

Columbia Emergency Planning Association
Meeting Minutes - - February 3, 2009

Present:

Jim Huff	CRF&R
Diane Dillard	CRF&R
Karen Fox Ladd	CHD Public Health
Anne Parrott	CHD Public Health
Steve Watson	Columbia 911
Steve Salle'	St. Helens Police
Henry Heimuller	Columbia County Transit Division
Lee Knowlton	Columbia 911
Michael Cave	Dyno Nobel
Alicia Little	Dyno Nobel
Terry Wolfe	Oregon State Fire marshal
Roy Barbour	American Red Cross
Kerri Smith	NW Regional ESD
Joseph Errante	CERT
Caroline Frappier	CERT & American Red Cross
Jay Tappan	Fire Chief - CRF&R
Steven Sharek	Fire Chief - Clatskanie Fire
Earl Fisher	Columbia County Commissioner
Tony Hyde	Columbia County Commissioner
Rita Bernhard	Columbia County Commissioner
Beth Santangelo	Armstrong World Industries
Ken Murphy	State or Oregon – Emergency Management
Nancy Harwood	RSVP
Greg Nordin	Boise Inc.
Gayle Case	Medical Reserve Corps.
Marge Murphy	Red Cross
Roy Barbour	Red Cross
Roger Barbour	Retired
Al Pierce	ARES
Dave Morrisson	ARES
Derek White	Columbia County Emergency Management
Michael Greisen	Fire Chief – Scappoose Rural Fire District
Mark Griffin	Military Sealift Command
Rich Grant	Oregon DEQ

Jim Huff opened the meeting. Introductions were made. Special welcome to guest speaker, Ken Murphy, Director of Oregon Emergency Management. Thanks to Armstrong World Industries for the treats and door prizes today!

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) – Anne Parrott has been named Coordinator of the MRC for Columbia County replacing Weyhi Zhao who went to Washington, DC.

Public Health – Busy with getting new website up and running and preparing for exercises.

911 – Steve Watson said Sally was home recuperating from recent foot surgery. The agency is recovering from the winter events – it is now grant season. They are continuing work with OWIN on the Clatskanie Mountain partnership – which has gone very well.

Columbia Co.

Tony – he noted that he and our guest speaker had spent numerous times giving testimony in front of our legislature talking about the events of the past – telling of needs and explaining the importance of emergency planning and preparedness. Eventually some of that testimony blossomed into some substantive legislation. He is currently dealing with economic stimulus packaging as well as with the Regional Advisory Council to Region 10 FEMA.

Rita said they've reviewed the snowstorm and flood – great meeting in Clatskanie recently that provided a good critique. Continue to struggle with the budget with challenges for all of us.

Earl – very concerned about the loss of economic activity particularly those job losses at Boise. This will eventually have a significant impact on special districts. Working with school districts to develop an intern program for juniors/seniors who want to get involved in government. If you have interest in learning more about this contact Earl at 503.397.4322 or earl.fisher@co.columbia.or.us.

Columbia Co. Emergency Management – Derek White continues to assist the department with the disasters of the past few weeks. We are presenting some citizen preparedness talks – next one is Thursday night in Clatskanie. We are seeking to gain some exercise credits and receiving great cooperation. We will also provide Shelter in Place Training especially for vulnerable populations. Congratulations to Derek who was named Emergency Coordinator replacing Grace Clark who is finishing up on some UASI grant stuff and going to school. Roy Barbour offered that the Red Cross has some Shelter in Place training programs and Ken Murphy noted that Morrow/Umatilla have some really good information and experience in this area of emergency management. Terry Wolfe reminded us that this is one of the first functions of a LEPC ... “helping the public understand without scaring them and providing material on individual preparedness.” There are good materials at OSFM office as well. They will join efforts with the Citizen Corps. (Nancy).

Red Cross – Marge said they are keeping warming centers open through March. Have had some serious fires in PDX.

OSFM – we now have four official LEPC's – Columbia, Morrow, Klamath and Linn Co. while Clatsop Co. is getting close. Very pleased that Randy Simpson has been named the new State Fire Marshall replacing Nancy Orr. We are also facing budget crunch.

RSVP – Nancy said she was really excited working with the Citizen Corp and especially now that all Clatskanie members are certified. Every city in Columbia County now has a Citizen Corps CERT team except for Rainier. Looking forward to expanding the new program called VIPS (Volunteers in Police Service). Also working on neighborhood mapping – similar to Neighborhood Watch.

Armstrong – Beth noted they have reduced working hours down to 5 days straight instead of shifts around the clock as business slows down. Did lose one of their older storage buildings during the heavy snow. Understand the Port of St. Helens lost several buildings and suffered property damage.

Boise – Greg Nordin is the new CEPA rep. for the company and he has been assigned to manage safety. Things are going fairly well as they continue the restructuring process – plan to be at a normal level of operations by April. They have shut down all the pulping operations and bringing pulp in from Wallula by truck. Terry Wolfe reminded Greg that Boise's environmental staff needs to make sure and notify OSFM as they eliminate hazardous substances.

Dyno Nobel – Experienced some diminished production as is usually the case when weather is extremely cold and CO2 levels in natural gas increase. Have hired a new IT tech that was laid off at Boise – so happy they could employ a Columbia County worker. In January 2009 celebrating no recordables for one year and in March plant will have gone three years with no contractor injuries. In June they will celebrate 11 years without a lost time injury for plant personnel. Alicia did express concern about the proposed greenhouse gas regulations explaining that it would have a very serious, negative financial impact on the operation. They are closely watching SB 80 and will be involved in navigating through the legislation. They will be glad to offer their facility for Shelter in Place training in the future.

Columbia County Rider – Henry noted they are completing grant applications like crazy. Dealing with a recent serious motor vehicle accident involving their large bus – Hwy 30 and Berg Rd.

ESD – Kerri Smith noted that the Educational Service District members all prepared for flooding and each school district did offer assistance to Vernonia. They were very pleased with the proactiveness of the Vernonia School District in preparing for the worst.

ARES – Ramped up for the potential flooding – fortunately it didn't happen but Al got to spend some time in Vernonia anyway. Working on a grant proposal with Derek White.

Scappoose Fire – Kept busy with the snowstorm and flooding and sent crews to Mist Birkenfeld and Clatskanie to help out. Mike noted that it was great that the WEB EOC was activated – fairly easy to use. Derek noted formal training will begin soon so all of the agencies and reps know how to use WEB EOC. Ken noted that they are working on building an interface so districts can easily access.

Columbia River Fire and Rescue – Jay said we were very thankful we missed serious flooding on this end of the county – but felt we were really very well prepared had it come. There were 359 calls in January and we did use the CAN system to alert residences recently to a possible dangerous subject. Pat Martyn, who was recently elected to St. Helens City Council, also has taken over as new Fire Inspector. We are beginning to initiate the Strategic Planning Process and will be involving several members of the community in the process. Reminded us that every Wednesday morning – 7 a.m. is the Legislative Calls with Betsy and Brad --- tomorrow it will be Betsy. On February 11 – Brad will call. This activity is endorsed by the So. County Chamber of Commerce and hosted by CRF&R – at the Administrative office.

St. Helens Police – an officer who was involved in a head-on collision was treated exceptionally well by CRF&R paramedics – was able to return to work very quickly. He really appreciated it. That's when Tony chimed in to say he too was grateful for the great care he got when he was involved in a serious car injury --- he said, "I'll never forget seeing Mike Greisen and knowing I was in good hands!"

Clatskanie Fire – Steve said the fire district recently met with the Police in an effort to strengthen their EOC. Although there were spots of major flooding in Clatskanie – a mobile home and motel, the rest of the City was not seriously damaged. They used the CAN system several times and helped evacuate 50 people. Had some equipment in Vernonia that they ended up having to call back. Steve met with Derek in an attempt to formalize a mutual aid agreement that the district has long had with Stimson Lumber. They did formalize the process. Terry Ramsey is the interim fire chief in Vernonia.

Sacagawea – held an Oversight Committee meeting. Finances are currently okay but know we'll be getting more requests for help as Boise lay-offs continue. The Art Auction is slated for May 16. We are looking at school-based health centers on a countywide basis. Diane mentioned Sacagawea is conducting a fundraising drive in February – called "touch the heart of a child" – pink hearts are being sold in various business establishments.

CCMH – Recent economic forecasts have made it look fairly bleak for future funding – suppose to have another forecast update on February 20. The MRDD (mentally retarded developmentally disabled) folks need special attention in developing a Shelter in Place program to deal with them during a disaster. Joan noted that there is only one grant station in the County and that is at United Way in Rainier – so they have gotten approval for another one to be installed at the Columbia Learning Center – for use by all private non-profit agencies. Should be available in March.

DEQ – the e-waste recycle program is getting up to speed – accepting old computers and monitors. We are beginning a mercury outreach program trying to locate and collect any quantities of the metal that may be left in schools, medical facilities, etc.

LEPC – we have approved the by-laws and a board of directors has been appointed – Next month our guest speaker will be from Calcasieu Parish in Louisiana – brought here by Dyno Nobel.

Misc. – Diane noted that we are extremely fortunate to have two new members to CEPA – our new County Sheriff, Jeff Dickerson, and Undersheriff, Andy Moyer. Both bring a new proactiveness and expertise to the agency and we look forward to working closely with them.

Guest Speaker – Tony introduced Ken Murphy saying he had known him for 13 years and actually met him when Tony was still Mayor of Vernonia during the devastating flood. Since then he's had a lot of interaction with Ken at Oregon Emergency management (OEM) with Ken being director for the past 6 years. He noted that Ken has just come off a term as president of the National Association of Emergency Managers. He also works with him on the FEMA Oversight Committee for Region 10 and is impressed with Ken's ability to make sure Oregon has the tools to deal with disasters. He is a great friend to organizations like CEPA.

Ken began by reiterating that the WEB EOC really is a great tool – but that we probably shouldn't forget how to learn to do it "by hand" if worse comes to worse. Technology affects all of us but when the electricity goes out and the lights are off, things change.

He said it is important to plan and was especially impressed that all three of our county commissioners are here today and recognize the importance of planning for emergencies. When we talk about planning he said that includes proactive mitigation projects as well as recovery --- it is incredibly important that in these tough economic times, we can help a business recover quickly.

"A prudent person foresees the dangers ahead and takes precautions."
Emergency and Disaster Preparedness is a sensible activity for all of us to be

involved in. It is amazing all the resources we have – like county fairgrounds, etc. and they need to be identified and cataloged. You need to read your home and car insurance policy – you don't want to be surprised after the disaster to find out you are not insured. Said Winston Churchill "Let our advanced worrying become advanced thinking and planning."

If you live here on earth, you are at risk. The top potential disaster counties are Joseph, Hood River and Coos. Flooding is the top disaster that kills most people on the planet. Don't limit your thinking.

Making a plan brings about a unity of effort. Reach out to all segments of the population. We simply do not have enough police, fire and public safety personnel to take care of all of us – we need them for the major stuff during a disaster. We must encourage people to be ready to help themselves.

Make it a shared planning system – a plan is never complete – it should always be "under construction." For instance, what about generators for gas stations – invariable in a disaster fire and police will need fuel. Do you know what a tsunami would do to your county? A wave traveling at 525 miles an hour could bring a 50 to 100 foot wall of water up the Columbia.

People change during a disaster so include a behavioral aspect in the planning. Recovery is extremely important and we need to address both physical and mental health. Put your agreements in writing. Go from the top to the bottom of government.

Disaster intelligence is critical. You need to know what's going on in the 97,000 sq. miles of Oregon. Have just discovered a resource of unmanned helicopter that can go for 20 hours at 1500 feet and tell you just what's happening where you live especially for areas inaccessible by car. Amateur radio is a great resource – use them.

We do have a state disaster assistance fund but are looking at making sure of its continual funding. Right now it's loans only but we need loans and grants.

Be sure there is an identified succession of command.

Department of Human Services already has a lot of information that can tell you what the disabled population will need. Steal other plans – don't reinvent the wheel. Spending time finding resources in the county – check out neighborhood garages – you'd be surprised what people have.

Organize your functions –
Size and length of the event
Key persons are:
Leaders trained and familiar

Are leaders familiar with their organizations?
Are employees and their families prepared?
Do you have media controls in place?

Most of all support your county emergency staff.

Next Board of Director meeting is Thursday, February 12 at 1:30 at the 911 Center. **The next CEPA meeting is March 3, 10 a.m. at the 911 Center.** Scappoose Police and Fire are providing treats. Our guest speaker is Dick Gremillion. He is the Director of the Calcasieu Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (OHSEP). Calcasieu is the parish or county dominated by the city of Lake Charles, Louisiana and comprised of 26 chemical plants including two oil refineries. The parish is near the coast, so it experiences hurricanes, flooding, ice storms and other natural disasters along with industrial incidents such as fires, explosions, chemical releases, bomb threats, and transportation emergencies. The local governments, residents, industries and response agencies are very well informed and well rehearsed in responding to emergencies of the industrial or natural variety. Their planning and communication is excellent. Dick is the key response person for the parish and has earned a good reputation in the state for how to plan and respond to emergencies.