



THE INDEPENDENT

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Winter came early this year as shown in this November 23 photo of Gladys and George Gans' barn on Stoney Point Road.

A full day of fun set in downtown

The first annual The Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia Celebration will be held Saturday, December 4. It will be a nostalgic day reminiscent of Christmases long ago. The celebration will run from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and will take place throughout downtown Vernonia's Bridge Street.

Events of the family-friendly day will include a live Nativity, traveling carolers, hot cider, music, a choir performance, hot chocolate, period costumes, Christmas storytelling, Vernonia Coffee, and a holiday baked goods competition. Pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus will be available in the downtown area. Local businesses will be offering special discounts to assist with your holiday shopping. In addition to these events, two fundraisers will be conducted; one for donations of non-perishable foods for Vernonia Cares food bank, the other for cash donations for the Commu-
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Vernonia Holiday Events

CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTRY BAZAAR
Dec. 4, 10 am-5 pm, Dec. 5, 12-5 pm, Vernonia Middle School
VERNONIA SENIOR CENTER BAZAAR
Dec. 4-5, 9 am-5 pm
THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS IN VERNONIA
Bridge St., Dec. 4, 10 am - 6 pm, then lighted parade
SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMS
Vernonia Middle School, Dec. 7, 7:00 p.m.
Vernonia High School, Dec. 16, 7:00 p.m.
Mist School, Dec. 17, 7:00 p.m.

New law applies to motorcyclists

As of January 1, 2011, new motorcyclists aged 30 and under must complete an ODOT-approved motorcycle safety course before they can be issued a motorcycle endorsement by DMV. This is part of a phased-in law (Senate Bill 546) passed by the 2009 Oregon Legislature. Other motorcycle-related laws were passed at the same time and have already gone into effect. ODOT-approved motorcycle safety courses are provided by the TEAM OREGON Motorcycle Safety Program. Since

1997, Oregon law has required all riders under 21 to complete a TEAM OREGON Basic Rider Training course as part of the endorsement process. Starting January 1, all new riders between the ages of 21-30 must take either the Basic or Intermediate Rider Training course. Those under 21 are still required to take the Basic Rider Training course. Under Senate Bill 546, mandatory training is being phased in for all new motorcycle riders regardless of age. Beginning January 1, new
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New mortgage assistance program

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) has launched a new website (www.oregonhomeownerhelp.org) and identified Community Action Team, Inc., to help deliver the state's Mortgage Payment Assistance (MPA) program in Columbia, Clatsop and Tillamook Counties. The funding for this program comes from the U.S. Department of Treasury's Housing Finance Agency Innovation Fund for the Hardest Hit Housing Markets. On December 10 OHCS will open an online application for the MPA program at www.oregonhomeownerhelp.org.

gonhomeownerhelp.org. Community Action Team will help homeowners throughout the application process. For the most current information about the program, including eligibility criteria and FAQs, go to www.oregonhomeownerhelp.org. The website will serve as the primary source of information about the MPA program and Oregon's other foreclosure prevention programs. Homeowners who need immediate help, should call Community Action Team at 800-325-8098 or 503-325-8098 or e-mail Cindy at cindkp@cat-team.org.



Columbia County Sheriff's Deputy Ryan Dews and Vernonia Police Officer Shawn Carnahan with the Medal of Valor awards they received at the OPOA banquet in Newport. Photo courtesy of Columbia County Sheriff's Office

Officers receive medals for Valor

Vernonia Police Officer Shawn Carnahan and Columbia County Sheriff's Deputy Ryan Dews each received the Oregon Peace Officers Association's (OPOA) Medal of Valor in a ceremony held in Newport on November 19. Carnahan and Dews received their medals after risking their lives to save the passenger in a stolen vehicle involved in a pursuit on Scappoose-Vernonia Road on July 4. The stolen car crashed when the driver of the car attempted to avoid a spike strip, lost con-

trol of the vehicle and left the roadway, where it burst into flames. Dews and Carnahan reacted quickly to the burning vehicle and were able to pull Robert Regan, St. Helens, from the flames. Dews and Carnahan reacted quickly to the burning vehicle and were able to pull Robert Regan, St. Helens, from the flames. The car quickly became engulfed, making further rescue attempts impossible, and the driver of the stolen vehicle – Brooks Anderson of St. Helens – died at the scene.
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