



East Oregonian: Cabbage Hill residents appreciate first responders

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By Paul and Mary Davis, Pendleton

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We have seen “up close and personal” the best of collaboration, coordination and teamwork between tribal, state, federal and city governments, private contractors, utility companies, volunteer firefighters, law enforcement, and search and rescue.

In these times of gridlock and inaction, it is encouraging and absolutely refreshing to witness highly skilled professionals acting quickly and decisively in a very serious emergency.

The “Weigh Station” fire started in tall grass in the early afternoon on July 30 just north of the Interstate 84 weigh station. High winds fanned the flames, the fire spread, and then jumped the freeway. In a matter of hours the fire spread to over 600 acres of grassland and timber. This wind-driven fire was long and narrow and fast moving. The ferocity and devastation was overwhelming.

Men and women performed a multitude of tasks with airplanes and helicopters providing surveillance and dropping fire retardant. Private contractors created fire breaks with caterpillars. Hotshot crews, fire departments, and government fire teams fought the fire on the ground. Law enforcement was on duty around the clock. At any one time, there were 200-400 individuals who suppressed and contained the fire. Without a doubt, our home and property were saved because of their decision-making efforts and fast response.

We may forget some of the details, but we shall always remember the heroes and heroines, some of whom are now known on a first-name basis. In addition to their dedication and professionalism, we’ll remember their civility, patience and efforts to communicate with us in a time of great stress.

It is with heartfelt gratitude that we thank:

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, including Tribal Forestry Department, Tribal Fire Department and Tribal Police Department, East Umatilla County Rural Fire District, Heppner Rural Fire District, La Grande Rural Fire District, Oregon Department of Corrections (Snake River, Powder River and Two Rivers facilities), Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon State Police, **Oregon Youth Authority** (Riverbend Fire Crew), Pendleton Fire Department, Pilot Rock Rural Fire District, private contractors, Umatilla County Emergency Management, Umatilla County Fire District 1, Umatilla County Search and Rescue, Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office, Umatilla Electric Co-Op, Umatilla Rural Fire District and the U.S. Forest Service.