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THE INDEPENDENT

Vol. 26, No. 24

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

December 21, 2011



Mackenzie Carr, newly named 2012 Miss Rodeo America, signing an autograph for a young fan at her Welcome Home Celebration at Vernonia High School on December 17.

Carr is Miss Rodeo America

Mackenzie Carr of Vernonia has been crowned the 2012 Miss Rodeo America. Carr, the daughter of Alan and Barb Carr, was selected from a field of 28 Miss Rodeos from across the country, at the Miss Rodeo America pageant held in Las Vegas, Nevada, from December 2 through December 11.

Carr, 21 years old, the Valedictorian at her graduation from Vernonia High School in 2008, was already involved in Miss Rodeo contests. She was a Columbia County Fair and Rodeo princess in 2007, and was queen in 2008. She was named Miss NPRA in 2009, before being named the 2011 Miss Rodeo Oregon, in July 2010.

Carr was in 4-H for nine years, competing in horsemanship, cooking and, once, in horticulture. Carr has also found time since 2008 to spend two years at Oregon State University (OSU) studying Civil Engineering, then earned an associate's degree from Lower Columbia College, across the Columbia River in Longview, Wash. She plans to return to OSU for a degree in Construction Management after completing her year as Miss Rodeo America.

During the national pageant, Carr won the competitions in Horsemanship (the most coveted one due to the silver saddle), Personality, Appearance, Speech, and Scrapbook, and also won the Raenan Wad-

hams Spirit Award, before being named the overall winner. In addition to the silver saddle, a beaver coat, jewelry, clothes, another saddle, and many other items, Carr will also receive \$25,500 in scholarship funds.

Carr said her favorite part of the competition was the interview with the judges, "I really liked getting to know them better." There were four judges, two women, who were previous title winners, and two men. Carr's win was the first time a contestant from Oregon has won the title since the pageant began in 1956.

She will be appearing in about 100 rodeos over the next year, starting January 4 in Denver, in addition to appearances at schools and special events. She expects to travel about 100,000 miles in 2012. During her official duties, she will be wearing the Miss Rodeo Crown, which is made of Alexandrites, pearls and Black Hills gold.

Carr has an 18-year-old paint horse, named Pedro (nicknamed Mexican Bob), but won't have time to take him along. Also, only quarter horses are used in rodeo. Each rodeo will provide her with a horse for her "arena ride", where she takes a circuit around the arena waving from horseback.

Ever wondered how they keep those white cowboy hats white? Those hats now have a

See Mackenzie on page 3

Three promoted at Vernonia Rural Fire



Newly promoted as lieutenants in the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District are, left to right, Loren Loomis, Dan Hanson and Jesse Harbour. Photo by Kate Talbott

Three Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District (VRFPD) volunteers have been promoted to the rank of lieutenant, based on their dedication and leadership qualities.

Loren Loomis, Dan Hanson and Jesse Harbour were officially sworn in to their new positions at the Fire Board Meeting, on December 13, by Deputy Fire Chief Earl Dean

Smith.

All three men will be taking on additional responsibilities in the areas of training, safety and operations.

Merkley helps pass legislation to keep renters in their homes

Congress passed final legislation that includes language championed by Oregon's Senator Jeff Merkley to help families in rental assistance properties stay in their homes. The provision reforms three commonly used rental assistance programs to provide more certainty for individuals and families if those properties should change hands or rental assis-

tance status.

"A stable home environment is incredibly important for the success of a family. Unfortunately, if ownership of a family's rental home changes

See renters on page 3

**Vernonia Middle
School Honor Roll,
See page 12**