This is particularly important when the architects are designing a building to last for at least 100 years.

Vernonia School District enrollment has decreased since the flood of 2007. How has that lower enrollment impacted the district, the school budget and current school programs?

694 students were enrolled in October 2007.

gusson, Mackenzie Frantz, Suin Jang, Brandon Krause, Alyssa Loggins, Breonna Maldonado, Mickell Maller, Terrance Medico, Timothy Pillow, Gavin Roberts, Byron Schorzman, Daniel Shaw, Levi Timmerman, Shyla Tungwenuk, Fabian Waldmann, and Christopher Watrous.

Honorable Mention, 3.00-3.24 – Kimberly Allen, Shelby Brookman, Eric Budge, Kaylee Dalebroux, Brandon Herd, Megan Hieronimus, Christopher Johnston, Oliver Kocura, Mathew Krause, Jacob Levenseller, Emily Mitchell, Blake Moeller, Elizabeth Poulin, Tim Prpich, Preston Roach, Matias Singers, Amanda Slinger, Cody Smith, Sara Stern, Mckenzie Tarkalson, Nicole Thompson, Danny Vanderschelden, and Dylan Vaughn.

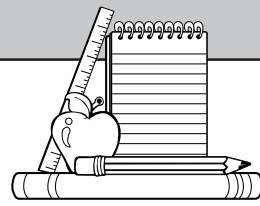
That number dropped to 604 the following year and currently is at 625. Since Vernonia schools are funded by the state at approximately \$6,000 per student, the loss of 70 or more students translates into a loss of more than \$400,000 and really impacts the kind of education the district can provide. This loss of state funding has already impacted the current budget, resulting in some staffing changes and layoffs. These cuts include: elementary music, the middle school counselor and principal, one teacher, and reverting back to half-day kindergarten for next year.

Do you think building new schools can reverse this downturn in enrollment?

I believe that once we get new schools built enrollment will increase. For one thing, the new schools would include the technology infrastructure required to ensure the teachers have the ability to use whatever technology is needed in the classroom. We also are looking into ways to incorporate the energy efficiencies of the building's technology into the curriculum so students can learn about solar, geothermal and other alternative energy sources. It is a known fact that businesses often check on the quality of education in a community before moving into that community. Having quality schools could positively impact Vernonia's economy, which would in turn impact student enrollment.

Keeping up with long-term enrollment growth could become a concern the district would have to watch. With this in mind, the district's plan calls for building new schools that would be large enough to accommodate at least 750 students. The architects also are designing the building to allow for inexpensive expansion options that would accommodate 1,000 students and more, if necessary.

The proposed School Bond, if approved, would raise about 25% of the funding needed to build a new campus. Do you really believe Vernonia can raise the rest of the money? Please see page 20



Pet of the Month

*Columbia Humane Society in St. Helens has a variety of wonderful pets available for adoption. Find the pet that's right for you in the shelter at 2084 Oregon Street. Phone 503-397-4353
Open Mon - Fri 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 11 am. to 5 pm.*

Prince has had two homes in his past life. The last home he was in for two years after being adopted from Oregon Humane Society. His parent, due to health problems was no longer able to care for Prince. She provided the following information: Playful, loves to clown around, pounce and play. He is talkative and friendly to visitors and family. Prince is an affectionate lap kitty who can also be independent. He does enjoy other cats' company especially for play time.



SIAMESE

The Columbia Humane Society is a No-Kill non-profit shelter dedicated to helping friends find each other since 1985.

This Adopt a Pet is Sponsored by:

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