



The new school site, as seen on May 18. Concrete is being laid and the project is on schedule, but obviously has a long way to go before the doors open.

Chalk Talk

Chalk Talk is a column of information about Vernonia schools. This column was provided by Superintendent Dr. Ken Cox.



At last week's board meeting the board approved the final adjustment to the school calendar, making the last day of school for students Wednesday June 15th – that is less than a month away. It's hard to believe, but summer is almost here!

In four short weeks our students will be out of school and looking for things to do. Fortunately, thanks to some concerned parents, volunteers, local civic organizations, and both the Vernonia and St. Helens School Districts, we will be hosting a summer meals program starting June 20th. We will be serving breakfast at 8:30 and then have some scheduled activities from 9:00 to 11, with lunch at 11:30 at the VHS Cafeteria.

In order to make the program successful we would like to get an estimate of how many children would be interested in attending. All children, ages 1 through 18 years-old are eligible (and those over 18 who are still enrolled in school). Please take a moment to let us know if you are interested or if you have questions about this wonderful opportunity, by contacting Cathy Meyer at either 503-522-5311 or 503-429-8033.

While the food is being provided by the St. Helens School District and the USDA Summer Food Service Program, and the facilities provided by the Vernonia School District, the activities and support for the program will be sponsored by many, including the following partners: Pioneer Baptist Fellowship, Vernonia Hands-On-Art, Vernonia Community Theater, Vernonia Prevention Coalition, Master Gardeners, Foster Grandparents Program, Hunger Relief Coalition, Community Volunteers, and the Community Action Team.

Our thanks to the many dedicated individuals who worked so hard to make this opportunity for our children a reality. Please call and make sure your children join in the fun and get a good breakfast and lunch all summer long!

47J District budget causes staff cuts

The Vernonia School District Budget Committee held their first budget meeting of the year, prior to the May 12 regular school board meeting. Three new members were appointed to the budget committee; Brett Costley, Don Schulte, and Evan Stahlnecker were all approved and seated before the budget was presented.

The budget message presented an anticipated decrease of more than \$100,000 dollars over last year's income, and a loss of 10 contract days for the next school year, to the same level as 2008-09. Some "significant staffing cuts" are also expected.

Those anticipated staffing cuts resulted in a student walk-out protest earlier this week, when students left school to rally at the nearby home of Steve Whiteman, whose position at the high school was originally going to be part-time, but the

position was cut in this budget. Additional staff cuts include the loss of middle school Social Studies teacher Ted Aubin, the half time Fundraising Coordinator position held by Betsy Miller, and the part-time Athletic Director position held by Gordon Jarman. Changes in staffing will occur in the Facilities Management area, with Maintenance Supervisor Tom Ramsey being replaced by a one-day a week consultant position.

Washington Grade School may have physical education four days a week instead of five, while art and band will be taught five periods a week instead of six. That will result in larger class sizes. Two part-time secretaries and two part-time instructional assistants will most likely be reassigned.

All of these changes are subject to final approval by the school board of directors after the budget committee finishes

their deliberations, though the district does not anticipate being able to add these positions back in for this fiscal year.

In other business at the regular board meeting, the board:

- Approved the 2010-11 calendar change making Wednesday, June 15, the last student school day;

- approved a new set of recommendations from the Facilities Evaluation Committee, that included a storm line redesign, removal of planned HVAC screens on the roof and design changes to some classrooms to use until the Vernonia Rural Sustainability Center is built;

- heard that construction at the new school site is on schedule.

The next budget meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on May 26 at the district office, while the next regular board meeting will be held starting at 6:00 p.m. at the district office on June 9.

Scholarships for some military families

Freedom Alliance is now accepting college scholarship applications from the children of military heroes for the academic year which begins in September 2011. Freedom Alliance sponsors this program to honor the service of Americans in our Armed Forces who have been killed or permanently disabled by helping their children achieve a college education.

Students are eligible if they are the dependent son or daughter of a U.S. Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine or Guardsman who has been killed or permanently disabled (100% VA disability rating) as a result of an operational mission or training accident, or who is currently classified as a Prisoner of War (POW) or Missing in Action (MIA). Students must be

a high school senior or graduate, or registered as a full time undergraduate and under the age of 26.

"We want every eligible student to have the opportunity to apply and get the assistance they deserve," said Freedom Alliance President Tom Kilgannon. "These scholarships help the sons and daughters of American heroes with the cost of a college education, but they also serve as a reminder to the student that their parent's sacrifice will never be forgotten by a grateful nation."

In 2010, Freedom Alliance awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships to college students who have had a parent sacrifice life or limb for our country. In total, more than \$4 million has been awarded over

the years by Freedom Alliance, and the organization is currently providing scholarships to 225 students at schools throughout the United States.

Scholarships may be used at colleges or universities; community colleges; vocational or technical schools.

To learn more about the Freedom Alliance Scholarship Fund and/or to apply please visit <http://www.fascholarship.com/> or call 800-475-6620. The application deadline is July 31, 2011.

Last day of school is June 15.

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