

The INDEPENDENT

Vol. 24, No. 15

"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

August 6, 2009



This photo, taken last year, is typical of the action at the Banks BBQ, Truck/Tractor Pull & Combine Demolition Derby. This year's event will be August 14-16.

Didn't shave? Then bring your face to the Grange beard contest!

Remember way back to 1959 when Oregon was celebrating the state's centennial with a beard growing contest in different communities? In Vernonia that year, Marion Steers won with his magnificent and 'bright red' beard.

Now that the state in 2009 is celebrating its sesquicentennial – that's 150 years – Vernonia, during its annual Friendship Jamboree will be having one of those 'Beard Contests'.

On Sunday, August 9, the Vernonia Grange #305, 457 North Street, is sponsoring a

Beard contest for those wanting to show off their long-growing facial hairs also known as 'whiskers'!

The judging will begin at 2:00 p.m. with a variety of categories being judged (e.g. longest, ugliest, most colorful, best and worst kept, scraggiest, people's choice, etc.). There is even a category for that special lady!

For more information, call 503-429-7731. It costs only a \$1.00 donation for each category (to pay for the awards).

County mandates furloughs for workers to help balance budget

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners approved the implementation of furlough days throughout the rest of 2009 through June 2010 for county departments, with the exception of the Sheriff's Office and the Road & Parks Department. All county offices, except

the Road & Parks Department, will be closed to the public on these furlough days.

This action is being taken as a result of budget shortfalls due to the recession that Oregon and the economy in general has been facing. Of the coun-

See Furloughs, page 5

64th annual Banks BBQ August 14-16

Get ready for fun and lots of action at this year's 64th annual Banks BBQ, Truck/Tractor Pull and Combine Demolition Derby to be held August 14-16 at Banks Sunset Park.

Many other events will make a weekend of fun, including a parade, lots of kids' games, a beer hall and great barbecue.

See page 28 for the full schedule of events.

Vernonia Jamboree starting tomorrow

A full weekend of activities and events will keep everyone busy during the 53rd annual Vernonia Friendship Jamboree, August 7-9. There's fun for everyone with a Kids Fishing Derby, art show & sale, parade, horse gaming, logging show, motorcycle show, car show, concerts, drama, pet party, book sale, teen dance, lots of food and more.

See page 13 for the full schedule of events.

Crisis fund set up to help alleviate cuts in housing assistance aid

United Way of Columbia County has set up a crisis fund and is accepting contributions from the community to aid those families who were adversely affected by recent cut-backs in assistance from the Northwest Oregon Housing Authority (NOHA). The Housing Authority and Community Action Team (CAT) calculate it will cost approximately \$140,000 to meet the housing needs of Columbia County's affected families over the next four months.

Contributions designated to the 2009 Housing Crisis fund can be made by calling the

United Way office at 503-556-3614 to use your credit card or by sending check or money order to United Way of Columbia County, P.O. Box 538, Rainier, OR 97048. Be sure to indicate "2009 Housing Crisis Fund" on your donations. You may designate your contribution for assistance in Columbia County. If you have any questions about this situation and the use of these funds, contact Rocky Johnson, Executive Director of CAT, at 503-397-3511 or Carol Snell, Executive Director of NOHA, at 503-861-0119, ext. 112.

Application process started for a hospital to be built in St. Helens

The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) is beginning its review of an application from Columbia Health District for a state certificate of need to build a new hospital in St. Helens.

The application is for a 12-bed general acute care hospital to be located at 35311 Millard Rd. in St. Helens (near the intersection of Millard Road and U.S. Highway 30).

State law charges DHS officials with reviewing proposals for new hospitals and nursing facilities to ensure health care consumers don't pay for facilities not justified by community needs.

Jana Fussell, DHS certificate of need coordinator, said a proposed decision about need for the proposed St. Helens project will be issued no later than Oct. 22.

Anyone who has a vested interest in the outcome of the DHS decision may request affected party status. Anyone designated as an affected person will receive copies of rele-

vant correspondence and may be a party to any future informal or contested case hearing. A public meeting will be scheduled at which affected parties and other individuals and organizations may provide testimony regarding this application.

DHS will make a copy of the application available for inspection during normal business hours in suite 930 of the Portland State Office Building at 800 N.E. Oregon St., Portland. For further information, contact Jana Fussell at 971-673-1108.

Fireworks Notice

There will be about a 10-minute fireworks display on Saturday, August 8, after the concert on the Vernonia school grounds.

This notice is to inform the community so those with pets can take adequate precautions to keep them safe during the loud noise associated with the fireworks.