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THE INDEPENDENT

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

July 5, 2012



Vernonia celebrated our country's birthday with a parade, a concert and fireworks.

County Assessor's office reduces business hours

Public business hours for the Columbia County Assessor's Office were reduced effective July 2.

The decision to reduce hours was made by the County Assessor and is due to continued budget shortfalls that have resulted in 26-furlough days, in addition to staff reductions in the Assessor's department. The reduced hours will allow uninterrupted time for the remaining staff to complete the duties necessary for compliance with state mandates.

For all services except manufactured structure changes from July 2 thru October 11, 2012, and November 19, 2012, through June 27, 2013, the hours are Monday through Thursday, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., or by appointment. From October 15 through November 15, 2012 (Tax Season) they will be open

Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Manufactured structure ownership/situs changes and trip permits will no longer be available for immediate processing. Requests for manufactured structure changes will be processed within one week of receiving completed application and fee.

There will be two workstations available for self-service use by the public. These computers are located at the front counter of the Assessor's Office on Monday thru Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Assessor's Office website, at www.co.columbia.or.us includes current property records, as well as forms, applications and general information for most programs maintained by the Assessor's Office.

Planning starts for school based clinic

The Public Health Foundation of Columbia County has received a state grant to support the planning and roll-out of the School Based Health Center in the new Vernonia K-12 campus.

The \$60,000 planning grant will be used to finalize the Vernonia business plan, get contracts in place, set up billing

and support the formal clinic opening which is slated for winter. The remainder will support the first year of clinic operations. After that the State funding formula will provide help with operations.

Public Health will provide medical sponsorship for the Vernonia clinic. Sherrie Ford, School-Based Health Center

coordinator for the Public Health Foundation, said the Rainier and St. Helens SBHCs provide great models, "We're using those models to build a clinic that will meet the needs of the Vernonia community, and are establishing valuable local partnerships."

"Some may not realize it yet
See School on page 13

Public forum on proposed coal terminal

A public forum is scheduled on a coal export terminal proposed for Columbia County. The purpose of the forum is to identify public concerns regarding the project, and to clarify misinformation.

Panelists invited to present their views include representatives from corporations making the proposals, advocacy groups that oppose the project on environmental grounds, and agencies in a position to regulate the proposed projects. Participants have been invited from Ambre Energy, Kinder Morgan, Columbia Riverkeepers, the Governor's office, Army Corps. of Engineers,

Oregon Department of State Lands, Portland and Pacific Railroad, Oregon Dept. of Transportation and the Port of St. Helens, plus state and national legislative representatives.

The forum will be held Wednesday, July 11, from 6:00

to 8:30 p.m. at St. Wenceslas Catholic Church in Scappoose. It is sponsored by Columbia County Citizens for Human Dignity (CCCHD) and the *South County Spotlight*.

"The goal of this forum is twofold," said CCCHD mem-
See Coal on page 17

VHS sent six to All-State

Six Vernonia High School Baseball players went to Linfield College on June 9 and 10 for All-State play. Josh Butcher earned 3rd Team All-State honors, 1st Team All-League and played in the All-State Senior All-Star Series. Jake Titus was

also on the 3rd Team All-State and 1st Team All-League. Joe Benes earned 2nd Team All-League. Jackson Miller, Tim Jennings and Bo Clark all received Honorable Mention All-League honors.



Josh Butcher appears very happy to be one of the Vernonia players at Linfield College during All-State play. Photo by Betsy Miller.