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# THE INDEPENDENT

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The Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley for Over 27 years

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Snow finally arrived this week in Vernonia and once it was here, it kept coming for a few days. Picture taken heading to the bridge over Rock Creek going into Anderson Park.

## Special Election ballot drop-off sites and certification information

The Public Certification Test of the counting equipment for the January 31 Special General Election will be held on Tuesday, January 24, 2012. Testing will begin at 10:00 a.m. in the County Elections Dept. The public is welcome to attend.

Drop sites for the election will be as follows:

- Vernonia Library, 701 Weed Ave., Jan. 13 - 30, during library hours and from noon to 8:00 p.m. on January 31.

- Mist-Birkenfeld RFPD, 12525 Hwy. 292, Jan. 13 - 30 during regular office hours and January 31 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Ballots can also be dropped off at the Columbia County Courthouse Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and January 31 from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. There is also a drive-by drop box in the lower parking lot of the Courthouse.



Left to right, Suzanne Bonamici the Democratic and Independent candidate, and Republican Rob Cornilles are candidates in the January 31 Special General Election.

## Vernonia School District continues fundraising

Recent donations to the Vernonia School District's new school fundraising efforts were reported at the January 12 school board meeting. Superintendent Dr. Ken Cox told the board that \$63,000 came in last week and that as of the end of December, an additional \$325,000 had been pledged or received. Cox also told the board that \$917,000 of the Ford Family Foundation \$1 million Challenge Grant had been met and that the foundation has approved continuing the challenge into October.

High school leadership student Alexis Baska added that Scappoose High School wrote a check for \$800 (over their stated goal) toward the high school challenge goal of \$11,000.

In the meantime, the board approved Resolution #11-01,

for a \$3 million bridge financing loan. The temporary financing will be obtained from Wedbush Bank in Portland so construction can continue on schedule while the fundraising continues. The district always knew there would be a timing gap and a need for a bridge loan, so this is not an unexpected event.

Construction is on schedule and interior paint is on the walls now, in the west wing. The district expects to have the keys to the building on June 8 and move in July 2 - 12. Demolition of the old schools is slated to begin on July 15.

Tree removal will start soon to prepare for ODOT's road improvements, now scheduled to start this summer.

The next school board meeting will be February 9, at 6:00 p.m., in the district office.

## Vernonians can start signing up as patients with Verdura Wellness

The Verdura Family Wellness clinic is expected to open in late February in the building previously occupied by Providence Medical.

New patient Welcome Packets are now available at West Oregon Electric Co-op and at the Vernonia Pharmacy. Packets include an envelope that can be sealed and dropped off in a lock box at Vernonia Phar-

macy. The packets will be picked up weekly. Filling out this paperwork ahead of time will save patients time at their initial visit, because their information will already be loaded into the Verdura system. There are separate adult and pediatric packets available.

More information should be available in early February.

## Come to event meeting and find out "what's going on" in Vernonia

Vernonia's old school buildings will be demolished this summer, so big changes will have to be made in some community activities.

Want to know what's going on with Jamboree, Salmon Festival, 4th of July or other Vernonia community events?

Want to be involved?

Come to the first community event planning meeting of 2012 on Thursday, January 26, at 6:00 p.m. at city hall.

This is your chance to find out "what's going on" at the meeting.

### Vernonia Band Concert

An "Evening with Oscar" is the theme for the Vernonia High School Band Concert on January 24, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Washington Grade School.



### Town Hall with State Senator Betsy Johnson in Banks

State Senator Betsy Johnson will hold a Town Hall meeting on Monday, January 23, at 7:00 p.m. in the Banks Elementary School cafeteria.

Subjects will include what to expect in the upcoming February Session, budget issues, and education. Also on hand will be Ben Cannon, Governor Kitzhaber's Education Policy Advisor.