

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Now it's time to get back to work on city projects

The Vernonia City Council hasn't let any grass grow under their feet since appointing three new council members.

It has been just eight days since Mayor Josette Mitchell and Councilor Randy Parrow appointed Bruce McNair, Kim Tierney and Donna Webb to fill the council positions left vacant by the recall of the three council members who fired the highly regarded Interim City Administrator Bill Haack.

In those eight days, the council has met far more frequently than usual, bringing the new councilors up to date, re-hiring Haack as city administrator, and hiring reserve police officer Brent Thompson to fill one of two vacancies on the police force. These are all positive steps.

There is still a lot to do, and an inadequate budget will require both council and staff to consider how to meet the City's needs within those budget constraints. This is a good opportunity for all concerned to take a new look at what is needed, not just what is wanted.

WOEC is a good example

The new West Oregon headquarters facility is a good example of careful planning within a strict budget. The planning has been combined with a willingness to continually review goals and costs, then being willing to make changes, when necessary, to stay within the budget.

The equipment bays have been designed to double as an emergency evacuation facility, including, among other considerations, generators to provide power in the event of another disruptive event such as the floods in 1996 and 2007.

Many decisions were made that make the building look much more expensive that it is —no, those floors really aren't slate. Many energy efficient elements will reduce the overall operating costs, including lights with motion sensors that will turn themselves off when a room is empty.

An open house planned for September 30, from 2:00 to 7:00 p.m., will be a good time to tour the facility. Remember, West Oregon Electric Cooperative is member-owned; so take a tour of your new building.



Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



With the weather being so warm, I'm sure the archers pursuing deer and elk across Oregon are praying for some rain. I also imagine the local timber companies are doing the same, and probably have their hands on the fire danger closure signs. The wet spring has made for extra lush vegetation across Oregon this year and now, with the hot dry weather, it has turned into a potentially exceptional fire season. While these two groups want the rain to return, I know for a fact the construction workers working on the school next to my house want more sunshine; they have definitely seen their share of rain this year!

Dad mentioned the other day that he has been having an odd feeling this year — he keeps wanting to start gathering up the camp gear for deer camp. Well, not this year. We put in for a harder to draw unit this year, and came up drawing a blank. We will have to settle for the mediocre Blacktailed hunting here at home this year. It is a shame Oregon has come to be known as a sub-par deer state, and with a game department that seems more interested in selling tags for non-existent game animals, no change is in sight.

I read with interest a hunter's report on a

hunting/fishing forum about mentoring his granddaughter on a doe antelope hunt. His hunting party had four doe tags as everyone showed up at camp. This Grandpa had a great time with his granddaughter as they pursued antelope, and had a couple of encounters with a few does. What amazed me more about his story, though, was that out of four doe tags, there was not one animal taken. Would one wonder that maybe the area they were hunting didn't need to have a doe hunt to begin with? I might have thought these hunters inept or hunting in the wrong area if not for the fact that I accompanied a friend last year to a place very near where these hunters hunted this year. I don't call antelope populations plentiful when you see only four antelope in two days of heavy scouting. This just has to make hunters shake their heads in disgust, especially when a sportsman burnt 12 points to get this hunt!

Chinook salmon in the Nehalem River are again going to be open for fishing. This fishery is conducted mainly in Nehalem Bay, about 90 river miles from Vernonia, but some of the fish the anglers will be pursuing are actually spawned right here in town and further upstream in both the upper Nehalem and Rock Creek. Many of us noticed the dismal returns of adult fish the last two years, most likely due to poor survival of fish in the ocean environment. While part of the reason for these dismal returns has to do with survival of young Chinook in our local river, a big part of the reason is ocean fisheries to our north in Alaskan and Canadian waters.

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