

## Frontier announces upgrades complete

Frontier Communications announced the completion of a major upgrade to the network that provides residential, government, public safety and business telecommunications service to Vernonia.

The fiber optic network was upgraded to provide four times as much voice and/or data traffic between Beaverton and Vernonia. Beaverton is one of three major hubs that Frontier operates in the Northwest Oregon and Southwest Washington region. All long distance and data connects to the world

from there.

The network provides a link to the Internet through a Digital Subscriber Line network (DSL), and all existing customers had an increase in speed to a maximum of 3-7 megabits per second, depending how far their home is from Frontier's central office on Highway 47.

Almost all modern phone and data services are now available to Vernonia businesses and government, similar to those available in Portland, including the price.

Frontier Communications

## Council holds a special meeting

Vernonia City Council held a special meeting on Wednesday, October 26, for the purpose of deliberations in an executive session (closed to the public). When they came out of that session, they voted to authorize Mayor Josette Mitchell to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the City, West Oregon Electric Cooperative and Soderback Trucking.

Council also approved hav-

ing City Administrator Bill Haack sign a license agreement with Soderback for truck parking, subject to the city attorney's review.

The next regular city council meeting will be November 7, starting with a work session at 6:00 p.m., followed by the regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. at city hall.

## Corps of Engineers seeks input

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers requests public comments on a proposal from the Oregon Department of State Lands to modify the document which governs the statewide in-lieu fee program.

The in-lieu fee program involves restoration, establishment, enhancement, and/or preservation of aquatic resources through funds paid to a governmental or non-profit natural resources management agency. It provides a way for people to accomplish the compensatory mitigation required for some projects, which may

be permitted by the Corps of Engineers.

A revised program document and detailed summary of the changes can be found at <http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/regulatory/home.asp>, click on "New public notices."

Comments must be received no later than November 13, and should be addressed to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CENWP-OD-G, P.O. Box 2946, Portland, OR 97208-2946. Comments can also be emailed to [Jaimee.W.Davis@usace.army.mil](mailto:Jaimee.W.Davis@usace.army.mil).

## Dist. 1 candidate gives opinions

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Greenfield – No, I will vote to reduce banking regulation. Banks are already the most heavily regulated business in our nation. Excessive bank regulation created the financial crisis, and excessive regulation is now keeping banks from lending, which is why our housing market is continuing to tank. I will oppose any more bank bailouts, which is an un-

constitutional waste of taxpayer money.

c. How will you get Republicans to compromise?

Greenfield – I won't. What I want for Republicans is total victory in 2012, so we can finally balance the budget, cut government spending, lower taxes, de-regulate business and get the free market economy growing again.

acquired Verizon phone companies in 14 states, in July 2010. The upgrades on the Vernonia network are part of a larger three year project, and many rural county areas are being considered for inclusion in its statewide plan. The three year expansion plan to provide high-speed Internet service to rural Oregon and Washington communities is part of the transfer agreement between Frontier and the State of Oregon.

## More jobs this year than last

Columbia County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 10.8 percent in September, essentially unchanged from the previous month (10.5%) but lower than the year before (12.1%). The rate was above the statewide rate (9.6%) and the national rate (9.1%). Total employment climbed by 39 to 22,363 and the number of unemployed people dropped by 48 to 2,454. Total employment this September was 633 more than one year before and there were 324 fewer people unemployed this year.

## Columbia County Assessor office gives property tax statement explanation

Due to the steep decline in the real market value of residential properties between January 1, 2010 and January 1, 2011, many property owners may see a decrease in their tax bill for the first time since maximum assessed value was set in 1997 by passage of Measure 50. This is due to the real market value falling below the maximum assessed value for these properties; therefore the real market value becomes the tax assessed value.

In addition, if the categorized consolidated rates exceed the constitutional limits of \$5 per thousand for education districts or \$10 per thousand for general government limits when applied to the real market value, the tax is further reduced by compression. Based on permanent operating rates, the consolidated education rates for Saint Helens, Scappoose, Vernonia and Rainier exceed the \$5 per thousand rate limit, and the consolidated general government rates for properties located inside the city limits of Rainier and Clatskanie exceed the \$10 per thousand rate limit.


For the 2010-11 tax year, only 579 out of a total of 23204 residential properties countywide had a tax assessed value lower than their maximum as-

essed value. For the 2011-12 tax year, this number has increased to 5838 out of a total of 23026 residential properties. The City of Clatskanie had the least percentage of properties, at 9.29%, that fell below the maximum assessed value this year, while the Cities of Saint Helens and Columbia City had the highest percentage of properties, at 40.46%, that fell below the maximum assessed value.

All properties have market trends developed by analyzing sales in each market area to determine the current tax year's increase or decrease in value. For the current assessment date of January 1, 2011, all sales in 2010 are reviewed and compared to the January 1, 2010 value. Real market values for residential properties decreased an average of 20% countywide. Property owners of townhouses and row houses in Saint Helens and Columbia City will see the greatest decrease of 36%, while property owners of rural residential properties in the Clatskanie dikeland area will see an increase of 3% in their real market value.


For residential properties that are currently electronically recalculated annually, the sales

**See Property on page 16**



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800-773-3236 [waunafcu.org](http://waunafcu.org)

