

# Friendship Jamboree Pull-out Guide inside



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# THE INDEPENDENT

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Tree farmers and others await the beginning of the Summer Tree Farm Tour at the Keasey Tree Farm on July 23. Keasey Tree Farm was named the 2011 Oregon Tree Farm of the Year by the Oregon Tree Farm System, Inc.

## City responds to councilor interviews

The City of Vernonia provided the following information in response to interviews in the July 20 issue of *The Independent*, "Recall election underway for two Vernonia city councilors". According to the City, some statements were made that need correction or clarification. They include the following:

- All loan reserve funds that have been required by the City of Vernonia auditors have been completely funded in the 2011-2012 City budget.

- The Brown & Caldwell engineering firm presented the Vernonia Wastewater Treatment Draft Conceptual Design Report in March 2010. The cost estimate for the wastewater option recommended by the City Public Works committee

was approximately \$10 million. City Administrator Bob Young received that report and passed it on to the City Council.

- On February 7, 2011, all five Council members were informed of the history and sta-

## 47J seeks one new board member

The Vernonia School District 47J board of directors has one open position, created by the July 1 resignation of board member Kim Wallace.

Information about, and the application for, the position can be found on the district website, [www.vernonia.k12.or.us](http://www.vernonia.k12.or.us), under 'school board', or on the front counter at the district office, 475 Bridge St.

Applications will be

tus related to the personnel issue with employee Michael Kay.

- On March 28th, 2011, the Vernonia City Council was introduced to Kathy Peck, a labor and employment law spec-

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accepted through Friday, August 19. Interviews will take place prior to the board workshop on Thursday, August 25. The appointment is expected to take place in September. The person chosen will fill the remainder of the term that expires on June 30, 2013. Applicants must be registered to vote and must have lived in the school district for one year.

## Keasey Tree Farm named 2011 Oregon Tree Farm

The Keasey Tree Farm in Vernonia was chosen as the 2011 Oregon Tree Farm of the Year. The Keasey Tree Farm was selected by the Columbia County Small Woodlands Association (CCSWA), which made the recommendation to the Oregon Tree Farm System, Inc. (OTFS). OTFS, since 1966, has selected one tree farm from those submitted by the six Oregon regions. Each tree farm nominated must have a management plan signed off by a professional forester to be certified. The certification shows the farm is sustainably managed and mills ask for certification information in order to be recognized for their sustainable practices.

The Keasey Tree Farm is managed by Dennis Nelson, who also owns and operates Dennis Electric. Nelson, a graduate of the OSU Woodland Managers class, took over management of the tree farm in 2000. Ralph Keasey had been the manager at that point. Nelson is related to the Keasey family by marriage.

Of the state award, Nelson said, "It is an honor and I think the Keasey family felt honored to be chosen and I felt honored to be chosen. The board nominated us as they believed we had something to offer." Stihl supplied a \$250 gift certificate for the Keasey Tree Farm.

CCSWA, along with the OSU Extension Service held their Summer Tree Farm Tour at the Keasey Tree Farm on July 23. Attendees went on a

tour of the tree farm and were able to see what helped make it the tree farm of the year. After the tour, there was lunch, music, and a tour of the Keasey home.

The Keasey home site, named Homewood, is on the same 392 acres as the tree farm. The land, along with a two-room house, was purchased by Eden Keasey from the original owner in 1889. The current home, attached to the original house, was built in 1896. The Keaseys are on the seventh generation now.

Homewood was originally covered in old growth. One cedar tree still on the property is estimated to be between 500 and 1500 years old. The second growth was cut in 1999, while Ralph Keasey was the manager. The Oregon-American Railroad ran right behind Homewood in 1922. Keasey Road runs from Vernonia to Homewood and beyond, and was originally named Rock Creek Road.

Next up for the Tree Farm of the Year designation are the naming of four regional farms from the nation, then the final award to the National Tree Farm of the year. There have been four regional winners from Oregon, but only one, K.C. VanNatta's, has been from Columbia County.

**Governor asks for forest road review, page 3**