



# THE INDEPENDENT

Vol. 25, No. 22

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

November 18, 2010



They had just finished working on a power outage and were driving back to headquarters after dark, but Kim Oblack-Morrison is grateful that they stopped to investigate some taillights in an odd place. Now Ryan Delemos, Terry Pike and Jamie Mullins are rightly being called "heroes". For the full story, see Power of the People on page 15. PHOTO COURTESY OF WOEC.

## Schools awarded \$1 million grant from Ford Foundation

The Ford Family Foundation announced Tuesday that it will contribute a \$1 million challenge grant to help rebuild schools and a community center in Vernonia.

The grant provides a \$500,000 one-to-one match for gifts of \$100,000 or more, and a \$500,000 one-to-one match for gifts of \$25,000 and more.

The extraordinary grant (an exception to the foundation's published guidelines) and challenge is meant to encourage other foundations, businesses and people from across the region to help Vernonia rebuild and create a stronger community after being hit with two 500-year floods within 11 years.

"The Vernonia community has created a plan to both replace their schools and to revitalize the community. We are impressed by this compelling project that will serve as the catalyst to rebuild a strong rural community that was damaged by two historic floods in such a short time," said Foundation president Norm Smith. "This visionary project will...also create connections to colleges and universities and demonstrate renewable biomass energy and other sustainable economic opportunities with its center for rural sustainability."

"Catalyst: the campaign for Vernonia's schools" will have until the end of 2011 to meet

the challenge grant.

"We are deeply appreciative of The Ford Family Foundation for providing such exceptional support and such a significant leadership gift," said Tom Kelly, co-chair of the campaign. "Their grant reminds us all that Vernonia is our Katrina. It is a community that has stepped up in a big way to rebuild itself, and it is a community that needs and deserves all of our support."

The new school and community center will be built in a safe, central location high above the redrawn floodplain and will provide for at least 30 years of population growth. The design and educational programs will be aligned with sustainable practices to create long-term economic opportunities.

The LEED-certified state-of-the-art facilities will feature a unique-to-Oregon integrated K-12 design, as well as a rural sustainability center that will combine science labs and classrooms for the schools with space for Oregon's colleges and universities to conduct sustainable forestry and clean energy research, and to provide job skills training.

"Together, with the community's input, we have designed schools that will serve Vernonia into the next century and a campus that will provide much-needed facilities for cultural, civic and community events," said Dr. Kenneth Cox, Superintendent of the Vernonia School District.

"The district greatly appreciates the generosity of the Ford Family Foundation. This challenge grant is an indicator of their confidence in the Vernonia Community and the impact that new schools will have on our future. We are excited by the fact that this grant will help generate

See Grant on page 11

## Winds trigger reminders for safety in emergencies

Strong winds walloped the west coast Monday night, felling trees, blocking highways and causing sporadic power failures. As utility crews work to restore power, emergency managers urge residents affected by outages to exercise caution and common sense.

"Power outages raise a number of safety concerns as residents seek to light, heat and power their homes from alternative sources," said FEMA Regional Administrator Ken Murphy. "Emergency power needs can rank right up there with food, water, first aid kits and shelter, but we need to be care-

full!"

When the power fails, resist the temptation to call 9-1-1 for information – that's what your battery-powered radio is for. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to prevent food spoilage. Turn off electric appliances to protect against power surges when power is restored. Turn off all lights but one (to alert you when power resumes). Plan on cell phones or corded phones for emergency calls – cordless phones require electricity. Keep your car fuel tank at least half-full (gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps).

Candles can be dangerous fire hazards. Flashlights and electric lanterns are safer by far. Battery operated radios and

See Winds on page 16

**Join Gov. Ted Kulongoski**  
**Students, School Staff and others for the**  
**Vernonia School Groundbreaking Ceremony**  
**Thursday, December 2, 1010 @ 10:00 AM**  
~~~~~  
**You are also invited to an**  
**Appreciation Reception at 11:30 AM**  
**at the Vernonia High School Gym**