



# THE INDEPENDENT

Vol. 25, No. 7

The Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley for Over 25 years

April 1, 2010



Easter is a great time for fancy bonnets so the Vernonia Senior Center had an Easter Bonnet Contest. The winner from among all of these contestants was Faith Reynolds, who is seated front and center.

## Vernonia may be a "Living Laboratory"

Catherine Mater, a Senior Fellow with the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, was in Vernonia, March 18, and gave three presentations on an idea to make Vernonia the nation's first "Living Laboratory" in sustainable biomass and/or carbon sequestration. The final presentation was at the Vernonia School District Town Hall, held that evening.

The mission of the Pinchot Institute is to advance conservation and sustainable natural resource management by developing innovative, practical, and broadly-supported solutions to

conservation challenges and opportunities. One area of their current focus is on sustainable bioenergy development. They accomplish their mission through research, education and technical assistance.

Vernonia came to the attention of the Institute in Washington, D.C., after hearing from Columbia County Commissioner Tony Hyde and others about Governor Kulongoski's Oregon Way project, the work of the Oregon Solutions team and the passage of the local school bond.

Some components of the

project in Vernonia might include bulk storage of fuel pellets made of woody biomass from the surrounding privately owned forests. The pellets could be used to run furnaces for heating and cooling at the schools, public buildings and residences, and might be available at half the price of normal pellet purchases.

In combination with this, is potential use of flood plain land to raise hybrid poplar trees which could be used for the biomass and also help the wastewater treatment process.

See Biomass on Page 4

## Studded Tire Season is extended

The studded tire season has been extended until 12:01 a.m. on Sunday, April 11. Major

changes in the weather forecast, the ferocity of these storms and citizen input convinced the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to extend the deadline. Drivers should remain cautious while driving in snow zones!

A similar extension has been announced in Washington, according to the Washington State Patrol.

ODOT encourages drivers to consider other types of traction tires or chains because studded tires cause at least \$11 million damage each year on city

See Weather on page 6

## Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday in Vernonia

The annual Vernonia PTA Easter Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, April 3, at 10:00 a.m. in Hawkins Park, on Park Drive.



Children aged 1-10 are invited to bring their baskets and join the hunt. The Easter bunny is expected to make an appearance and children's pictures can be taken with him.

Don't be late, as the hunt always starts on time.



Raymond Pultz and his son, Austin, had a good time and a good catch at Vernonia Lake during Spring Break. Photo courtesy of Garry Kinney.

## City reportedly settles lawsuit

A lawsuit filed by Garry Kinney against the City of Vernonia has been settled, according to a source close to the case. *The Independent* was unable to obtain official verification from the city before press time. The suit alleged that, on August 22, 2009, Vernonia Police Officers Michael Kay and Jeff Dalrymple improperly and illegally detained Mr. Kinney, assaulted and battered him, illegally searched him and his property.

According to the information obtained by *The Independent*, the City of Vernonia, through its insurer, settled the case with Mr. Kinney for the amount of \$9,800. Mr. Kinney's attorney stated in his letter of intent to sue, "In the view of Mr. Kinney

and many of the citizens of Vernonia, there has been a systemic pattern of this type of abuse by the police department and this must be rectified." Mr. Kinney was also "requesting that the Vernonia Police Department institute proper training of officers so the harassment of the people of Vernonia does not continue in the future." No information was available on any non-monetary settlement that may be included in the finalization of this lawsuit.

**KNOW THE CANDIDATES!**  
Interviews with all candidates for Columbia County Commissioner begin on Page 5

## Benefit Concert to aid Dennis Chadek

A benefit concert for Vernonia resident Dennis Chadek will be held April 10, starting at 5:00 p.m., at the Vernonia Community Church. Chadek is recovering from a stroke and needs help with medical expenses. The concert will feature, Strand, Second Wind Jazz Ensemble and Disaster Relief.