



# THE INDEPENDENT

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Excitement, and praise for the community's efforts by Governor Ted Kulongoski, easily compensated for a gray, cold day at groundbreaking for the new Vernonia school complex.

## Governor, community join in start of school project

"I use this community as an example. You believed in your community, your children and each other. You believed in a brighter day. That day has come," stated Governor Ted Kulongoski at the start of official groundbreaking ceremonies for the new Vernonia schools, on December 2.

One day short of three years from the flood of 2007, a crowd of perhaps one hundred community members, plus a goodly number of elected officials and other dignitaries, came together to see the groundbreaking for construction of the new school building that will house students from kindergarten through twelfth-grade, beginning in the fall/winter of 2012.

Governor Kulongoski also

brought a surprise announcement that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) would be putting \$3.8 million dollars into street improvements to Highway 47 (Bridge St.) and the two streets that adjoin the new school site. Included will be widening of Hwy. 47 by Missouri Ave. to allow for a turn lane, paving two streets, constructing sidewalks and other streetside additions.

The Governor, with a very big smile, operated a track hoe with bucket before picking up a shovel along with about 10 others for the actual groundbreaking.

After the groundbreaking, the Governor attended an assembly of all students and gave the school district an Oregon state flag to fly at the new school. In return, Superintendent Dr. Ken Cox presented Kulongoski with a book of drawings done by the 2007 third grade class just after the flood.

More donations to the Vernonia Schools project were announced at the reception held in the high school gymnasium. In addition to the \$1 million challenge grant from Ford Family Foundation, the following grants and gifts were announced; \$100,000 grant from The Kelley Family Foundation, \$50,000 from the Oregon Community Foundation, \$25,000 from U.S. Bank, and \$25,000 from the Samuel Johnson Foundation. All donations, plus the \$13 million bond measure passed by Vernonia voters in November 2009, will go toward the \$38.9 million price tag for the new schools.

"Vernonia battled back and today represents a new chapter, a new beginning...I say to each and everyone of you, God Bless Vernonia and God Bless Oregon," was Kulongoski's final statement at the new school site.

## Help local kids by using Giving Tree

A Giving Tree has been set up in the lobby of the local U.S. Bank branch, for needy children in the Vernonia School District. Tags on the tree, available for the taking, specify items needed, such as a Dignity Bag with full contents, a Dignity Bag of individual items, coats, shoes, underwear and socks. There are tags for all different financial abilities.

The tree is sponsored by U.S. Bank Vernonia Branch, and the Vernonia Prevention Coalition.

### Vernonia School Holiday Programs

VERNONIA HIGH SCHOOL  
TONIGHT, 7:00 P.M.

MIST SCHOOL  
DECEMBER 17, 7:00 P.M.



Spectators at Vernonia's annual Lighted Truck Parade on Dec. 4 were wowed by Ray Cota's log truck, which was followed by an equally colorful Bighorn Logging truck.