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Letters

Update on work to move Health Center

To the Editor:

We would like to take this opportunity to address recent questions that have surfaced in the community. We hope a review of the history and where we are to date will answer these questions.

As you all know, we were flooded in 2007 and in previous articles we informed you that the Vernonia Health Center building is mandated to move out of the flood plane by December 2012.

In the pursuit of that mission, we have found that, unfortunately, there are no funding opportunities available for a new facility given our current operating partnership.

In order to maintain the high level of services this community needs, we have had to pursue other sources of funding available to us, including the basic primary business partnership.

In looking at the opportunities available, we requested the aid of the Governor's Office, Oregon Solutions, O.P.C.A. (Oregon Primary Care Associates), Oregon Office of Rural Health, Senators Betsy Johnson, Ron Wyden, Jeff Merkley, Representatives David Wu, Brad Witt, and Columbia County Commissioner Tony Hyde.

Senator Johnson graciously made the introductions to the Coastal Family Health Center which has been a successful medical clinic practicing the past 8 years under the guidance of CEO Jim Coffee, MPA. After meeting with Mr. Coffee and looking at all available opportunities, the Vernonia Health Center Board of Directors weighed pros and cons and it was obvious that it would be in the community's best interest to apply for approval of our new partnership with Coastal Family Health Center.

The partnership with Coastal Family Health Center brings with it, the following:

- New funding opportunities to move the clinic out of the flood plain.
- Expansion of clinic hours to meet the needs of the workforce, to include the potential of evenings, weekends.
- Continuation to provide quality services to the insured

and underinsured, and non-insured.

- Expanded dental and mental health services.
- Acceptance of all major insurance carriers.
- Transportation to and from appointments.
- Expanded opportunity of physician recruitment and long term retainment.

We will be notified of the approval or denial of this application by the end of this year, 2011.

Coastal Family Health Center and Providence Health and Services are working diligently together to ensure a smooth transition, including joint hiring of clinic staff. You will probably notice some new faces at the medical center as the transition unfolds. The employees hired through this process are anticipated to make the transition to the new partnership with Coastal Family Health Center.

The health board is currently working in partnership with the City on development of the Rose Avenue project as the new medical center location.

We look forward to keeping you informed as new information materializes.

Vernonia Health Center Board of Directors

Goals met, Vernonia Pride will disband

To the Editor:

Vernonia Pride was formed in 1994 by Genny Fisher, a long-time resident of Vernonia who moved to Longview after she married her present husband. When her husband retired they moved back to Vernonia and Genny was very dismayed by the appearance of our downtown. It didn't take her long to enlist the help of others; such as Shirlee Daughtry, Enid Parrow, and Dorothy Hass, and Vernonia Pride was formed.

It was the group's purpose to instill pride in the community, and to make our downtown more attractive.

We have decided that with the help of downtown businesses, who have painted, planted flowers, etc., we have accomplished this goal.

After reviewing these projects, and since our group is so small, our present group members have decided to disband Vernonia Pride.

To our credit, these are some of the many projects our group has contributed to or provided: Replaced ceiling tiles, painted, new carpeting and window blinds for the old library; purchased kitchen appliances for the new City Hall; replaced the water fountain in front of the old Penney's building; provided the wood benches; garbage can receptacles; the coyotes and bears on the light poles; welcome sign and landscaping at the entrance to Vernonia; bricks and trees in front of Shay Park; walking tour plaques of downtown buildings and the tour book; *Pocket in the Woods* historical book; flags for downtown and Shay Park; sign for Pioneer Cemetery; flowers for the garbage receptacles and parks; Yard of the Month; and (with help from the Chamber of Commerce) the new street banners; donated \$500 each to the logger memorial which will be placed at the museum and to the new sign that will replace the Elk as you enter town.

We have sponsored the annual "Make Vernonia Shine day", the 4th of July Parade and fireworks, the Christmas tree lighting and the parade.

With our remaining money we will be purchasing bricks and a tree for the addition to Shay Park, doggie bag holders and bags for each block downtown, a banner for the Farmer's Market, garbage cans, and refurbishing of garbage receptacles and benches.

It is our hope that some other group or individuals will step up to continue some of the projects this group has done.

**DeDe Webb
Vernonia Pride**

Stamp Out Hunger effort is really a help

To the Editor:

Dear Letter Carriers:

Thank you for running the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive on May 14, 2011. Thanks to your efforts and the generosity of the Vernonia people, 1,066 lbs. of food was delivered to this food bank. Thank you so very much for your organization, work, and generosity to make this event happen. Special thanks to Peter O'Leary for taking the lead for this project.

In 2011, Vernonia Cares

Food Bank assisted an average of 394 people per month with three days worth of emergency groceries. We can only do this through generous donations like the food the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive brought in.

**Sandy Welch
Executive Director
Vernonia Cares Food Bank**

Thanks to many for a successful plant sale

To the Editor:

We would like to say a big "Thank You" to everyone who donated, volunteered their time, and all the wonderful people who came and purchased plants and things at the Senior Center Plant sale. We were able to raise well over \$1,000 much needed dollars for the Senior Center. Good Job Vernonia!

**Jack Harvey
Vernonia Senior Center**

June First Friday was another great event

To the Editor:

The second First Friday of the Season, June 3rd, brought crafters, musicians and visitors to the Scout Cabin for an evening of shopping, cookie decorating, visiting neighbors and enjoying music.

Please see page

Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters with personal attacks on private citizens. Preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address or phone number.

NOTICE

The INDEPENDENT publishes on the first and third Thursday of each month. Because June has five Thursdays, there will be three weeks before the next issue, on July 7, 2011.

The deadline for the July 7 issue is Friday, July 1.