



THE INDEPENDENT

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

January 6, 2011



More waterfowl are walking on Vernonia Lake than swimming in it, as these Canada geese illustrate, because most of the lake is frozen.

Rainier Police Chief killed on duty

Rainier Chief of Police Ralph Painter, 55, was shot and killed Wednesday morning, January 5, after he responded to a disturbance call at Rainier Sound Authority.

Reports of the incident were sketchy at press time, but apparently Daniel Armaugh Butts, 21, of Kalama, Washington, was trying to take someone else's vehicle. Painter struggled with Butts and was shot just before 11:00 a.m.

Painter was taken to St. John's Medical Center in Longview, where he was pronounced dead.

After other law enforcement personnel arrived on the scene, Butts was shot and wounded before being taken into custody.

Hwy. 30 was closed for a time after the shooting.

Painter was married and had seven children. He graduated

from St. Helens High School in 1974, then attended Clackamas Community College. He had been a DARE officer and a Rainier city councilman. He had served on the Rainier police force since 1999 and had been Chief since 2006.

"I expect it will have a huge impact on this community," said Columbia County Sheriff Jeff Dickerson.

Board member sought for M-B FD

The Mist-Birkenfeld RFPD Board of Directors is accepting applications for Board position no. 1, previously held by Stephen Butsko, who resigned effective November 16, 2010. This term will run to June 30, 2011.

Interested parties residing in the fire district are invited to attend regular Board meetings and meet with Board President

Volunteers needed for Ambulance Assoc.

Looking for a way to help make a real difference in Vernonia? Consider becoming a member of the Vernonia Volunteer Ambulance Association (VVAA).

To volunteer or for more information, call 503-429-4600 Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Bill DeJager to answer any questions concerning Board responsibilities.

Any interested, qualified person wishing to serve the remainder of the term must mail a letter of intent by January 14, 2011. Address the letter to Mist-Birkenfeld RFPD, Attention: Board President Bill DeJager, 12525 Hwy. 202, Mist, OR 97016.

Vernonia 2010 Year in Review

- Jan. 4 – 1st batch of flood property acquisitions are approved by city council.
- Jan. 7 – The Independent starts 25th year of publication. DPSST completes complaint review of Captain Mike Kay, no action taken because conviction constituting disqualifying misconduct occurred prior to January 1, 2001. (2011 update: Kay is the subject of a new investigation, but no details are currently available)
- Jan. 13 – Senator Ron Wyden holds town hall.
- Jan. 19 – Group of Vernonia business owners object to city council's new sign ordinance.
- Jan. 26 – Two arrested for burglary of 16 laptops and other items at Vernonia High School.
- Feb. 1 – At city council meeting, Mayor Sally Harrison accuses Publisher Clark McGaugh of "being quick to find fault" due to "not being breast fed or the need to justify misspent youth." Next attorney Jason Short, on behalf of Captain Mike Kay, gives Powerpoint presentation stating as fact many untruths about McGaugh.
- Feb. 6 – Donkey Basketball.
- Feb. 25 – 1st corporate donor, NW Natural Gas (\$100,000) and 1st private donor, Anne Kilkeny (\$50,000) were announced at town hall meeting to update new school progress.
- Mar. 10 – Vernonia Pharmacy named Business of the Year at Vernonia Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet.

Please see page 2



Marilyn Nicks, left, and Willow Birch are sworn in as new Vernonia City Council members, as the city's new mayor, Josette Mitchell, looks on.