

Diatribes first, then Council resumes hearing on sign ordinance

The February 1 Vernonia City Council meeting started with about an hour-and-a-half of diatribes against *The Independent*, or more specifically Clark McGaugh, the publisher. First, Mayor Sally Harrison stood down from the podium to read a letter that was over three pages long. Speaking as a citizen, she accused *The Independent* of all sorts of things, including being quick to find fault,

and said she thinks it's due to "not being breast fed or the need to justify a misspent youth." After Harrison finished, an attorney, on behalf of Captain Mike Kay, gave a Powerpoint presentation that included many untruths or half-truths about McGaugh.

McGaugh reminded council that the remedy for information in *The Independent* that is considered to be in error is to ask

for a correction, which they have not done. Councilor Brett Costley stated he asked for a correction and the error was just repeated. McGaugh asked him to email the information in question.

When council started city business, they continued the public hearing on the sign ordinance and heard from Marilyn Nicks, owner of Cornerstone Naturals, who spoke on behalf of a group of Vernonia business owners. According to Nicks, an informal survey of business owners indicated that 43 of 51 responders did not favor an Early 1900s Historic Mill Town theme for downtown and that 43 responders wanted to have illuminated signage (prohibited by the ordinance being considered for adoption). On the question of whether a temporary sign fee of \$10 is needed, 44 responded "no". Nicks went on to ask Council to amend the ordinance on these items and a few other minor ones. When Council began deliberations on the ordinance, City Administrator Bob Young told them that the planning commission was asking for direction from council on changes. Council asked Young to take back the following recommendations to planning commission:

- No theme be included in the ordinance,
- illuminated signs be allowed,
- that any fees be set by res-

olution, not ordinance, include approval for portable sign use in residential zones.

The council unanimously gave these directions to Young. Council also approved a Resolution listing proposed minimum standards for commercial aeronautical activities.

From the audience, Sam Waters told council that the problem with his father's water bill is not settled or resolved to the family's satisfaction, though the bill has been paid and the water is turned on.

Later, after Waters had left the chambers, City Attorney Jeff Bennett explained his understanding of the status of that water situation. Bennett told council that he and the Water's

attorney never talked about "settlement" but worked on agreements and arrangements that would get the bill paid and the water back on, and that had been accomplished to the satisfaction of both Bennett and the Water's attorney.

Young told the council that the city owns an approximately 20 x 3 foot triangular section in the middle of the property that West Oregon Electric Cooperative is seeking to purchase (where the FEMA trailers had been) and that there will have to be a public hearing before the city can dispose of that property.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 16 (due to the President's Day holiday) at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall.



Atty. Jason Short giving presentation for VPD Capt. Kay.

County GOP schedules Lincoln Day Dinner Feb.13

The Columbia County Republican Central Committee is sponsoring their annual Lincoln Day Dinner for Republicans and other conservatives. The event will be held on Saturday, February 13, at the St. Helens Elks Lodge, 350 Belton Road, St. Helens. Social Hour begins at 5:30 p.m. with Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

The theme for this year's Dinner is "We the People" and features KPAM Radio Talk Show Host Victoria Taft as guest speaker, as well as candidates running in the May Primary election. Also included will be silent and oral auctions with a portion of the silent auction proceeds donated to the Columbia Pregnancy Center. Ticket price is \$25.00 per

person. Contact Keith at 502-366-1381 or Fred at 503-543-6271 to reserve tickets by February 8.

Haulers: Need certificate From page 1

ple who transport metal to a scrap metal business on a public highway to complete a "Metal Transportation Certificate". A hauler who does not have the certificate on hand, can be charged with the new class C misdemeanor that carries a penalty of up to \$500 and 30 days in jail.

Anyone planning to transport metal can download and complete the Metal Transportation Certificate at <http://www.co.washington.or.us/cgi/sonews/letter.pl?searchstring=currentid>

Jobless numbers up for December, 2009

Columbia County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 12.7 percent in December, a significant increase from the previous month (12.2%) and higher than the year before (9.4%). The rate was above the statewide rate (11.0%) and the national rate (10.0%). Total employment dropped by 178 to 21,412 and the number of unemployed people rose by 211 to 3,211. Total employment this December was 969 fewer than one year before and there were 832 more people unemployed this year.

Wauna Federal Credit Union's 43rd Annual Meeting

Where:
Columbia County Fairgrounds Pavilion

When:
Saturday, March 6, 2010
Social 2pm, Meeting 3pm (no charge to attend the meeting)

Meal Tickets:
Limited to 200 Adult Tickets - \$5 each
30 Children Tickets (10 and under) - \$1
Hurry - First Come, First Serve!

All tickets sold at the door will be \$10 each.

Join us for this celebration of great food, many prizes, a credit union update and elections for our Board of Directors



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