

Furloughs: Early retirements, pay freeze for managers and elected officials all applied

From page 1
ty's 175 positions, up to 16 jobs in various county departments could have been affected without the implementation of furlough days, an early retirement program, and a pay freeze for managers and elected officials.

"We had a choice, said Commissioner Tony Hyde, the County's budget officer, "We could reduce the budget through furloughs, a pay freeze and early retirement, or we could lay people off." "The Board chose to retain jobs and provide the least impact on services to the public", he said. The County appreciates its partnership with the Unions that have worked with it to develop the furlough plan. Without their cooperation, this would not have been possible.

As approved by the Board of Commissioners, the furlough

days for the remainder of 2009 September 4, November 25 and December 24. In 2010, the furlough days will be January 4, March 26, April 23, May 28 and June 18.

The scheduled furlough days will close all County departments except the Road and Parks Department, and limited access for State Court Services, which as of this date, will be open for business as usual.

Anyone needing information regarding County operating hours, or whether a certain department is open, may call the county information number, 503-397-7210. Information regarding Courthouse closures or departmental phone numbers can be found on the County website: <http://www.co.columbia.or.us>"MACROBUT-
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Council: City Hall will close at noon Friday

From page 4
recommendation, council did not respond.

After that, Clark McGaugh spoke, "A couple of weeks ago, Mike Kay said Elana (Brasure) was a stalker. It was brought to our attention that Mike Kay had a stalking order against him while in uniform and there was a lawsuit in 1999 to about 2003.

One has to be careful to avoid lawsuits and calling someone a stalker, thought you should be aware." After Kay chuckled, McGaugh asked him what was funny and Kay responded, "If someone was convicted they would not be a police officer." McGaugh answered with, "I did not say convicted, I said arrested and it was in the courts for a long time."

City Administrator Bob Young told council that city hall would close at noon on Friday, August 7, because city staff is involved in Jamboree preparations.

In other business, council;
• heard that the city has received a letter of appreciation for the improvement in service at Anderson Park since Gerie Reynolds has been the host,
• unanimously, by poll, approved the second reading of Ordinance 861 which establishes a police officer training

fee to be tacked on to fines levied by the Justice Court,

- was introduced to DeAnna Pearl, the newly hired Vernonia Prevention Coalition Project Director,

- heard from City Administrator Bob Young that Vernonia has been accepted as a Main Street Program. More information will be provided at future meetings,

- unanimously approved a resolution changing how the city offers Workers' Compensation for Volunteers.

The next scheduled council meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on August 17 at City Hall.

More complaints about Chief Kay

Recently, concerns have been raised about Vernonia Police Department Interim Chief Mike Kay's professionalism when dealing with citizens. Many citizens have told us at *The Independent* about their complaints, dealing mostly with unprofessionalism, bullying, lying, and abusive behavior.

The Independent has uncovered allegations of past abuses by Kay, while he was a police officer in Newport, where lawsuits were filed.

This week, former Vernonia resident Milton Dennis brought up more concerns about Kay, as related in the council meeting article in this issue.

MTC secures summer employment for 75 youth in county

Youth in Columbia County are working this summer with help from MTC Works. The program, funded largely by federal stimulus dollars, is helping about 75 local youth learn about different industries while earning a wage.

In Vernonia, six youth and a supervisor are working on a trail building crew at Stub Stewart State Park, four are working with Vernonia Public Works, one is at the Vernonia School District, and three youth and a crew leader are working in Vernonia assisting seniors in completing projects in their yards and also assisting the Public Works Department with other projects around the community.

Youth in Region One will be paid for more than 26,000

Unemployment rate down, still very high

Columbia County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped to 14.7 percent in June, a significant decrease from the previous month (15.5%) but still much higher than the year before (6.4%). Columbia County exceeded both the statewide rate (12.2%) and the national rate (9.5%). Total employment fell by 135 to 21,484 and the number of unemployed people rose by 18 to 3,625. Total employment this June was 1,247 fewer than one year before and there were 2,106 more people unemployed this year.

The Independent also uncovered a letter, from former Chief Mat Workman to a complainant, about Kay allegedly beating the complainant while he was in hand-cuffs. The letter stated that the complaint was being put in Kay's personnel file, though Kay recently stated at a council meeting that he had no complaints in his personnel file, only commendations.

The city, apparently, has finalized the selection process to hire a new, part-time chief of police. Hopefully, the new chief can clarify and rectify any problems with Vernonia Police Department personnel.

hours of their time at 70 work sites, earning more than \$315,000 – a bill that local businesses won't have to pay.

Julie Gassner, director of the Astoria-based employment and training organization MTC Works, said 134 youth received the temporary jobs this summer because of \$361,633 the agency received from the federal government as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Finding entry-level jobs right now is very challenging for younger workers because of the unemployment rate in the state and county, she said.

"Had they not had this opportunity, they most likely

wouldn't have been able to go to work," Gassner said.

Approximately \$175,000 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will be used in Columbia County to provide local youth with summer work.

In addition, MTC Works received a grant for approximately \$32,000 from the Oregon Youth Employment Initiative and \$11,000 from a Marine grant through the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps.

The \$32,000 grant will be used for a six person crew at Stub Stewart State Park in Vernonia and the \$11,000 grant is for a five person crew on Sand Island near St. Helens.

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