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# THE INDEPENDENT

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

November 2, 2011



Adults, and children, had a good time during the Vernonia Downtown Costume Parade on Halloween early evening. About 300 kids trick-or-treated the downtown businesses.

## Fire started in mulch near wetland

A smoldering fire was discovered Monday, October 31, in a mulch pile next to the new wetlands, located on the old mill site in Vernonia. The fire, said Fire Chief Dean Smith, may have been smoldering for days in mulch created when woody debris from the wetlands site was chipped. It was anticipated that the mulch would be used as path material, but the site was not ready

for paths this year as the final plantings are not in place. The wetland was covered with annual grass seed to hold the sides stable until final planting can take place next year.

The Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District put water on the fire and called for heavy equipment to spread out the mulch, thereby eliminating possible further spontaneous combustion. See picture on page 9.

## CCSO Sheriff schedules town hall

The next Town Hall meeting with Columbia County Sheriff Jeff Dickerson is scheduled in the South Columbia County area for November 15. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the St. Helens High School Auditorium.

The meeting is designed to give Columbia County residents a greater understanding of the service reductions and looming devastating cuts that are forecast for the sheriff's office, and to invite citizen

See Sheriff on page 19

Volunteer crossing guard help needed in the mornings. See Chalk Talk on page 11 for details.

## City of Banks puts levy on ballot

The City of Banks is seeking voter approval for Ballot Measure 34-194, a five-year replacement levy for police services, on the November 8 ballot.

The measure would replace the levy for contract police services with Washington County, which will expire June 30, 2012. The current levy has a rate of \$1.89 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The new levy calls for a rate of \$2.35 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. As with

the current levy, other services funded by this levy include 9-1-1 dispatch services, city recorder services and routine administrative expenses (such as utilities, auditing, liability insurance and materials).

If Measure 34-194 fails, Banks residents will have to rely on other jurisdictions to respond to high priority 9-1-1 calls as Banks will no longer be able to contract with Washington County for police services.

## Greenfield, District 1 candidate, answers forum questions

To provide information for Congressional District 1 residents who will be voting in the Nov. 8 special primary election, *The Independent* published questions and answers of four of the 11 candidates for 1st District Representative in Congress, in the October 19 issue. Of five additional candidates contacted, only Republican Jim Greenfield responded to the same questions that were answered by Democrats Brad Avakian, Suzanne Bonamici and Brad Witt, and Republican Linda Delgado-Morgan.

*The Independent* was unable to contact two candidates,

Pavel Goberman and Dominic Hammon.

Rob Cornilles, Lisa Michaels, Todd Lee Ritter and Dan Strite were contacted but did not respond. Strite sent a Letter to the Editor (see page 3) without responding to the questions. Republican candidate Jim Greenfield was the only candidate contacted who responded to the questions, his answers follow:

1. What steps will you take to see that jobs are retained and new one made?

Greenfield – The way to improve the economy and create

See candidate on page 4



The Vernonia Loggers football team, shown at the end of the Homecoming game on October 21. The team wore pink socks for breast cancer awareness in honor of Vernonia instructional assistant Roxana Sherman-Heath. The Loggers won the game against Nestucca, 14 to 7.