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THE INDEPENDENT

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

September 21, 2011



This picture of the new Vernonia school was taken on September 19 and shows the ongoing progress as the builders prepare to finish the roof before the winter weather sets in.

Town Hall gives school update

Vernonia School District 47J held a New School Town Hall on September 13 in the cafeteria building.

About 50 people attended to hear a presentation by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) on the changes to Bridge St. and Missouri Ave. that will provide improved access to the new school.

David Kim, ODOT Project Manager, presented a map showing what Bridge St. and Missouri Ave. will look like after the project is completed. Coming up the hill from the old schools, there will be a left turn lane from Bridge St. onto Missouri, with Bridge St. widened for this purpose. The extra space needed will come from the Vernonia Pioneer Museum and Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District properties. Turns will still be possible, as now, onto Texas Ave. and Lakeview Ave. Missouri will have left and right turn lanes coming from the school onto Bridge St. A new, marked crosswalk will be on the east side of Missouri Ave. This will be an illuminated crosswalk sign with rapid flash beacons to alert drivers that pedestrians are about to use the crosswalk. There will also be a six foot bicycle lane on Bridge St.

Missouri Ave. will be widened and will have parking on the west side only. The east side will have a planter strip and a wide sidewalk for pedestrians and bicycles.

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ODOT said work is expected to begin next Spring and will be completed before school starts in September 2012. The ODOT work is being funded by a \$3.9 million grant.

Utility work will be done by the school district and city, not ODOT. School district Project Manager Steve Effros said the utilities need to be in place before winter so system testing can begin at the school. It has not been decided if power will be underground or overhead. Work will start on the utilities this month or in October.

The audience also heard that Lango Hansen Landscape Architects, of Portland, won the contract to build the new Spencer Park on the old school site. Kurt Lango told the audience there will be, "A lot of opportunity for input and for people to come together with ideas for this new space."

One member of the audience asked, related to the funding for the new school, "Is there going to be enough money to finish this?" This was answered by State Senator Betsy Johnson, "I know in my heart we're going to find the money." John Donovan of the Metropolitan Group, hired to raise the money for the school, said the fundraising is where we expected it to be at this point and finished with, "This place is one of the places Oregon can stand together."

Veterans: Benefits & Job Fair, Sept. 28

Veterans and their families needing assistance are invited to attend a Veterans Benefits and Job Fair at the Willow Creek Center, 241 SW Edgeway Drive, Beaverton, from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 28. Washing-

ton County Disability, Aging & Veteran Services, WorkSource Employment Beaverton, and the Western Washington County Employer's Council are coordinating the hosted event.

Veterans are unemployed in higher-than-average numbers

locally and statewide, with more than 20 percent of veterans younger than 35 without jobs. The lack of jobs puts veterans at risk of becoming homeless quicker than veterans of any other era. It is esti-

See Veterans on page 22



Outcome of a log truck to log truck accident, on September 9, at the junction of Hwy 47 and Scappoose-Vernonia Rd. Two fully loaded log trucks, one driven by Larry Cave of Cave Trucking of Warrenton (not pictured) met up with this BMS truck, driven by owner Bill Montgomery of Gaston. Both lost their loads and Montgomery sustained non-life threatening injuries. Hillsboro Towing handled the towing and Weller & Sons Trucking came out with self-loaders and picked up the logs.

**Salmon Festival
October 1
See page 24
for more
information.**

**Final Vernonia
First Friday
September 30,
5 to 8 pm
at Scout Cabin**

Reward amount raised in elk kill

Oregon State Police (OSP) Fish & Wildlife Division troopers are continuing to ask for the public's help to identify the suspect(s) responsible for the illegal killing of four elk found in

See Reward on page 14

See page 22 for information on Salmon Poisoning