



THE INDEPENDENT

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

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Vernonia favorites, The Golden Oldies entertain frequently at the Vernonia Senior Center. Performing yesterday were, from left to right, Art Jackson, Bob Eastman, Pat Ray, Al Shaeffer, Duke Gortler, Elie Thompson and Pat Wheeler.

Public hearings scheduled on redistricting for legislatures

The House and Senate Committees on Redistricting announced a schedule of 12 joint public hearings across the state to hear from local residents about how to redraw the legislative and Congressional district boundaries. Every 10 years, the Legislature is charged with redrawing legislative and Congressional districts to reflect the growth of Oregon's population and the movement of people within the state.

The 2010 Census data released in late February shows that Oregon has grown by 409,675 people since the last census in 2000. The public hearings will provide Oregonians across the state with an opportunity to discuss the redistricting process and how legislative and Congressional districts may change as a result of population changes since 2000.

"The Legislature has a unique opportunity to pass a

fair and bipartisan redistricting plan this year," said House Redistricting Committee Co-Chair Shawn Lindsay (R-Hillsboro). "To accomplish a fair and bipartisan plan, Oregonians need to be involved throughout the process. We need Oregonians to share their ideas and concerns about their future representation in Salem and Washington, D.C. With valuable citizen input, I'm confident we can produce a fair plan for Oregon over the next ten years."

"Input from Oregon's citizens is always a critical part of the Legislative process. In redistricting, which takes place just every 10 years, it's even more important," said Senate Redistricting Committee Chair Suzanne Bonamici. "Oregonians know best how they want and need to be represented. These hearings are an opportunity for the people of our state to share their thoughts and concerns with the committees that will redraw the district lines."

The first hearing was held in Tillamook on Friday, March 11, at Tillamook Bay Community College, and provided an opportunity for citizens from Astoria, Lincoln City, and Newport to participate via video conference links in their communities. Members of both the House and Senate Redistricting Committees were on hand to listen to testimony.

A hearing is scheduled for the Portland Community College, Rock Creek Campus on April 8, from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. The room will be announced.

"Our goal is to ensure that the redistricting process is fair, open and transparent. I'm looking forward to traveling across Oregon to hear from all of our communities on what we can do to ensure better representation."

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Many scammers pretend to aid Japan

Oregon Attorney General John Kroger is warning Oregonians to be alert for scam artists posing as Japan disaster relief charities. While many legitimate organizations are seeking donations to aid victims of the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, thieves are sending e-mails, making phone calls, and posting fake video footage on social media sites to steal money and personal information.

Scam artists are becoming increasingly adept at exploiting disasters for personal gain. After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, text messages became a convenient and popular way to donate to legitimate groups like the American Red Cross. Scam artists caught on to this trend and started sending mass "charity relief" text messages, requesting credit card numbers and other sensitive information.

In a new twist on the "emergency" scam, hackers are now using alleged video footage of

the disaster in Japan linked to malware and online surveys that are designed to extract personal information. For example, one report describes a video linked to a scammer's Facebook account. By clicking on the video, the viewer's personal information shared on Facebook becomes available to the scammer.

Attorney General Kroger offers the following tips to avoid common emergency relief scams:

- Be sure you are contributing to a legitimate organization registered with the Attorney General's Office by searching the Department's online database or calling 971-673-1880. You can also visit www.guidestar.org or www.charitynavigator.org to get detailed information about charities and their performance.
- Give to established charities. Creating an efficient and effective charity overnight is nearly impossible, make sure

the charity was around before the disaster.

- Do not respond to email requests from supposed disaster victims. Unless you know someone in Japan, these requests are almost always scams. Also, be wary of donation requests or videos posted on social media sites by alleged victims or unfamiliar charities.

- Do not give out personal information via phone, text or email. Legitimate charities will

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Help with First Friday planning

Call out to Artists, Crafters, Musicians or anyone who is interested in participating in the Vernonia First Friday Events. First Friday, a project of Hands on Art, brings the community together to celebrate its local talent, have fun and maybe learn something new. The 2011 Season begins the first Friday in May and ends in October.

We are looking for people

who are interested in helping to organize the event as well as craft vendors, artists, musicians or other talent.

Come to a planning meeting on Thursday, March 31, at 6:00 p.m. at the Vernonia Pioneer Museum. For more information contact Catherine Helmer 503-914-9525, or Kathy Larsen 503-449-3591, or email FirstFridayinVernonia@gmail.com.

St. Pat's Parade

St. Patrick's Day Parade, tonight, 5:15 p.m., starting at State Avenue and Bridge St.

Fishing Derby

Fishing Derby (Free) by Pioneer Baptist Fellowship, on March 26, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Vernonia Lake.