



THE INDEPENDENT

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This Red-tailed Hawk recently dropped in for lunch at Vernonia Lake. PHOTO BY GARRY KINNEY

Start of school changes traffic



Be prepared for a longer commute due to the addition of school buses being out and about, and increased vehicular traffic as a result of teenagers driving to school.

Expect the unexpected, watch for children darting out into the street or children riding their bicycles, especially during the dark hours of the morning.

Be patient and observe the law when approaching or following a school bus that activates its stop arm for loading and unloading children.

Be very mindful of intersections where children are prone to gather for the bus or at designated bus stops.

When traveling in or around areas where schools are located, be aware that the speed limit in a school zone is 20 mph.

Twelve candidates contending for Vernonia mayor, council seats

An impressive number of people are running in the November 2 election for three positions on the Vernonia City Council. The filing deadline closed August 24 with a total of 12 candidates for the mayoral and two council positions that are up for grabs.

Four have filed for the two-year mayor's position. Incumbent Sally Harrison, who is seeking a third term, will face Josette Mitchell, Victoria J. Peters and Emil Edward Rode.

Eight candidates will vie for the two open council positions, with the winners serving four-year terms. Two incumbents have filed, Cynthia Ball and Catherine M. Helmer, who was appointed July 19 to an open position on the council. Others running for council positions are Willow Burch, Edward Johnson, Steven Eric Johnson, Marilyn Ann Nicks, Ernest

(Ernie) W. Smith, and Burton (Burt) Tschache.

Ballots for the November 2 election will be mailed on Friday, October 15. Watch *The Independent* for additional information about the candidates.

The deadline for new voter registration is
 October 12

— CORRECTION —

Incorrect information about the price of Dallas Brass tickets was provided to *The Independent* (August 19, 2010). The correct ticket prices are \$12.00 for adults and \$8.00 for students, or 5 persons for \$40.00. The show is September 17, at 7:00 p.m., at Washington Grade School. Tickets are available at Creatures or the School District Office.

Vernonia Health Board seeks new clinic, more coverage

Recent news that the Vernonia Health Center Board has voted to work toward providing medical services to the community by means of becoming a partner with Coastal Family Medical Center has raised many questions in the community.

One of the reasons given by the board for moving in this direction is the need to move the clinic out of the flood plain. The Board currently has an operating agreement with Providence Medical Clinic, which does not build rural clinic buildings. In order to pursue other opportunities for building a new clinic, the board started looking at other operating options. One option that came to the forefront was a partnership with Coastal Family Medical Clinic.

Coastal Family Medical Clin-

ic in Astoria has been in business for eight years and is one of over 1,000 Federally Qualified Health Centers (HC) in the United States. The first HCs were set up 40 years ago and are still serving patients. Grant opportunities exist within the FQHC model for Vernonia to become what's termed a Look-Alike of Coastal. HCs are non-profit private or public entities that are designed to serve medically underserved populations or areas. Vernonia qualifies as an underserved population due to the distance to other clinics.

HCs serve the community by seeing all patients, regardless of ability to pay, which doesn't mean they are "free" clinics. A sliding fee scale for services is based on patients' ability to pay,

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Culvert replacement closes lanes on Scappoose-Vernonia Highway

A culvert replacement and re-paving project started August 26, three miles from Highway 47 on Scappoose-Vernonia Hwy., is resulting in temporary lane closures. The construction work will take place between mileposts 2.5 and 3.5 and requires lane closure during the daytime. Expect up to 15-minute lane closures during construction. The delays should be minimal by September 15, and the work is expected to be completed by September 30.

The scope of work includes replacement of existing culvert to allow more juvenile fish to migrate up stream to better spawning habitat. The total project cost is \$482,350.99, with the funding coming from multiple grant sources stem-

ming from the hard work of the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council. The grant sources are Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, \$389,350; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, \$43,000; and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, \$50,000. The only work being completed by the Columbia County Road Department is implementation of the contract. The project construction contract was awarded to TFT Construction, Inc. of Scappoose with Lower Columbia Engineering designing and managing the project.

The primary work of replacing the culvert will bring the roadway crossing to standards set by the regulatory permitting agencies.