



Declaration of Cooperation

Vernonia Schools Project

June 24, 2009

Background

On December 3, 2007, the city of Vernonia, Oregon, suffered the second “500-year flood” in eleven years. A combination of heavy rain on top of snow caused the Nehalem River and Rock Creek to overflow their banks and flood much of downtown Vernonia. Nearly 300 people were rescued from homes and workplaces, and there was widespread damage to private property, businesses, and public infrastructure.

District Superintendent Ken Cox had closed schools for the day so no children were present at the time of the flood, but all three schools and the district office were hard hit, and the high school was substantially destroyed. Following the flood, Vernonia’s nearly 700 students were sent to classrooms around the community and to schools in Scappoose. In early February 2008, the elementary school and middle school buildings were re-opened. Children from all grades are attending school in a combination of the two buildings and modular units, but the situation is still a makeshift one: The high school is unusable and has been mostly demolished. In addition, the elementary school is in bad state of repair and has a significant collapse potential in case of an earthquake.

Soon after the flood, the Army Corps of Engineers issued and the City of Vernonia adopted a new floodplain map, placing all three schools squarely in the high-risk zone for future floods.

After the immediate recovery efforts were underway, the town decided that its first and highest priority was to rebuild a safe and sustainable school system out of the newly mapped floodplain and harm’s way.

Oregon Solutions Project

In April 2008, Governor Ted Kulongoski granted Columbia County Commissioner Tony Hyde’s request to designate the Vernonia Schools Project as an Oregon Solutions project. Governor Kulongoski responded: “This project is important to me and my staff. The problem of relocating and funding Vernonia’s schools needs to be addressed immediately. Education is one of my highest priorities and with that comes the need to provide our students with a safe and healthy environment in which to learn.”

The Governor assured participation of his staff and appropriate state agencies on the team. The project team has met for over a year and has achieved its first goal: to find a new site for the school system and to get the appropriate land use documentation prepared for filing. This declaration of cooperation is designed

to document the successes of the project to date and to outline the next phase of collaboration.

Agreements

All team members acknowledge that the best solutions depend upon cooperation by all entities at the table. Accordingly, they recognize that each individual has a unique perspective and contribution to make, and legitimate interests that need to be taken into account for the success of the various projects. The following sections provide each entity's contributions to the project listed above.

Purpose of Declaration of Cooperation

Oregon Solutions provides a structure for the public, private, and civic sectors to collaborate in addressing one of the state's sustainable community objectives. That collaborative process, which results in agreements being made between the parties and commitments being made to the project, created the basis for this Declaration of Cooperation. This document outlines the commitments that all parties have made to successfully carry out the project and to achieve their collective goals in Phase II of the Oregon Solutions process.

Collective Project and Achievements

For over a year, the Oregon Solutions team, representing federal, state and local government, private industry, civic organizations, and philanthropies, has met to support the Vernonia School District and the City of Vernonia in their efforts to find an appropriate location for the Vernonia school system and to assist in any land use applications that might need to be made. The team has leveraged hundreds of thousands of dollars to the project and has engaged the businesses, regulatory agencies, and the public in the process.

The next phase of the project will be focused on finding funding for the school project and for supporting the entire community in making connections between the overall Rebuild Vernonia efforts and the reconstruction of the school system.

City of Vernonia


The City of Vernonia (City) is represented on the Oregon Solutions Project Team by Interim City Administrator Jim Johnson and by Planning Commission Chair Dan Brown. In the spring of 2008, the City agreed that the school rebuilding process should be one of the highest in the flood recovery effort and agreed to serve on the Oregon Solutions team assembled by the Governor. The city administrator served on the Executive Committee and the Siting Committee and Planning Commissioner Brown was the chair of the Siting Committee. The City and the School District have worked cooperatively with the other partners to find mutually satisfactory solutions to siting a new school complex.

The City has a variety of roles in the siting process: 1) the City owns land that is suitable for the new school and is within the preferred site recommended by the Oregon Solutions team and selected by the board, and the City is willing to negotiate a transfer of this land; 2) the City's roads and utilities will serve the new school; 3) the City provides permit services for the new school; 4) the City and Columbia County have jurisdiction over land use issues which will include the processing of an urban growth boundary amendment; and 5) the City supports the new school as a vital community facility necessary for a thriving city.

Because of the importance of the new school to the community, the City of Vernonia commits to the following:

- The City Administrator and the Planning Commission Chair will continue to serve on key committees organized to support the Oregon Solutions Project.
- The City will give priority, within city laws and guidelines, to the issuance of permit applications for any school-related project.
- As land owner of Spencer Park, which is a potential school site, the City will work with the School District on an exchange of property that will replace in-kind the park facilities built with volunteer labor and federal and state grants, on a site now owned by the School District.
- As desired by the School District, the City will negotiate an agreement for the use of the city's 50+ acre forest property as an educational "classroom" for Vernonia School District students.

- The City will work in partnership with Columbia County to expeditiously process an Urban Growth Boundary Amendment to include school property within the city limits.
- The City agrees to consider an amendment to the city's various Systems Development Charge (SDC) ordinances so that if the School District (or any other owner) can show that there is no new net gain in demand on a utility system, then the cost of that utility SDC will be reduced. For example, if all stormwater drainage from the school district's property is handled on-site, then the city will agree to significantly reduce the stormwater SDC.
- The City will work with the School District to plan the vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation routes to and from the new school.
- The City will join with the School District to apply for state and federal grants to support the construction of the new school complex, transportation improvements, and the extension of utilities.
- The City will work with the Oregon Solutions Project Team on balancing congressional funding requests between city needs and Oregon Solutions priorities.
- The City will work with the Oregon Solutions Team in the next phase to develop an integrated set of projects to support Vernonia in its efforts to become a more sustainable and prosperous community as part of an effort called *Rebuild Vernonia*. In addition to new schools, key projects will include a new sustainable wastewater treatment facility, a new headquarters building for West Oregon Electric Cooperative designed to at least a silver LEED standard, a Main Street and urban renewal program downtown, construction of a Recycling and Reuse Center, and the development of a light industrial park, including a new power generation plant that would convert biomass to electricity.


Sally Harrison
Mayor

Columbia County

The Columbia County Commission, through Commissioner Tony Hyde was one for the parties to request the Governor's designation of the project. Commissioner Hyde has served as co-convenor of the Oregon Solutions project and has provided leadership and vision to the project. Columbia County has also partially funded a public affairs firm to connect Vernonia flood recovery efforts to federal resources. Columbia County has also _____

In the next phase of the project, Columbia County will:

- Have Commissioner Hyde continue to serve as co-convenor for the next phase of the Oregon Solutions project.
- Have Commissioner Hyde continue to serve as the lead spokesperson for the Oregon Solutions project with the media and other interested parties.
- Continue to fund (along with the City of Vernonia and the Vernonia School District) to employ the public affairs firm to connect the flood recovery efforts to federal resources until _____.
- Provide leadership through its Board by encouraging fundraising efforts from the private, state, and federal sectors. In this regard, the Commissioners and staff will offer their time and expertise to lobbying efforts as may be needed at the state and local level.
- Give priority, within county, state, and federal laws and guidelines, to the issuance of permit and land use applications.
- _____

Rita Bernhard, Commissioner

Earl Fisher, Commissioner

Tony Hyde, Commissioner

Congressman David Wu

Congressman David Wu represents Vernonia and the surrounding area in the U.S. House of Representatives and has been a consistent supporter of the community's efforts to rebuild schools, homes, and other infrastructure. In addition to working directly with Vernonia community members, Congressman Wu has provided leadership and support to the larger Oregon Solutions team. Congressman Wu's staff members have been active members of the Vernonia project team and continue to offer their support, advice, and energies to the relocation of the school system and to the broader Rebuild Vernonia project. Congressman Wu has contributed to the Vernonia Oregon Solutions project in the following ways:

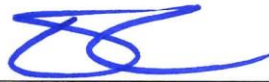
- Met with the Oregon Solutions team on several occasions and provided leadership and encouragement both in Washington, D.C. and in the District.
- Dedicated staff time and resources to attending team meetings, advising the budget and development committee, and advocating for legislation and funding requests that benefit the project.
- Sought and obtained congressional earmarks of \$381,000 dedicated to equipment and supplies for Vernonia School District and \$475,000 to help the Western Oregon Electric Cooperative build a new distribution substation outside the floodplain.
- Helped those affected by the storm and other community members work with federal agencies, including FEMA, to ensure a robust response and negotiate proper benefits.

Congressman Wu will continue to participate in the following ways:

- Continue to provide leadership for the project and encourage all parties to work collaboratively to achieve the Rebuild Vernonia vision.

Congressman David Wu
Declaration of Cooperation
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- Continue to serve as an advocate for the Vernonia project within the federal Government and with the public.
- Continue to submit congressional funding requests to help the school district and city with essential rebuilding needs and advocate for the project.
- Sponsor or support legislation and budget requests favorable to this project as appropriate.
- Continue to work with the team to identify additional funding sources for the Rebuild Vernonia effort.
- Continue to provide the budget and development committee with advice, leadership, and staff time and resources.



David Wu
Member of Congress



Date

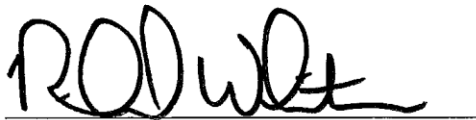
**Department of Land Conservation & Development (DLCD)
Declaration of Cooperation**

In general, to assure the highest possible level of livability, DLCD is chartered with facilitating well prepared and coordinated comprehensive plans for cities and counties, regional areas and the state as a whole. As our mission statement indicates, we support all of our partners in creating and implementing comprehensive plans that reflect a balance of the statewide planning goals, the vision of citizens, and the interests of local, state, federal, and tribal governments.

Specifically, in our role of assisting local governments, DLCD has been an active partner in providing technical assistance to the Oregon Solutions team charged with relocating the Vernonia school system in a safe and healthy location. DLCD has provided representation to the Oregon Solutions team, was instrumental in the Vernonia project receiving a Transportation Growth Management Quick Response Grant with a value of \$127,000 to inform the school siting decision, and has provided technical assistance on land use issues throughout the process.

In the next phase of the project, DLCD will:

- Continue to provide a representative to the Oregon Solutions team.
- Continue to provide technical assistance on land use issues that arise as part of the Oregon Solutions project.
- Provide technical assistance wherever possible on issues related to enhanced community livability, and strengthening economic vitality.
- Give high priority, within county, state, and federal laws and guidelines, to the timely review of land use decisions relating to relocation of school facilities for the Vernonia community.



Richard Whitman, Director
Department of Land Conservation and Development

6/9/09
Date

Neil Kelly Company

Neil Kelly Company President and CEO Tom Kelly has served as co-convener of the Oregon Solutions process since the very beginning. Tom Kelly has provided significant technical expertise about green building and advice and counsel to the team on fundraising, particularly in the Portland business community.

In the next phase of the project:

- Tom Kelly will continue to serve as co-convener of the Oregon Solutions Team.
- Tom Kelly will continue to serve as an ambassador for the project in Portland and around the state.
- Along with Senator Betsy Johnson, Tom Kelly will serve as co-chair of the subcommittee on private philanthropy for the project.



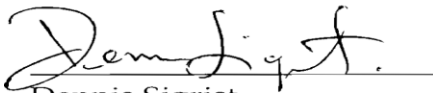
Tom Kelly
President & CEO
Neil Kelly Co.

June 24th 2009
Date

Oregon Office of Emergency Management

The Oregon Office of Emergency Management has participated fully in the Oregon Solutions process and has been represented by Dennis Sigrist and Phil Carpenter. The Office of Emergency Management has provided technical expertise and administers FEMA's Public Infrastructure Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant programs in Vernonia. In the next phase of the project:

- The Office of Emergency Management will continue to participate on the Oregon Solutions Team.
- The Office of Emergency Management will continue to provide technical assistance in the most effective way to interface with FEMA.
- OEM will notify the Oregon Solutions team when they hear of opportunities to leverage additional resources for the project.
- OEM will continue to take the lead in advising the team on the Public Infrastructure Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant programs.



Dennis Sigrist
Office of Emergency
Management

6/24/2009

Date

Portland Community College

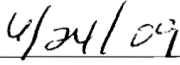
Portland Community College has participated fully in the Oregon Solutions process and has been represented by Kelly Marks. PCC has an interest in seeing fully integrated educational opportunities in Vernonia, as for the rest of its service territory. Kelly Marks has provided advice and support on the connection between K-12 and higher education. In addition, she has participated actively in a subgroup of the team devoted to designing the new school buildings.

In the next phase of the project:

- Kelly Marks will continue to serve on the Oregon Solutions Team.
- Kelly Marks will continue to participate in the subgroup working on school design.
- Portland Community College will continue to actively pursue partnerships with Vernonia School District for the benefit of both institutions.
- Portland Community College will continue to support life-long learning opportunities in Vernonia and Columbia County.



Kelly Marks



Date

Senator Jeff Merkley

Since being sworn into office in January 2009, Senator Merkley has followed the Oregon Solutions project dedicated to rebuilding the schools in Vernonia in a safe and sustainable manner. Senator Merkley's staff has been briefed on the project and has advised members of the team about opportunities for Federal resources.

In the next phase of the project, Senator Merkley will:

- Provide leadership for the project and will encourage all of the parties to work together to achieve the Rebuild Vernonia vision.
- Dedicate staff time and resources to participate on the Oregon Solutions team.
- Serve as an advocate for the Vernonia project with the Federal government and with the public.
- Submit congressional funding requests as appropriate to benefit the project and the citizens of Vernonia.
- Sponsor or support legislation as appropriate that benefits the project.
- Work with the team to help identify additional funding resources to support the project.

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

Date

Vernonia Sentry

Vernonia Sentry has participated fully in the Oregon Solutions process and has been represented by Gordon Smith. Gordon Smith has provided advice and support to the team and has testified on behalf of the project several times. In addition, Mr. Smith has participated actively in the siting subcommittee of the Oregon Solutions team.

In the next phase of the project:

- Gordon Smith will continue to serve on the Oregon Solutions Team.
- Gordon Smith will continue to serve as an ambassador for the project in Vernonia and will bring community concerns to the full team.
- Gordon Smith will work with the team to develop sufficient resources to complete the project.

Gordon Smith
Owner
Vernonia Sentry

Date

Winterbrook Planning

When it became clear that one possible site for a school complex was located outside of the city's current Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), staff from the City of Vernonia and from Oregon Solutions approached Greg Winterowd, a principal in the firm of Winterbrook Planning. Greg provided technical assistance to city and Oregon Solutions staff about the details of an UGB boundary expansion under Oregon state law. He also talked to DLCD staff and met with them to determine the best approach to a UGB expansion application.

Winterbrook Planning agreed to complete the application to Columbia County for a UGB expansion amendment. This application has been submitted to Columbia County and to the State Department of Land Conservation and Development. The application was completed by Jesse Winterowd and Greg Winterowd at no cost to the city.

The UGB amendment process includes hearings before the city planning commission, the county planning commission, the Vernonia City Council, and the Columbia County Board of Commissioners.

Winterbrook Planning commits to continue providing technical assistance to the city as the UGB application goes through the approval process. The firm also commits to meeting with the city/county and staff from DLCD if that is necessary.

Greg Winterowd

Greg Winterowd, Principal
Winterbrook Planning

West Oregon Electric Cooperative

West Oregon Electric Cooperative has fully supported the Oregon Solutions process to rebuild the Vernonia school system and has been represented by Marc Farmer. West Oregon Electric sees the school system as the heart to a vital community and supports the communities' and the team's efforts to rebuild the schools.

In the next phase of the project:

- Marc Farmer will serve on the Oregon Solutions team.
- West Oregon Electric will continue conversations with the school district and with other partners to explore co-location opportunities.
- West Oregon Electric will work with the Oregon Solutions team to pursue opportunities that might benefit the co-op, the schools, and the community.



Marc Farmer
General Manager
West Oregon Electric Cooperative

17 JUNE 2009
Date

The Ford Family Foundation

The Ford Family Foundation has provided active assistance and support to the citizens of Vernonia and the Oregon Solutions team since the flood of 2007. At the time of the flood, the Ford Institute for Community Building was supporting a second leadership class in the community. Following the flood, the Ford Institute hosted a facilitated dialogue in the community to allow community members to express both their grief and their hopes for the community. Board members and senior staff also came to Vernonia on a listening mission to learn about the needs of the community. Subsequently, The Ford Family Foundation gave a \$75,000 grant to Vernonia School District to assist with rebuilding the gym so that the community would have a place to gather and students could continue to participate in athletics and physical education while the school system is rebuilt.

In the next phase of the project:

- Ford Family Foundation will continue to look for opportunities to support the community's and the Oregon Solutions team's efforts.
- At the appropriate time The Ford Family Foundation will convene a group of philanthropic funders to learn more about the project.
- Ford Family Foundation will support the Oregon Solutions process with a community assistance grant in the amount of \$10,000.

THE FORD FAMILY FOUNDATION



Norman J. Smith
President

Oregon State University Extension Service

Oregon State University Extension Service has participated fully in the Oregon Solutions process and has been represented by Glenn Ahrens and Chip Bubl. They have provided technical expertise and leadership on natural resources based education models to both the Oregon Solutions Team and to faculty and staff of Vernonia School District. They have also provided technical expertise and advice in the area of woody biomass both for heat and for energy production.

In the next phase of the project:

- Glenn Ahrens and Chip Bubl will continue to serve on the Oregon Solutions Team.
- They will continue to provide technical assistance in the areas of natural resource based education and in woody biomass.
- They will notify the Oregon Solutions team when they hear of opportunities to develop additional resources for the project.
- Glenn Ahrens will offer technical assistance to teachers and staff in developing a natural resources curriculum.
- Glenn Ahrens will continue to serve on the woody biomass workgroup of the Oregon Solutions Team.

Glenn Ahrens
OSU Extension

7/20/09
Date

Chip Bubl
Chip Bubl
OSU Extension

Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District (Col-Pac)

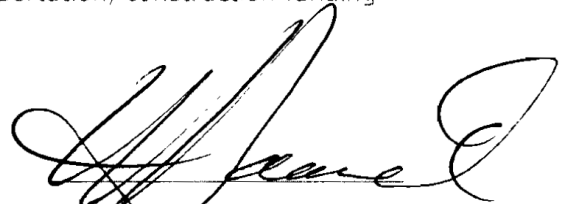
The Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District (Col-Pac) is represented on the Oregon Solutions Project Team by William Haack, Economic Recovery Manager. The Col-Pac is a private non-profit organization established to assist in diversifying and strengthening the economy and livability of Northwest Oregon. The District covers all of Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook counties and the western part of Washington County. Col-Pac secured an U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT that fully funded this position in 2008 to 2010, a total of \$150,000 combined. In addition, the EDA grant was expanded in 2009 to support a LIDAR imaging survey of Columbia County to in part assist the school siting studies, an assessment of properties zoned light industrial that may be used to locate critical services out of the flood plain, and to analyze the opportunities to bring high-speed internet connectivity to the new campus and the community as a whole. The value of these three services to the community is \$80,000. To date Haack has served as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Coordinator for Columbia County, assisted the school secure an initial \$75,000 grant from the Ford Family Foundation, prepared work sessions and town hall meetings this past year to assist the community grapple with the issues that they are facing since the December 2007 flood event, served on the Oregon Solutions Project Team, the executive committee, the Budget Committee, and the Development Committee.

In 2009 and continuing in 2010:

- Col-Pac will fund elements of the LIDAR mapping contract, specifically as they pertain to the greater Vernonia area of interest, and serve as project liaison with the Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Oregon
- Col-Pac will convene and attend meetings with WiMAX and other high-speed internet technology firms to assess their viability in a remote rural environment to support communities, businesses and schools; and Col-Pac will meet with USDA and DOC to assess which Federal broad band component of the Recovery Act is best designed to work in Vernonia
- Col-Pac will assist the City of Vernonia manage the development of a multi-use facility to locate the senior center, food bank, and health clinic; this will include coordinating the transfer of surplus lands from the State to the City as well as creating and leading a development and financing plan for the site and improvements
- Col-Pac will provide staff support to research the use of woody biomass generation as an element of the school and the City's community-wide recovery efforts
- Col-Pac will meet with Federal congressional staff and assess whether the needs of the community can be served by high level intervention for the Project
- Col-Pac will serve as the co-lead grant writer for Federal, State and private foundation Grant and other financing applications; with a focus on energy, transportation, construction funding opportunities



Mary McArthur
Executive Director



William Haack
Economic Recovery Manager

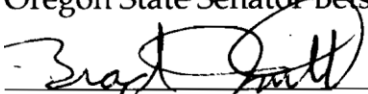
State Legislative Representatives

The two legislators representing Vernonia , Senator Betsy Johnson and Representative Brad Witt provide a broad representation of interests and deep knowledge of the social, economic, and environmental factors affecting Vernonia. Senator Johnson has served as the chair of the development committee and, as such, has been a member of the executive committee. Senator Johnson and Representative Witt have been active on the project team and continue to offer their support, advice, and energies to the relocation of the school system and to the broader Rebuild Vernonia project. Senator Johnson and Representative Witt will continue to participate in the following ways:

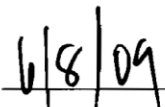
- Continue to provide leadership for the project and encourage all parties to work collaboratively to achieve the Rebuild Vernonia vision.
- Continue to serve as advocates for the Vernonia project within state government and with the public.
- Sponsor or support legislation favorable to this project as appropriate
- Endorse Congressional funding requests and advocate for the project as appropriate.
- Continue to work with the team to identify funding sources for the Rebuild Vernonia effort.
- Senator Johnson will continue to offer her time as co-chair of the philanthropy subcommittee and will work with other project team members to develop and execute a fundraising plan.



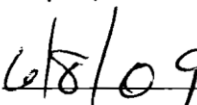
Oregon State Senator Betsy Johnson



Oregon State Representative Brad Witt



6/8/09



6/8/09

Vernonia School District 47J
475 Bridge Street
Vernonia, OR 97064

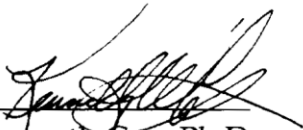
Vernonia School District has been one of the central partners on the Oregon Solutions Project Team. The District has been represented by Superintendent Ken Cox and School Board Chair Kim Wallace and Board Member Jim Krahn. The District has worked collaboratively with the City, the County and other partners to find mutually satisfactory solutions to siting a new school complex.

1. The District has not only provided meeting space as needed for Oregon Solutions Meetings but has been open to the suggestions and timelines put forth by the Oregon Solutions Team.
2. As participants in the Oregon Solutions Project district representatives have attended all of the Oregon Solutions meetings. We have provided all requested data and access to district staff and property to accommodate the completion of the Transportation Growth Management study that was conducted.
3. We have demonstrated our cooperation and commitment to the process by following through and acting upon the Oregon Solution Team's school siting recommendation.


Vernonia School District commits the following to the next phase of the project:

- Superintendent Cox and Chair Wallace will continue to serve on the Oregon Solutions Team and on key committees.
- The District will continue to lead the effort to design and build the new schools complex.
- The District will lead the efforts to present a general obligation bond to the Vernonia voters in the fall.
- The District will continue to work with the Oregon Solutions Team partners to maximize the environmental, social, and economic sustainability of the new schools.
- The District will work with the Oregon Solutions Team to maximize its opportunities to leverage resources from all public, private, and civic sources.

- The District will provide \$10,000 to help fund the next phase of the Oregon Solutions process.
- The District will work with the Oregon Solutions Team in the next phase to develop an integrated set of projects to support Vernonia in its efforts to become a more sustainable and prosperous community as part of the *Rebuild Vernonia* effort.
- The District will participate fully in the *Rebuild Vernonia* effort that has the school at the center, but which includes other positive opportunities for the community.


 Kenneth Cox, Ph.D.
 Superintendant

6-24-09
 Date


 Kim Wallace
 Board Chair


6-19-09
 Date


 Cari Levenseller
 Board Vice Chair


 Jim Krahn
 Board Member


 Ernie Smith
 Board Member


 Greg Kintz
 Board Member


 Tammy Jennings
 Board Member


 Tim Bamburg
 Board Member