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THE INDEPENDENT

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Santa Claus and a helper were on hand for The Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia tree lighting and holiday celebration, held on December 3.

Reward offered on items stolen at Stub Stewart Park recently

The Northwest Trail Alliance is offering a reward of up to \$500 for information leading to an arrest and the recovery of a trail construction machine and trailer stolen in late November from an enclosed maintenance compound at L.L. "Stub" Stewart State Park, in northwest Washington County. Oregon State Police (OSP) is investigating the case.

Between 4:30 p.m., November 29, and 7:00 a.m., November 30, unknown suspect(s) stole a gray Xterra 18-foot dual axle trailer displaying Oregon license U449427. The trailer belongs to "Northwest Trail Alliance" and displays the alliance's logo on both sides of the trailer.

Inside the trailer were various tools, accessories and an ST240 trail construction machine valued at \$80,000. A photograph of the stolen trailer and

ST240 trail construction machine is available with other information on the Northwest Trail Alliance website at <http://nw-trail.org>.

Anyone with information regarding the suspect(s) and location of the stolen trailer and equipment is asked to call Oregon State Police Northern Command Center dispatch at 800-452-7888.

VMS/VHS Band Concert

The Vernonia Middle School and High School Band Concert will be December 15, at 7:00 p.m. in the high school gymnasium.

Children are encouraged to attend in their pajamas, as they will be doing something special with "The Polar Express."



Foreclosed home buyers beware

Recently, people have purchased foreclosed homes in Vernonia only to find out that the homes were flooded, substantially damaged, and need to be raised. Once a home has been determined to be substantially (over 51% of value) damaged, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires the home to be raised, whether by the same owner or another.

The City of Vernonia will not provide water and sewer service to such a home unless the current owner agrees to lift the home within six months. Lifting

a home can cost from \$30,000 up, not including the costs of engineering and permits.

Banks and mortgage holders who have not actually lived in a home are allowed to sell homes "as is" without disclosing that the home may have been flooded. The banks, etc. may not even have that information.

Before buying a foreclosed home or a home with a price that seems too good to be true, check with the city, the neighbors and your realtor to determine the history of the property.

New 9-1-1 administrator named

The Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Operations Manager Lee Knowlton has accepted the position of Administrator.

Knowlton began his career at Columbia 9-1-1 in February of 1987 as a Communications Specialist. He was promoted to Chief Dispatcher in 1988, and was in charge of day-to-day operations. In addition to those

duties, he became involved in many aspects relating to the administration of the agency, including hiring, training, personnel matters and budgeting. Knowlton's job title was later changed to Operations Manager, which more clearly identified his job duties.

Knowlton has an Executive certificate from the state Department of Public Safety Stan-

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Attendance was good at the Washington Grade School Winter Concert on December 1.