State/Microsoft partnership for free online training

Governor Ted Kulongoski announced May 27 that Oregon will partner with Microsoft to provide free online technology training to Oregonians who are out of work and looking for opportunities to improve their computer skills. Microsoft will provide the state with over 16,000 vouchers for eligible Oregonians.

"This public-private partnership will provide Oregonians with the opportunity to learn the skills needed for twenty-first century jobs," said Governor Kulongoski. "I would like to personally thank Microsoft for their generosity during this difficult time."

Under Microsoft's Elevate America initiative, Oregon will receive 16,875 vouchers for online training, online testing, and more advanced level training:

· Each training voucher is redeemable for free, online training on Microsoft Windows Vista or one of the programs in the Microsoft Office Suite.

· Each testing voucher is redeemable for a Microsoft Business Certification Exam.

· Advanced level online training vouchers are redeemable for training for individuals on technical professional career tracks in areas such as web development or database management.

WorkSource Oregon, the state's workforce system, will administer the Elevate America program in Oregon. Eligible participants must be unemployed and registered with WorkSource Oregon. Vouchers will be provided on a first-come, first-serve basis for those eligible.

Oregonians can find out how to access the program by going to www.WorkSourceOregon.org or by visiting their local WorkSource Oregon Center.

Microsoft announced the "Elevate America" program at the National Governor's Association Winter Conference in February 2009. The initiative is expected to provide up to 1 million vouchers nationwide for Microsoft e-Learning courses and select Microsoft certification exams at no or low cost to recipients. The program, part of Microsoft's overall Unlimited Potential efforts to improve social and economic opportunities for people, will provide technology training for up to two million people during the next three years.

City, Ridge Riders discuss lease

Vernonia City Council held a work session, May 28, with the Vernonia Ridge Riders and the city's Parks Committee, to discuss a possible amendment of the Ridge Riders lease for the arena at Anderson Park.

It soon became clear that there are issues that need to be worked out before June 30, when the current lease between the City of Vernonia and the Ridge Riders runs out. If the lease is not rewritten at that point, it would continue for five consecutive 19 year terms unless the Ridge Riders (but not the City) wished to make a change or chose not renew it.

According to Mayor Sally Harrison, the lease needs to be redone, but there are no "big" issues, and the City wants the lease written in a way that allows the Ridge Riders to pursue grant opportunities for building a roof over the arena.

Parks committee member Casey Mitchell and councilor Brett Costley, who is chairman of the committee, both noted that a change in the law no longer allows the city to grant a 99 year lease, and will require a change in the lease. A few other issues were raised, by Parks Committee members and Ridge Riders.

Harrison asked for a workshop on the issues and the lease language. The workshop is set for June 10 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall.

The next regular meeting of the Vernonia City Council is will be at 7:00 p.m. on June 7.

County jobless numbers go up again

Columbia County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 12.6 percent in April, a significant increase from the previous month (11.9%) but lower than the year before (13.8%). The rate was above the statewide rate (10.8%) and the national rate (9.9%). Total employment climbed by 217 to 21,529 and the number of unemployed people fell by 157 to 3,087. Total employment this April was 112 fewer than last and there were 347 fewer people unemployed this year.

Community Calendar

VERNONIA

Alcoholics Anonymous	Mondays	6:30 p.m., 410 North Street
Alcoholics Anonymous	Thursdays (Big Book Study)	7:00 p.m., 410 North Street
American Legion Post #119	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m., 627 Adams Avenue
Booster Club	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., VHS Library
Boy Scout Troop 201	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., Scout Cabin
Boy Scout Troop 860	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., LDS Church
Cemetery Beautification Comm.	2nd Thursday	6:30 p.m., Library
CERT	4th Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-3018
Chamber of Commerce	2nd Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-6081
Community Coalition	2nd Monday	12:30 p.m. School District Ofc.
Cub Scout Pack 201	Scout Cabin	For Info Call 503-429-4250
Friends of the Library	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Vernonia Library
Girl Scouts, Neighborhood 4-2		For Info Call 503-819-0143
Izaak Walton League	3rd Thursday	For location call 503-429-7193
Kiwanis Club	2nd & 4th Wednesday	6:30 p.m., New Hong Kong
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Tuesdays	6:30 p.m., New Hong Kong
Municipal Airport Committee	1t Wednesday	6:30 p.m., City Hall
Pioneer Museum		For Info Call 503-429-3713
Public Works Committee	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Cares Directors		For Info call 503-429-1414
Vernonia City Council	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Community PTA	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., WGS Library
Vernonia Garden Club	2nd Tuesday	1:30 p.m., Vernonia Library
Vernonia Grange	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., Grange Hall
Vernonia Health Center	2nd Monday	6:00 p.m., 510 Bridge St.
Vernonia Learning Center	1st Wednesday	6:00 p.m., VLC
Vernonia Parks Committee	3rd Wednesday	6:30 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Planning Comm.	1st & 3rd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Pride	2nd Thursday	1:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Ridge Riders	Last Thursday	7:00 p.m., Senior Center
Vernonia RFPD Board	2nd Tuesday	6:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia School Board	2nd Thursday	6:00 p.m., District Office
Vernonia Sr. Center Board	2nd Friday	10:00 a.m., Senior Center
Vernonia Transfer Station	2nd & 4th Saturdays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.	Behind VHS
Vern. Volunteer Ambulance Assoc.	1st, 3rd & 4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
WOEC Directors	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., WOEC

MIST-BIRKENFELD

M-BRFPD Board Business Mtg.	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-BRFPD Board Workshop	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Ambulance Drill	1st & 2nd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Fire Drill	1st & 2nd Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Helping Circle	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B SAR Drill	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Volunteer Assoc.	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Natal Grange	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Natal Grange Hall
T.O.P.S.	Mondays	9:00 a.m., Main Fire Station
Upr Nehalem Watershed Council	For date call 429-0869	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station

BANKS

Alcoholics Anonymous	Friday	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
Alcoholics Anonymous	Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
American Legion Post #90	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., Main Street Post
Banks City Council	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., City Hall
Banks Fire District #13	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Station 13
Banks Library Commission	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Banks Planning Commission	Last Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Banks School Board	2nd Monday	7:30 p.m., Jr. High Library
Banks Youth Group	Sunday, Wednesday	7:00 p.m., UMC Youth Bldg.
Chamber of Commerce	1st Thursday	12:30 p.m., Fire District Office
CPO 14	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Everybody's Hometown Band	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., BHS Music Room
Friends of the Library	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., Brown Derby
Sunset Park Assoc.	3rd Wednesday	8:00 p.m., Gun Club
T.O.P.S.	Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Administration Bldg.

COLUMBIA COUNTY (All meet in St. Helens unless otherwise noted.)

Board of Commissioners	Wednesday	10:00 a.m., Courthouse
Citizens for Senior Justice	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Sunset Park Church
Columbia Comm Mental Health	1st Tuesday	5"30 p.m., 58646 McNulty Way
Columbia Soil & Water District	3rd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., NRCS , 2514 Sykes
County Fair Board	2nd Monday	6:00 p.m., Fairgrounds 4-H Bldg.
County Parks Commission	3rd Tuesday	Times vary, 1054 Oregon St.
Mental Health Advisory Comm.	Quarterly	For Info call 503-397-7211
Comm. on Children & Families	3rd Thursday	5:30 p.m. OSU Ext., 505 N. Hwy. 30
Local Alcohol & Drug Plann. Comm.	Quarterly	For Info call 503-397-7211

Organizations and meeting dates not listed may be included by calling 429-9410 or by mail to The INDEPENDENT, 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.