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# THE INDEPENDENT

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The new wetland, located on the O-A Mill site, is taking its final shape as the excavation work finishes up in the next week. The logs in the middle are being put in place for fish to eventually hang around. See full story on this page.

## New wetland in Vernonia will enhance old mill site

In order for the Vernonia School District to use the new school site at what used to be Spencer Park, they had to mitigate a wetland that existed on that site. The term mitigate in this context means to replace the lost wetland with larger wetlands so there is no loss from the change.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for investigating, developing and maintaining the nation's water and related environmental resources. USACE, along with Oregon's Department of State Lands (DSL) looked at the existing wetlands and determined there were 3.72 acres of Palustrine Emergent (PEM) wetland, plus .07 acre of intermittent stream that would be lost at the new school site. They then determined that the replacement would need to be 5.69 acres of PEM and restoration of 1.3 acres of upland buffer.

PEM is identified as wetlands that are non-saline (not tidal) with plants – such as cattails, sedges, bulrushes, reeds and saw grass – that remain standing until the next growing season and cover over 80 percent of the wetland.

Originally, the school district looked at a site by the city's wastewater lagoons that might have been of benefit to the city in their need to upgrade the lagoons. When the timing of

those two projects did not match up, the district and the city agreed that use of the city's property at the old O-A Mill site would be beneficial for both. It was a site that would be relatively easy to work on and would add a nice feature, a true wetland, to the site.

The site chosen required a 12-month study on the groundwater to be sure there was enough water (rain) at the site so water would not have to be added to maintain the wetland. That study also provided data for how deep the excavation would need to be so the site could hold enough water to keep the wetland damp through the summer months.

Historical/cultural studies were done, to determine the site had no archeological value (for example, no dinosaur bones or signs of early civilizations). That study was relatively simple as there is pretty good historical data indicating nothing was there before the area was settled in the late 1800s.

A contamination study was done to make sure there was no oil, hydraulic fuel or other soil contaminants on site. USACE did a 1st and 2nd stage study before clearing the site for construction. Finally, an engineering study of the habitat and existing plant species was done.

After all those "planning  
**See Wetlands on page 14**

## Providence to leave Vernonia at year end

Providence Medical Group-Vernonia clinic has announced that they will leave Vernonia at the end of this year. The Vernonia Health Board has been working on other operating plans for the clinic and Providence notified the Health Board recently that they will discontinue operating the Vernonia clinic as of December 31, 2011.

The Health Board had been working with a different clinic to expand their services to Vernonia when Providence left. That plan was contingent on federal funding that was not awarded to this location.

The Health Board has stated that it is actively working on a plan to have medical services available at the clinic effective January 1, 2012. The make-up

of those services and information about who will provide services will be announced when plans are finalized.

Providence is an active participant in helping plan new health care options in Vernonia and has donated the equipment currently in the clinic building to the Health Board.

## Carreon earns award for volunteerism

Crystal-Ann Carreon, a senior at Vernonia High School, has been selected as the Region 2 winner in the Outstanding Youth Volunteer category for the 2011 Governor's Volunteer Awards. "I'm very honored to be chosen," said Carreon of her selection.

Region 2 includes Clatsop, Columbia, Marion, Polk, Tillamook, and Yamhill counties.

Carreon was nominated for her role in the Joy For Jaden fundraising efforts. Joy For Jaden raised money for a young boy in Banks with cancer. This was a year-long fundraising effort organized by

Carreon.

Along with her parents, Carreon will attend a November 4 luncheon in Salem honoring regional winners. If selected as the Outstanding Oregon Youth Volunteer of the Year (from all regions), Carreon would receive \$500 to give to a charity of her choice.

The Governor's Volunteer Awards recognize individuals and organizations for their dedication, commitment and determination in promoting and supporting volunteerism throughout Oregon. The purpose is to inspire individuals to make a positive difference by strength-



**Crystal-Ann Carreon was selected for regional award.** ening Oregon communities.

## Reward offered for information on WOEC truck and tool theft

Early on the morning of September 20, a Ford bucket truck was stolen from West Oregon Electric Co-op. The truck, along with spools of wire, chain saws, other tools and electrical equipment was seen on video leaving at about 3:35 a.m.

The truck was later seen at Staley's Junction and was recovered, in inoperable condition, on a logging spur off

Strassel Rd. The other stolen items were not recovered.

There is a \$2,000 reward for information resulting in the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the theft. Anyone with information should call the Vernonia Police Department at 503-429-7335 or the 24-hour dispatch number at 800-696-7795.