

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Who could use your help?

Who could use your help? If you have money to give, that's great. Vernonia Cares Food Bank comes to mind right away. With money and jobs scarce right now, more people are turning to the food bank for help to put food on the table. Or, go to one of the fundraising events set up to help raise money for the kidney transplant needed by Vernonian Darrold Mushatt.

Many people do not have extra money to give nowadays, but there are still many ways to give. The Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District is currently seeking volunteers and you don't even have to fight fires to help (though you can; they can always use more firefighters). The Vernonia Volunteer Ambulance Association, the school district, the Senior Center, the food bank, the Lions Club, the Boosters, the Vernonia Community PTA, the American Legion Post, the Scouts (cub, girls, boys, etc.), Prevention Coalition, Friends of the Library, Hands on Art, Jamboree Committee, Pioneer Museum, Vernonia Grange, Vernonia Pride, Columbia County Women's Resource Center and many other county agencies or organizations, plus all the same and more in Banks or whatever community you live or work in – all these and more could use an extra hour of your time (including any we inadvertently left out).

Help a child learn to read. Help an adult learn to read. Mentor a teen and help them make positive choices by being an example. Got a special talent? Teach it to someone. Know an elderly person, a sick person, someone recovering from surgery, someone who's depressed? Maybe they can use a meal, or help around the house, or help shopping, or just need to get out of the house for awhile, or need their dog walked. Cards and flowers are great, but sometimes a phone call or a visit is even better.

Time to be prepared is now

Now, as the weather starts turning cold and wet, is the time to start thinking about winter weather preparedness. Make sure you have a 72-hour emergency kit or, at least, make sure you have extra water, food, blankets, batteries for flashlights and radios, medications, candles or lanterns for power outages. Make sure you and your family have a plan for where to meet in case of high water or other emergencies. Don't forget items your animals will need. Let's hope this won't be needed, but...be ready, just in case.

CORRECTION: OURS appeared in place of ORS (Oregon Revised Statutes) twice in the September 17 Opinion.



Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



Archery season just ended and now rifle deer season will open this weekend in our local area. Locally, I didn't hear of a lot of elk being taken during the archery season, but statewide the results sounded above par with a lot of bigger bulls being taken.

I've heard that sportsmen have been seeing some very nice bucks in our local area. We had a pretty hard winter this year and I have assumed this would have a negative effect, but probably more so on young animals than the older bucks. Last year the buck harvest in the Saddle Mt. unit was up by a couple hundred over previous years; it will be interesting to see if this increase in harvest can be sustained or if it was just a blip on the radar.

Last year's archery elk harvest was up and rifle harvest was down from previous years. It is going to be a little less crowded during rifle elk season this year, due to cutting 300 tags out of each season. It will be interesting to see how this affects harvest. I would guess a slight increase in success rates and a slight reduction in overall harvest.

Recently I took a ride-along with one of the OSP troopers who is working under the Access and Habitat grant program in the local area.

Funded by a surcharge on hunting licenses, this program provides funding to hire retired troopers just during the hunting seasons. This is an efficient way of putting more troopers on the ground when they are needed. On our trip around the local countryside, I became more aware that these officers duties include more than just handing out tickets. We removed closure signs and put up green dot stickers. The green dot stickers are for the new Stimson travel management areas, one in upper Rock Creek and the other in the Camp Olson area. Actually, the travel management areas will be similar to those in years past, but instead of a closure sign on each road that is closed, now there are green dots on fiberglass posts on roads that are open. In general, the main arterials are open and the side spurs are closed. So if you travel into one of these travel management areas be careful not to drive down a road without a green dot marker at the head of it. I was riding with Trooper Holbrook and, while talking with him, it became apparent that these retired state troopers have put in a lot of effort to help keep and expand access for sportsmen on private timberlands. Their hard work paid off with more access for bow hunters on Stimson lands this year. I believe it is in everybody's interest to have these liaisons between sportsmen and private landowners because they provide a middle ground from which to build consensus on access issues.

One aspect that is harming sportsmen's access on private timberlands is the constant dis-

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