

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Work done and work to do

Vernonia' voters have done their work, by passing Measure 5-197, the \$13 million bond to 'ante' us into getting new schools out of the path of future floods. Now the real work begins for the school board, that of raising or finding the additional \$24 million needed to complete the project.

The bond measure is going to raise property taxes. That will be difficult for some property owners and more expensive for some, depending on the size of their property, improvements, and all of the factors that the Columbia County Assessor uses to determine the value of each piece of property.

The school district and the city take the two biggest chunks of property tax, with Columbia County coming in a distant third. Property taxes pay for a lot of services that we wouldn't have otherwise; such as street lights, streets and paths, water, sewer, stormwater, and police. Unfortunately, many of the people whose salaries are paid, at least in part by those taxes, don't live here and help pay those taxes. That's a shame.

One way the city and the school can give back to the community is by shopping locally and keeping as much money in the community as possible. For instance, the city just bought studded tires, out of town, for many of the city owned vehicles. When the police department need to have cars painted, they don't use the body shop in town, they take the vehicles to Vancouver, Washington. Everyone living in this area knows that the time, mileage and gas needed to buy out of town isn't always a bargain. Often the same item can be purchased here for the same cost, sometimes even less. It makes sense for the city to spend our tax dollars in our taxpaying businesses. Please, shop locally.

While we're on the subject of our tax dollars at work. People who work out of town usually have to drive their own vehicles to and from work. Yet, some of our police officers drive police cars to and from work. Wouldn't it be more cost effective to hand them one of those stick-on lights for the few times they have to come to town quickly? The police department has one vehicle per employee, plus two extra vehicles; a truck and an unmarked car.

One last thought. What other town the size of Vernonia has a part-time police chief, a captain, a sergeant and two officers? Seem top heavy? There were about 2,300 residents in Vernonia as of the last census. That's one police position for every 511 residents, including babies and young children. We do need police, but how many, and do we need them 24/7?

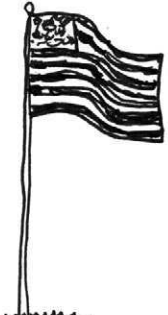
DON'T FORGET THE VET!

REMEMBER WHO THE REAL HEROES ARE

SEEMS TO BE CONGRESS HAS...

TAKEN THE BENEFITS THAT OUR HURT, SICK, WOUNDED AND DISABLED MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED THIS COUNTRY DESERVE. REMOVING PROGRAMS AND MONIES THAT VETERANS ARE BY RIGHTS INTITLED TO AND NEED TO HELP THEM LIVE A FULL LIFE!

WHILE PADDING THEIR OWN POCKETS WITH MORE, BIGGER AND BETTER! THEY NEED TO KNOW WHO PUT THEM THERE! AND WHY....



google-Veterans Rights.

VETERANS DAY NOVEMBER 11

Ike Says . . .

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



When you read this the Blacktailed deer season will just be finishing up. The weather has been perfect for hunting Black-tails this year, opening weekend had rain and there has been rain lately in conjunction with the rut, a perfect combination for good hunting. Early reports are pointing, though, to a slow harvest this year. The deer hunting sure isn't what it used to be and neither are the revenues that used to flow through our area in the good old days. I remember all the red hats walking around town when deer season was in full swing. Out in the woods you had better have brought your own stump. The height of hunters in the woods for Blacktails was in 1985, partially because Eastern Oregon was in the dumps because of bad winters and tag cut backs. A record high 168,000 hunters hit the woods that year and harvested 47,468 deer. This was the record for hunters, but not for harvest; that record was 65,988 Blacktails in 1961. Last year, 118,866 hunters pursued Blacktails and harvested 25,592 deer. No matter how you slice it, Blacktailed deer hunting is far from the days of the past, just how much further the hunting will slide is anybody's guess, but there is no sign that the slide has stopped.

Many of you may have heard that a ballot

measure to return the use of hounds to hunt cougars is in the works. This is very preliminary at this point, but it is something that everybody in the hunting community understands is needed. It will be the non-hunting community that will need to be educated so that they can make the right choice. Of course I can hear the comments being made right now that I'm full of B.S.; that's fine, but what is the goal of the people who want to protect all the predators? Ultimately it is to end hunting. Last year the harvest of deer in Oregon, statewide, was 72% lower from the peak harvest. We have a deer and elk population that is faltering and a cougar population that is peaking. The current estimate of the statewide cougar population is above 5,800 with a ungulate kill every eight days, which equals around 265,000 deer, elk, antelope, sheep or goats eaten a year. The herds simply cannot sustain this amount of mortality.

Some units in this state are getting to the point that even some hunters are starting to question the logic of continued hunts. The lack of mature bucks in the herds may be leading to reduced breeding and lowered survival of the fawns. There comes a time as a sportsman that you have to understand that there may not be room for continued hunting. This is a bitter pill to swallow though when cougars are running unchecked in the woods.

Hunters are allowed to hunt cougars, with most being taken incidental while deer or elk hunting. With decreased opportunity and cuts to

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