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# THE INDEPENDENT

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

June 6, 2012



The Vernonia High School Class of 2012 graduates wait to be called up to receive their diplomas during the graduation ceremony on June 2.

## Vernonia: Your water and sewer bills are going up

Water and sewer rates are going up after a vote, on June 4, by the Vernonia City Council.

The council had already announced that the water rates would go up, with most residential users paying \$36.00 (up from \$35.00) for the base rate and \$4.25 (up from \$1.25) for each 1,000 gallons after the first 2,000 included in the base rate.

Council has been discussing raising the Sewer Loan repayment fee from \$12.00 to \$31.00 in order to start paying on the principle, not just the interest, on a loan that was partially drawn upon for work that was done prior to the 2007 flood. The flood put an end to the project, which was no longer permissible in the flood plain. The city expects to use more of that loan, and raise fees accordingly, to complete the sewer project that is now being planned for later this year. That project is being planned in order to bring the city's waste water treatment into Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) compliance for the first time in over 20 years.

Council also approved the budget for the 2012-2013 fiscal year, after a public hearing, though there were no members of the public in the audience.

Other business at the June 4 meeting included passage of the financing plan for the Vernonia Schools system development charges for the new school. The district negotiated

with the city for a final amount of \$139,159 payable over four years with total interest of \$4,673.

The council voted unanimously for Resolution 22-12 amending the water and sewer rates.

In other business, at the May 21 meeting, council:

- approved Resolution 15-12 establishing the Parks Committee,

- passed Ordinance 881, Rules and Regulations for the City of Vernonia Park System (repealing previous Ordinances 761, 790 and 824).

In other business at the June 4 meeting, council:

- authorized City Administrator Bill Haack to sign an agreement with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) regarding road work for the new school,

- approved new hours for city hall (see related article on page 1),

- approved Resolution 25-12 that will allow volunteers with the city to be covered by Worker's Compensation.

## City Hall will open at 11 a.m. as of July 1

Vernonia City Hall will have new hours starting July 1, after the city council approved a plan presented by City Administrator Bill Haack.

The window at city hall will open at 11:00 a.m. (instead of 9:00 a.m.) and stay open until 6:00 p.m. on Mondays. Tuesday through Friday, city hall will

still close at 5:00 p.m.

The phones will be answered starting at 10:00 a.m. and the Planner and Building Official are still available by appointment. Haack told council that the change would allow time for staff meetings, cross-training between jobs, and greater flexibility for staff that

needs to attend evening meetings. After six months, Haack said he will re-evaluate the change in hours.

The change in hours is expected to be revenue neutral, neither increasing nor reducing costs.

## Vernonia Pharmacy closing on June 9

Vernonia Pharmacy has announced plans to close and consolidate with their other location, Banks Pharmacy. Their last day in Vernonia will be June 9.

Owner Philip Darrah cited rising costs from drug manufacturers and distributors, and the increased use of mail order prescriptions by health insurance companies, plus the general increase in the cost of do-

ing business and the slow economy, as the major reasons for the closure of his Vernonia business.

Vernonians can still use his services at the Banks location, a larger store with more products, and Darrah is offering free shipping on the first three prescriptions using the Banks location to mail to Vernonia. In addition, Vernonia customers will receive a 40% Off coupon,

good for any over-the-counter or gift item in the store, with the first prescription picked up at the Banks Pharmacy.

Banks Pharmacy is located next to Jim's Thriftway at 662 S. Main Street. They are open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. They can be called at 503-324-5780.

## VHS Track and Field team shines at district, and at state

After setting three new records at the district meet in May, the Vernonia High School Track and Field Team went to state, where they had more success.

At the May district meet, the boys 4x100 relay team was the 2nd fastest in the state at 44.5 seconds. Nicolo Casale per-

formed the 100 meter dash in 11.2 seconds, and the 4x400 relay team finished in 3:35. In addition, Casale took home the "Athlete of the Meet" trophy, and the team overall finished in second place, losing to Nestucca. Track coach Byron Brown, assisted by Teresa Williams, took home the "Coach of the

Year" honors.

At the OSAA State Championships in Monmouth, May 18-19, Vernonia took four first places, one second, a sixth, and a seventh.

Nathan Fleck won the Boys 800 Meter with a time of 1:59.01, Nicolo Casale won the Boys 200 Meter Dash with a

time of 22.67, the Boys 4x400 Meter Relay team of Kristian Wredstroem, Nathan Fleck, Jacob Stevens, and Nicolo Casale placed first with a time of 3:26.80. The final first place went to Lea Wilson with a 39-03.00 result in the Girls Shot Put.

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