

Columbia Emergency Planning Association
Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2009

Present:

Another "packed house" at CEPA – 50 in attendance!

Jim Huff	CRF&R
Diane Dillard	CRF&R
Steve Watson	911
Jay Tappan	CRF&R
Michael Cave	Dyno Nobel
Alicia Little	Dyno Nobel
Greg Godfrey	Dyno Nobel
Joseph Errante	CERT
Vicki Harguth	Columbia Co. Emergency Management
Roy Barbour	American Red Cross
Henry Heimuller	Columbia County Rider
Al Pierce	ARES
Mike Greisen	Scappoose Fire
Anne Parrott	Public Health
Cristin Corcoran	Cities Readiness Initiative
Loren Klepper	ARES
Chris Greenhill	Department of Homeland Security
Kimberly Johns	Oregon Military Department
Kevin Hawkins	Beary Special Photograpy
Rita Bernhard	Columbia County Commissioner
Earl Fisher	Columbia County Commissioner
Russ Moon	City of Rainier
Roger Barbour	RSVP
Jim Huff	CRF&R
Janet Wright	Columbia County
Lonny Welter	Columbia County Road Dept.
Gayle Case	MRC and SAR
Kimberly Johns	Oregon Military Department
Andrew Moyer	Columbia County Under Sheriff
Lee Knowlton	Columbia 911
Sally Jones	Columbia 911
Terri Levie	Columbia 911
Don Hillgaertner	Clatsop ARES/RACES
Terry Wilson	Coast Community Radio/Ham
Hyla Ridenour	Columbia River Fire & Rescue
Robbie Roberts	Northwest Natural Gas
Jeff Dickerson	Columbia County Sheriff
Edward Conrad-Waggoner	Port of St. Helens

Theodora Tsongas
Paul Jewell
Genell Grow
Derek White

Portland State University
Corps of Engineers
St. Helens Federal Community Credit Union
Columbia County Emergency Management

Meeting was called to order by Jim Huff at 10 a.m. Special thanks to Columbia County for the treats and Cascades Tissue Group for the door prizes.

Introductions were made.

CEPA Expo 2009 – next planning meeting is Thursday, June 11 – 9 a.m. at CRF&R Administrative Building. Still looking for donations.

Reports

OSFM – no one here

Cities – Russ Moon Rainier – still working on water and sewer rates.

RSVP – Not here

Industry – **Dyno Nobel** – things going very well. Probably 2nd best year of profitability. Ag demand is up here in Oregon – so we are selling it as we make it up. New emission standards for 18-wheel diesel trucks – stricter NOX abatement rule – the only technology seems to be to interject urea solution. We are the only plant west of Wyoming – just helps secure the future of our plant. Back injury to an employee – 11 years without any lost time but this last one was a recordable.

NW Natural – Robbie Roberts - nothing significant to report however, working up in the Mist fields – putting in a couple more storage fields.

SHFCU – doing good. Holding our own. Genell said they have not had to cut hours and or wages – we're seeing slight increase in deposits.

Beary Special Photography – nothing to report

Law – Sheriff Dickerson – we are in crisis mode – we are virtually poised to lay off every deputy by August 1 – looking at solutions to avoid. So we only have 5 people to respond to emergencies. Looking at some correctional services being altered. Still a fluid situation – hoping that we can find some solution to keep a few deputies to be able to respond most to the most emergent calls.

Columbia County Rider - New 43 passenger bus has been delivered. Created a new logo. The bus will make debut at CEPA next month – and some new bus shelters coming. We have been transporting RSVP board to various communities – think there has been a lot of progress. Fair board perspective – so people who have companies or organizations that we could offer tickets to at a discounted price. Ask about our “stimulus package” and trying to bring entertainment prices down for the summer. We are set to close on the Friesen/Stimson Lumber yard by July 1st. It will become a transit center. Janet Wright has spearheaded the grant writing – administration center, park and ride, Columbia County transit center.

Chamber – Diane reported there are lots of visitors from all over the world because of Twilight movie.

Sacagawea Health – Diane said art auction great success – proof that people care about our children's access to healthcare.

ARES – received a grant from OEM – three new radio's, new computer and the software to run some new packet systems.

Fire

Scappoose - Mike Greisen – not much going on – burn season. **Clatskanie** - Steve reported 50 foot telescope project is right on schedule – waiting for more equipment but should be up and going next month. Now begins the training – responding to electrical substation emergencies. We are drying out. Wrapping up plans for 4th of July parade. **Columbia River Fire & Rescue – Jay** – incidents up for May – 341 total – up 50 from a year ago – 75% are medical. We are seeing trend of severe motorcycle crashes. Seven structure fires. Big news is water line break last night and into the morning – 14” line that affected about half of St. Helens! The jail was the big player we were worried about – response from the City was nothing short of phenomenal – Kept industry in mind for fire needs. We have water pressure but the water is now from Bayport. Right across from the Best Western by the railroad tracks. It did undermine the highway pretty good. **Hyla** – gearing up for a lot of summer activities – wildland fires, parades, **CEPA Expo** – the theme is Shelter in Place slated for July 18.

Mist-Birkenfeld – not able to make it because due to shortage of staff – things going reasonably well over there.

LEPC – little behind on the sub-committee meetings – so will be calling a board meeting shortly.

DHS – Theodora happy to be here – doing research on community preparedness.

CCMH – no one here

Oregon Dept of Forestry – no rep.

Cities Readiness Initiative – things are progressing well in Columbia County – very large presentation in August with the Push Partner registry.

Department of Homeland Security – lost the funding to maintain Emergency Operations center at waterfront in PDX – could track shipments of barges – will be working a remote system. He listened to woman complain this morning about Sam Adams, Mayor of Portland lack of knowledge about Cascadia Peril.

Medical Reserve Corps – Anne – had the first appreciation day in May – they are uniting – meeting on a more regular basis – getting geared up to take some public outreach projects. Interviews with Vista volunteers – with Washington and Multnomah County – sharing some administrative tasks.

Public health – only one confirmed case of H1N1 flu. Just in an observation mode. World level – 115 deaths and 17 in the U.S. Today is the opening of the Rainier School based health center – “soft opening” at the end of the school year. Exciting to see another health care opportunity for our children.

911 – Sally – City of SH just sent out a “boil water” advisory. We will be sending out newsletter – semi-annual – if you would like to see a message to the entire county let Sally know. Columbia County's new twitter blog. Huff indicated she contact OSFM for some partial assistance with funding if they include an article about the new CEPA LEPC. Working with sheriff regarding law enforcement response in the non-incorporated area. The call-takers are the first impacted by the severe budget cuts – they are the ones who are going to have to say that no

one will be coming. As CEPA grows we are going to work to rearrange the room. Volunteer Columbia is a piece of DHS – but RSVP and many other agencies are piece of this. Rita said they are officed at DHS. Legislature did divert the 911 excise tax to help re-balance the general fund – the governor proposed diverting additional funds – but we are hoping that this won't happen. If you have an opportunity, talk to Betsy or Brad regarding diversion of 911 funds. Diane expressed her thanks to 911 for the CEPA support.

Port – Edward looking at possible presence at the CEPA Expo – and looking into donation. We're expecting some conclusion on the Multnomah site – working with insurance and then demolition. Working with potential projects – bio-diesel and solar companies up at Port Westward.

County –

Rita mostly working on the budget. There are 141 people in this county that will be losing their housing assistance.

Earl – looking at the budget – still \$157,000 short even with the budget cuts we have already made. The demand for services is up.

Vicki – last month James Roddey was here and we all enjoyed his presentation on the Cascadia subduction zone – he has agreed to do two public presentations the second weekend in August – great presentation based on science. The Saturday presentation will be in Clatskanie – the Friday night probably in Scappoose. Have updated the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan – updating County's comprehensive emergency plan. We have laid off Grace Clark and Kerry Craft.

Road Dept. - Lonny – Just wrapped up FEMA working trying to recover funds from the December storm – we may get back \$90,000. Now starting to work with federal highway association – on getting some roads repaired.

ARC – In May helped two families affected by residential fires. Statewide we still respond to an emergency every 30 hours. We are also challenged with budget cuts and are losing two employees and getting other mandates. Helping revise state's mass care annex. We will be providing VOAD president office space in our chapter office. Spinning up a new duty officer type response system. We do help respond to wild fires. There were over 1000 lightning strikes in Central Oregon last week.

Corps of Engineers – Paul Jewell - helping roll out emergency communications center at the Portland waterfront – sent a team of five back to North Dakota to pick up all the sandbags.

Oregon Military Dept - Kim said they have been spinning up the emergency communications system – now we will contact local emergency services providers so they can get linked.

Guest Speaker – Don Hillgaertner – Amateur Radio Emergency Services – this will be a review of what you already know – you have a very active chapter out in Columbia County. We appreciate the support you have given us. During the incidences of January 2008 – when vandals decided to steal copper wire – we relayed a lot of emergency traffic –

Amateur – “lacking in experience in competence and not for profit”... we don't try to turn a profit – we are prohibited by Congress to make a profit. We cannot compete with commercial ventures.

Mobile operation – history goes back several decades. Field Day in Columbia County yet to be scheduled. Last weekend of June – the amateur radio operators get away from their home base to prove that they can serve during an emergency.

Sue Helm operates her ham radio and has been aboard the space station. Ham radio operators have capability of operating through satellites in orbit.

Emergency assistance defined as “urgent need for assistance” – so when we talk about “routine emergencies” – the general public has no idea.

We talk to the Emergency Management and tell us what you will need and want – we are a volunteer organization – we can do a lot of things that most of you aren't aware. We have satellites, digital modes, and we can operate in conditions when radio and cell phones go down. In Clatsop County our emergency manager met with us and we set priorities – our sheriff has some substations in Jewell and Knappa – they installed ham radio antennas and then brought along a self-contained system and a 110 volt power supply – it also has plug-in for a laptop – we as ham radio operators are told to experiment and learn. We have embraced a lot of the modern digital technology. We have a cabinet at Camp Rilea – we discovered during the December storm 2007 and we are 11 feet below sea level – no one could reach Clatsop County – all roads blocked – All the news was about about Vernonia and Tillamook. At Rilea we had a corps of emergency responders – the Warrior Hall building is a great meeting place. This is great seeing the involvement of power/utility and private industry. Those utility companies saved us except for Qwest who did not help us at all. They had no clue where their technicians were.

We figured out to add an amateur radio system at Warrior Hall. Two VHF and UHF radio and a shortwave radio. We have a similar setup at the Clatsop County Emergency center – basement of the public safety building – we had our own radios and laptop computers – our County Commissioners asked us to send a disaster declaration to the governor. We scanned it and put it in a program called WinLink – to a station in Texas, Idaho and then finally to Salem – and it made it to the office of Major Paul Evans. It worked and it didn't cost the taxpayers a penny! Then Ken Murphy gets involved in it and then Marty McPhillip too. And they wanted every EOC in the State to be equipped with ham radio capability. Columbia County is a recent recipient of this equipment – totally independent of other communication systems.

Local KMUN – only non-commercial radio station that stayed on the air during the 2007 storm. Because Terry Wilson was the radio station engineer – allowed us to operate for another 5 days - \$2000 worth of propane. Cell phones were down, internet was down – the telephone system reverted to the 1950's mode. Then ham radio operators went to fire stations. In Clatsop County we weren't quite as organized – and we have two 911 centers instead of just one.

So you can support your local ham radio operators – perhaps install a antenna. ODOT has a ham radio operations at their center. It's all pre-wired – and it is locked up and in storage – you can get the ham radio station installed. We even installed a ham radio station at Home Depot – this is a gathering place when there is an emergency. We can identify resources but not discuss business. Home Depot also has a generator.

Plan for mobile operation – it was formerly an ambulance in Tillamook – we had been operating a CZ logging truck built in 1972. We went on the air 3 p.m. on Sunday and operated for 9 days in a row – either from the old bus or from the other operations center – we had put out word we were in desperate need and Tillamook came through for us. We have two short wave radios that give us simultaneous communications. We have aircraft and marine radios and public safety radios. If you are doing much traveling – talk to the road department they know what is going on. Inverse “Scotty rule”. Think outside the box – batteries out of a golf cart put on a handcart – for the emergency Seaside fair – he walked from his house and pushed his cart – we practice the plan on a regular basis.

Hood to Coast is a great way to practice – the other is Columbia Bridge Crossing – they close the bridge one day and we are involved in that event. We do ham radio communications as well as point of contact for many other agencies. This serves as a Simulated Emergency Test (SET) – we documented what we learned. We have ham radio operators who have their own television stations. During Dec. 2007 floods and snowstorms – needed status – and they put a ham radio operator in an airplane with a TV.

Work the practice with the same players as your emergency mission and you learn SOP and earn trust.

What did we learn from Hurricane Clint – it was a Category 4 hurricane – in excess of 86 mph for 72 hours – 147 mph on Naselle Ridge. We learned

- People are resilient
- Utility companies are critical
- Three days are not enough
- Have a fuel shortage plan
- Use what stays operational

Amateur ham operators were the communications conduit. When I became Emergency Coordinator for Clatsop County – we decided to provide Clatsop County Citizen's and Governmental leaders with reliable communications when all else fails. CARE enough to be the very best. Special thanks to Senator Betsy Johnson's Foundation for providing the ham radio for the station!

Next meeting is Tuesday, July 7, 10 a.m. at the Columbia 911 center. Our guest speaker is **Timothy F. McLain Superintendent Oregon State Police**. Treats and door prizes will be provided by Columbia River Fire & Rescue.