

## Where to Find Them

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## Letters

### Vernonia, a beautiful gem of a small town

To the Editor:

Dear Vernonians: I had the pleasure of touring your city in early August as I was there working on a project to help Vernonia get grant money to support the health center. I was so impressed by the reception I received, the support the health center has from a wide variety of people and the obvious love they all share for their community. You have a small and beautiful gem of a town and I was touched to be part of it for a day. Thank you for your efforts.

**Heather Bonser-Bishop  
 Gold Beach**

### Help offered to avoid mortgage foreclosure

To the Editor:

The US Department of Treasury has approved plans submitted by Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) for Oregon to receive \$138 million dollars in funds to assist families hardest hit by unemployment and the threat of foreclosure on their homes. OHCS will be implementing the program by year end. It is important for people in the counties of Tillamook, Clatsop and Columbia not to wait to seek assistance if you are struggling to make your mortgage payments

or think you might be in this situation soon. The process involved in foreclosure prevention can be lengthy. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has a website ([www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)) where you can locate a HUD approved housing counseling agency near you for assistance. The services offered are free of charge. Community Action Team, Inc. is a HUD approved counseling agency serving Tillamook, Clatsop and Columbia Counties. We have assisted approximately 200 households in the last 18 months with foreclosure prevention. Community Action Team plans to hold community meetings once the final OHSI plan is released by OHCS. But please do not wait if you feel you are in need of assistance – we are here to help. 503-325-9215, ext. 2303 or [cindkp@cat-team.org](mailto:cindkp@cat-team.org)

**Cindy Peake  
 Housing Center Manager  
 Community Action Team, Inc.**

### Promoting a healthy life style is VPC goal

To the Editor:

Vernonia Night Out was a huge success!! Representatives from the Vernonia Rural Fire Department, Cadet Program, EMT, Vernonia Police, and Vernonia Prevention Coalition (VPC) were there to meet and greet over 300 people at

Anderson Park. Showings like these are invaluable to the community to strengthen our collaborative commitment in providing quality service to the citizens of Vernonia. And in turn, getting the recognition these partners deserve but never ask for. Thank you to the City of Vernonia, Lion's Club, Oregon Dairy Women, Kiwanis, Sentry Market and all other volunteers who made this annual event happen.

This is just one of the many opportunities that the VPC has been a part of. The Coalition has had a successful two years of implementing programming to heighten the awareness of public safety and policy enforcement around the issue of reducing access of ATODs (Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs) to youth. We can and will continue for up to 10 years. Each program completed thus far has been approved by the project directors of SAMSHA Drug Free Communities Grant. These programs are planned almost a year in advance and have to follow stringent guidelines in planning and implementation to ensure effective outcomes.

The VPC's mission is to develop safe and healthy neighborhoods through collaborative planning, community action, policy advocacy and enforcement. No two coalitions are alike nor are they expected to

be. In fact, while the goals of the grant are steadfast, our community's needs are ever changing and things we do to influence change will change. Coalitions around the nation are providing services in their communities that are developed specifically for their community. Vernonia is no exception.

One of the most important projects to date is to bring increased awareness of the Oregon State Tobacco Free Schools Policy, and Vernonia 47J District's policy for Public Conduct on School Property. These, and others, address the need to provide safe and healthy environments for our children to learn and play in by asking youth and adults not to use ATODs on school campus, therefore enforcing state law. Another objective of the VPC is to help reduce harm to the majority of the population by bringing awareness to and encourage enforcement of current public safety ordinances enacted by City Council.

How do we effect positive community environmental change? We lead by example. The coalition is helping to ensure places for people to gather that encourage positive behavior while mentoring our youth in healthy lifestyle choices. The majority of what a child learns is NOT from what an adult says, but what the child SEEs the adult doing. Whether it is having a good time without abusing alcohol or drugs or seeing an adult follow park rules is teaching positive life lessons.

Members of the VPC work diligently to address the changing needs of the community. We offer to help other entities become stronger advocates for each other. We offer support to other agencies serving the citizens of Vernonia. In the first year alone, our volunteer board, members and partners

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## Ike Says . . .

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the Western Oregon elk harvest and population is stable. In the Saddle Mt. unit, elk hunters took more bulls in '09 than in '08, contrary to the goals that ODF&W had hoped for. Remember that rifle bull elk hunters were reduced to try and reduce total bull harvest in the Saddle Mt. unit. In '08 rifle hunters took 350 bulls between the two seasons and in '09 rifle hunters took 372 bulls. '08 rifle hunter numbers were 2,419 versus 1,916 in '09; needless to say the hunter success numbers for '09 were very good at a 19% average. Archers took their second highest bull harvest with 142 bulls, versus 123 in '08. Archer numbers actually dropped from '08 to '09, 1,521 to 1,479 respectively. So archers also increased their success rate, which was 13%

for bull/cow combined.

Easter Oregon mule deer had a harvest of 19,935 bucks and 20,980 deer total in '09. In '08 the harvest was 19,476 buck and 20,457 deer total. For perspective, the harvest in 1996 was 24,278 bucks and 29,581 deer total. So it appears that the mule deer harvest and population may be up 2% from '08, but since '96 the stats show an 18% decrease in buck harvest and 29% overall.

The picture for Eastern Oregon elk is not so good. In '09 the harvest was 4,946 bulls and 7,293 elk total. In '08 the harvest was 5,121 bulls and 7,169 elk total. In 1996 the harvest was 8,269 bulls and 17,870 elk total. While the overall stats show an increase in elk taken in '09 compared to '08, this is mainly due to Cow harvest (a 300 animal increase), even

though bull harvest was off 3%. In regards to 1996 harvest levels we are now 40% down for bulls and 59% down overall. I would suggest that ODF&W get off the cow hunts now; with the increase in apex predators (cougars and now wolves) we have little need for these female hunts.

Everybody also needs to know that the 1996 data that was used for comparison purposes does not reflect the historic highs for any of these areas or hunts. 1996, though, does represent the second harvest season after the ban on using hounds for cougars.

**Izaak Walton League,  
 Nehalem Valley Chapter**  
 meets monthly on the 3rd  
 Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Call  
 503-429-7193 for location.

### Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters with personal attacks on private citizens. Preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address or phone number.