

The INDEPENDENT

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"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

September 17, 2009



The first day of the school year is always exciting, but students at Washington Grade School in Vernonia appear to have formed the letter "W" as they prepare to enter WGS.

WOEC rate increase adopted

Following a rate hearing September 15 at the Vernonia Fire Hall, the West Oregon Electric Cooperative Board of Directors returned to their WOEC office board room for a meeting to formally adopt a rate increase of approximately seven percent. The increase will add about \$7.00 to the average member's monthly bill, based on using 1,000 kWh per

month, according to WOEC General Manager Marc Farmer. The increase includes an additional \$1.50 in the Facility Charge, from \$25.00 to \$26.50, and a slight increase for debt service. The increase for debt service is for two major construction projects, getting more line underground to reduce outages from tree problems, and

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*St. Mary's
Quilt Fair
Sept. 17 - 20
960 Missouri Ave. Vernonia*

*Community-Wide
Garage Sale
Saturday, Sept. 19
Maps at Vernonia Realty
953 Bridge St, Vernonia*

Commissioner Samuelson facing recall attempt

Citizen groups have submitted petitions to the Clatsop County Election Department for the recall of two Clatsop County Commissioners, Jeff Hazen and Ann Samuelson. "District 1 for the Columbia" is seeking to recall Hazen, and "Democracy in District 5" is heading the effort to recall Samuelson.

District 1 petitioners have submitted 552 signatures; they need a minimum of 445 valid signatures, as confirmed by the county clerk. District 5 petitioners have submitted 513 signatures and need a minimum of

447. The recall attempts of Hazen, of Astoria, and Jewell resident Samuelson, as well as signature gathering that is underway to recall District 2 Commissioner Patricia Roberts, have resulted primarily as a result of the commissioners' approvals for siting a LNG terminal in Clatsop County.

"Both campaigns were aided by voters' outrage and frustration at the way Hazen and Samuelson have conducted themselves in making key decisions for the county. People

have had enough," said District 1 Chief Petitioner Jack Guyot.

"Signatures were gathered from all corners of District 5, showing that dissatisfaction with Samuelson is widespread," said District 5 Chief Petitioner Betsy Ayres.

The county clerk must certify the signatures by September 18. If the groups have the minimum number of certified signatures, then Commissioners Hazen and Samuelson will each have 5 days to either resign or submit a statement justifying their position.

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The new spar tree erected September 15 at the Camp 18 Logging Museum is one of only three in the nation known to be traditional spar trees. The 160 foot, 175 year-old Douglas fir, above, was felled by Camp 18 owner Gordon Smith in 2007. This year, a crew from Wayne Stone Logging was pulled from the woods September 14, and donated to remove the old spar tree. The next day they raised and rigged the new spar tree, under the supervision of John Wood.

Paving work slows Hwy. 47 traffic

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) contractor Baker Rock Resources, began paving sections of Highway 47 (Nehalem Highway) after the Labor Day weekend near the cities of Banks and Vernonia.

The paving work requires daytime lane closures on Highway 47 Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Flaggers will direct motorists during the lane closures. The

work will take place in the following locations:

- Vernonia – Highway 47 from the Vernonia city limits north to the Pittsburg Junction.
- Banks – Highway 47 from Cedar Canyon Road north to the split to U.S. 26 (Sunset Highway).

Weather permitting, completion is expected by the end of September. When the paving is complete, ODOT crews will finish striping and shoulder work.

Thieves targeting rural homeowners

Chainsaws and other valuables have reportedly been stolen from homeowners in rural areas of Banks and Vernonia

in recent weeks. Homeowners are advised not to leave items outside where they can be seen and taken.