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May 16, 2012



The Vernonia High School Band went to state competition, on May 10, and came home with the 1st place trophy for division 2A/1A. The band is shown on the stage after receiving the award, which is held by Director/teacher Robert Izzett. Vernonia beat 6 other bands in the competition. In 2011, the band came in 5th at state. Photo by Tracy Eason.

Kay threatens to sue more Vernonians

Former Vernonia Police Sergeant Michael Kay's attorney, Michelle R. Burrows, sent a letter to the City of Vernonia dated April 14 stating that the original notice of lawsuit (Tort Claim Notice) is being amended.

According to the letter, the following individuals would be included in the lawsuit: Mr. Randy Parrow, Mr. Jim Tierney, Mr. Brett Costly (sic), Ms. Shirley (sic) Daughtry, Chief Matt Workman, Ms. Linda Graff (sic), Mr. Jim Johnson, Ms. Joanne (sic) Glass, Alex Sosnowski and Mayor Josette Mitchell.

"An explanation of their involvement in the termination and destruction of Michael Kay will be forthcoming in a complaint we are now drafting to be filed in United States District Court, Portland Division," the letter continued.

Another paragraph stated that "We have uncovered enormous irregularities in public finance, public meeting and land use regulations within your city - some of which may be connected to actions taken against Kay..." Burrows also said she

intends to ask for an investigation of the issues and the involvement of the following people: Mr. Tony Hyde, Betsy Johnson, Bud Dow, Sharon Bernal, Josette Mitchell and her husband, Casey.

Burrows' original Tort Claim Notice was sent to the City of Vernonia, on November 4, 2011, and stated her intent to ask for, "back pay, front pay, emotional damages for loss of an entire career in the amount of high six figures, including attorney fees." By law, any lawsuit must be filed within two years of the Tort Claim Notice.

Kay's employment with the Vernonia Police Department was terminated on June 28, 2011. Prior to that date, the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) Police Policy Committee voted unanimously, on May 19, to revoke his certification to be a police officer. DPSST found, based on their investigation, 10 known instances where Kay "misrepresented" the truth, was "untruthful", and "dishonest". Kay filed a grievance complaint with the police bargaining association requesting arbitra-

tion. That grievance hearing is scheduled for August of this year.

DPSST does not consider Kay's employment discharge final until so determined by the arbitration. As a result, DPSST suspended their mandatory revocation of Kay's certification until arbitration is complete. At that time, if Kay's discharge is upheld, DPSST's mandatory revocation of his certification resumes. If Kay's employment termination is not upheld in arbitration, DPSST still has a "discretionary" revocation process that could resume.

High school graduation ceremonies

Banks High School graduation is June 8 at 7:00 p.m.

Vernonia High School graduation ceremony is on June 2 at 2:00 p.m.

Be sure to pick up the June 6 issue for the Vernonia High School Graduation Section.

May 15 election results

With a very low voter turnout of 23.63 percent of registered voters in Columbia County, and 98.15 percent of ballots counted, both county commissioner positions appear to be headed for a runoff in the November election. In order to avoid a runoff, one candidate would have needed to receive 50 percent plus one of the votes cast. That didn't happen.

In the run for Columbia County Commissioner Position 1, incumbent Earl Fisher was leading the crowd with 1,753 votes (29.63 percent) followed by Wayne Mayo with 1,330 votes (22.48 percent). The other three candidates were out of the running; Brady Preheim (754 votes), Terry Luttrell (1,048 votes) and Colleen DeShazer (1,018 votes).

Incumbent Commissioner Tony Hyde led the pack for Po-

sition 3, with 2,696 votes, but that totaled 46.72 percent of ballots cast, 3.28 percent less than the 50 percent needed to avoid a runoff. Unless that vote tally changes by morning, Hyde will face Tammy Maygra in the November election. Maygra received 1,751 votes (30.35 percent), followed by Jim Gibson with 1,118 (19.38 percent), while 186 voters favored Vernonian Reginald Ward.

Measure 34-197, the Banks School District #13 bond levy, appeared to be failing, with 526 no votes (51.57 percent) and 494 yes votes (48.43 percent). Washington County was reporting 100 percent of the precincts with a 20.5 percent voter turnout.

These tallies are "unofficial" results until they are certified by the Oregon Secretary of State.

Vernonia meets \$1 million challenge for new school

The new K-12 school and community center in Vernonia is one giant step closer to completion today. Catalyst: the campaign for Vernonia's schools has announced the successful completion of a \$1 million challenge grant to raise support for this innovative project.

Dozens of generous businesses, foundations and people from across Oregon have stepped up with contributions of \$10,000 or more, unlocking a \$1 million one-to-one matching contribution from The Ford Family Foundation to help this rural timber town recover from two devastating floods.

"We thank The Ford Family Foundation for their longstanding and generous commitment to our community," stated Vernonia School District Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Cox. "The Foundation understood from the start that recovering from two 500-year floods in 11 years

is more than a single community can bear on its own. They were willing to make an ex-

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