



THE INDEPENDENT

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Alison McLeod, of the Wauna Federal Credit Union team, Bucket\$, and Derek Handegard of Black Bear Coffee Company's Hot Shots, battle it out in Donkey Basketball February 6 at Vernonia High School. The Hotshots prevailed to win bragging rights over three other teams.

Sheriff seeks input on nuisance properties

The Columbia County Sheriff's Office is holding the next in its series of sponsored meetings around the county regarding nuisance properties and ideas for combating the attendant crime and environmental problems associated with them. The meeting will be held Monday evening February 22 at 6:00 p.m. at the Columbia County Courthouse in Room 308.

"More than 70 people attended the first meeting in Rainier," said Sheriff Jeff Dickerson. "We are hoping to continue the effort to gather information and ideas for combating this county-wide community problem."

The Rainier meeting took place January 28 at Alston Corner, with 71 people in attendance. Many in attendance expressed for more teeth in county ordinances to address chronic crime properties and the public nuisances they become.

"The Sheriff's Office, in its role as conservators of the peace in Columbia County, has an earnest interest in improving

measures to address these community problems," the sheriff said. "We believe the best ideas for dealing with these issues can often come from the community that has to live with them. We also are aware of the efforts in other places to address these issues and improve conditions in their communities. Together, we can work to improve our situation in Columbia County, too."

This is the second of three planned community meetings to address nuisance properties in Columbia County. Additional town hall meetings are also being contemplated for later in the year on a wide variety of public safety issues affecting the sheriff's office.

Bottle and Can Drive

Bring your bottles and cans to the Washington Grade School play shed on Saturday, February 20, between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and help the Class of 2010 raise money for their senior class trip.

CC Rider adds a run for Vernonia

CC Rider (formerly Columbia County Rider) has added another run to the Vernonia Fixed Route. The bus leaves Vernonia City Hall at 6:15 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. for stops at Stub Stewart State Park, Staley's Junction, and Tri-Met's Willow Creek Station, before returning via the same stops.

The rate, one way, for each ride is \$4.80 for the general public, or \$3.80 for seniors, disabled, students and children. Monthly passes are also available by calling 503-429-4304.

CC Rider also offers Dial-a-Ride service to and from Vernonia on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Call 503-429-4304 one week in advance to schedule your ride.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the West County Flex Route bus leaves Vernonia City Hall at between 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. and in the afternoon at

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Study of law enforcement in county near completion

In December of 2009, the Columbia County Board of Commissioners established a nineteen member Enhanced Law Enforcement Advisory Committee (ELEAC) to determine present levels of law enforcement in all parts of the county, determine both short and long term law enforcement needs, research law enforcement service delivery models, and file a final report and recommendations with the County Commissioners by May 1, 2010.

This effort is both timely and important to the residents of Columbia County. A full look at all law enforcement issues within the county will lead to a set of recommendations for consideration by the Board of Commissioners.

The ELEAC has created three subcommittees, with each handling a different part of the work load. The Needs Subcommittee is surveying the current level of service and identifying the needs in both cities and unincorporated areas of the County. This subcommittee has developed a standard format for gathering current service data, and is beginning to identify service gaps and voids in the current system. Each incorporated city is providing information that will be analyzed and compared with call data from the 9-1-1 District and the Sheriff's Office. From this information, the subcommittee hopes to be able to zero in on needs and the gap in services.

The second subcommittee is

Town Hall with new school updates

Vernonia Schools will hold a Town Hall, February 25 at 7:00 p.m., in the Vernonia Middle School cafeteria to discuss the latest on the new schools project.

working on various options for the delivery of law enforcement services within the County. From the initial ten options that the subcommittee reviewed, three options were eliminated from further consideration. This subcommittee will coordinate its work with the Needs Subcommittee once the full extent of needs is developed.

The third subcommittee is focused on communication and education. They have developed a comprehensive plan designed to let everyone within the County know about the ELEAC, what it is doing, who is on the committee and what the work schedule for is. It is the committee's desire that everyone within the county know about the ELEAC and have an opportunity to attend one of many informational meetings to learn more and to provide new ideas to the ELEAC.

Meetings have been scheduled in St. Helens on Saturday, February 20, from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the St. Helens Learning Center. This meeting is being planned in partnership with the South County Chamber of Commerce. Saturday was selected to experiment with an alternative meeting day for many local residents who commute all week and who might not feel like going out to a meeting after arriving at home from work.

The second meeting will be held February 23 at 7:00 p.m. at the Mist-Birkenfeld Rural Fire Protection District Fire Station on highway 202. There will be additional meetings held over the next two months. The initial set of meetings is designed to inform citizens about the committee and the process, as well as getting citizen suggestions for what should be done. The ELEAC will conduct additional meetings once they have ar-

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