

Friendship Jamboree Pull-out Guide inside



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This is what the old West Oregon Electric Co-operative building looked like last week as the demolition continued. See article on this page for information on flood recovery projects.

Verdura Family Wellness office in Vernonia has closed

Verdura Family Wellness office in Vernonia closed for the last time on July 30. The clinic opened on February 20 of this year and had been open three days a week. Business Manager Sara Miller cited a lack of patients as the primary reason for the closure. They had hoped to have 1,000 patients by this time and had only 348 as of this week.

At the end of the day on July 30, Miller said, "We hope we've helped some patients while we've been here."

Patients will receive a letter this week telling them of the closure and their options to

continue care at the Hillsboro or Carlton clinic locations. Verdura Family Wellness will provide medication refills for 30 days and will follow up with patients on any labs or tests done recently. Patients with questions or concerns are urged to contact them at the Hillsboro office at 503-648-8210.

The Vernonia Health Board met with Verdura on Monday night, to facilitate their closing, and remains committed to providing health care in Vernonia. The board will now begin a search for another provider to operate the clinic.

2007 flood recovery efforts are winding down this year

The tear down of the old West Oregon Electric Co-operative building took place starting the week of July 23. The building, at the corner of Adams Ave. and Maple St. was built in 1957 for \$113,406. It was replaced this year by the new building, out of the flood plain, at Maple St. and Rose Ave.

Recovery efforts from the flood on December 3, 2007, are winding down, with the last batch of nine houses to be lifted this year. A total of 36 houses have been elevated (without money from FEMA), 30 were elevated with FEMA money, nine FEMA elevations still to go, 34 houses in Columbia County were bought by FEMA and torn down. One house was

moved to a different part of the property (higher ground) and then lifted. 21 houses were mitigated by the owners, such as replacing an existing manufactured home. There were also three businesses, Vernonia Sentry, West Oregon Electric Co-operative, and the schools that were mitigated (floodwalls for Sentry), or torn down and re-built elsewhere. Two businesses are still in the process of seeking mitigation options.

Oregon given No Child Left Behind waiver, see page 12

Cougar seen in Vernonia neighborhood

A cougar was spotted inside city limits of Vernonia on July 20. Ernie Smith and his son, Taylor, saw a cougar, at about midnight, in their backyard between 4th and 5th Avenues, at the north end. The cougar stayed in the yard for a couple of minutes, then moved off into the timber behind the house.

"Then we heard it attack some animal," Smith said, "it was snarling and making a guttural growl," then the noise stopped. They called 9-1-1.

When a Vernonia Police Officer arrived they heard sounds that led them to believe the cougar was devouring something. They listened to the sounds for about five minutes.

The next day, Ernie Smith went in the woods but saw no sign, though Taylor found large cat prints and a path that looked like the cougar had dragged something into the thick brush. Smith said they had previously seen a deer with two yearlings in the area and, since, have seen only one yearling. The police department contacted Oregon State Police and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW).

Information on the ODFW website states that Oregon is home to more than 5,000 cougars, also known as mountain lions. Their primary food source is deer, but they will also eat elk, raccoons, and other

mammals and birds. Cougars are large animals with a cat-like appearance, tan or tawny color and a nearly three foot long tail.

ODFW advises those who live in cougar country to keep **See cougar on page 5**



How to identify cougar tracks, see page 5