

Local

Sumpter hosts wildfire awareness meeting

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Sumpter Fire Department and Powder River Fire Protection District hosted a Wildfire Awareness and Community Meeting on Thursday, September 24th at the Sumpter Schoolhouse.

Kurt Clarke, Sumpter Fire Chief, opened the meeting and introduced members of the Baker County Interagency Fire Prevention Team, including Tom Morcom of Vale BLM, Steve Meyer of ODF, Jason Simmons of BLM, Noel Livingston of USFS, and Gary Timm of Baker County Emergency Management Fire Division.

Clarke concluded his remarks by stressing the importance of defensible space in saving homes in the event of a wildfire. He volunteered to help residents assess and protect their homes.

He said he wants to make everyone's home safe and make it safer for his firemen also.

Timm invited the approximately twenty in attendance to ask questions. He explained his role working with the 12 rural fire districts around Baker County and promoting a seamless cooperative spirit between fire agencies. He liaises between the rural fire districts and the County. He said this meeting is happening due to Clark's energy and guidance to get out education.

Livingston called this year a "one-percent year" and said he has never seen anything like it in his career. He spent a lot of time with teams on different fires across the west. He said he has seen fires before scattered throughout rural areas threatening a structure here or there. This summer, fires were threatening communities. With not enough fire resources to go around, he said it is extremely important to make your residence more defensible. He referenced Stices Gulch and said structures were saved in that community because of work done around structures before the fire got there.

The Fire Prevention Team and community members discussed ideas and options for reducing fire risk. Meyer said ODF tries to get money every year for grants for thinning for the Sumpter area, though there is not a lot available. He also offered that concerned landowners can call ODF and they will send someone out to look and explain what can be done to make the home safer.

Timm said he also has not seen a season like the past one in his career and that it will take everyone working together going forward, whether the money is there or not. He said, "As citizens of Baker County, we have the obligation to do right by ourselves, so as to do well

by our neighbors."

LeAnne Woolf of Sumpter asked about the mature crop of ponderosa pines throughout Sumpter. Livingstone responded that ponderosa is fairly fire resistant as a single tree, but is a fire hazard if tightly packed. He said Sumpter doesn't need to get rid of its pine trees and suggested evaluating whether canopies are touching or open and how tightly packed the trees are.

Timm explained the concept of prefire planning looking from the outside in "all the way to the kitchen sink." Is there sufficient entrance for emergency crews? Timm said they like to see vegetation cleared 14 feet to the sides. A defensible space 100 feet out from the home doesn't mean taking everything down to gravel, but reducing risk of combustible items. Right by the house, it might be irrigated a bit more or kept green. Look at the house and what it's made of. Finally, evaluate everything inside the house, including use of candles and space heaters.

A discussion of bark beetles led to Meyer suggesting calling the ODF office to have a forester come out and take a look.

There are a couple of different types of beetles in the area. Drought weakens the trees and when a beetle gets into a tree, it sends out pheromones to attract other bugs. Beetles fly in the spring so it is important to get affected trees taken care of by April or May. The team then discussed the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

Timm said the County has a plan and the team can talk about a given area of the County and all will know what area they are talking about and risks in those areas. The plan includes a list of mitigations for risky areas. They look at what's important to the area, and what needs to be done to help reduce risk. This can include fuel reduction projects, community meetings, water sources, signage, etc. Timm said this "allows us all to look at the big picture and come together and get stuff done."

Simmons said the CWPP has led to cool things like large fire planning exercises involving infrastructure, capabilities, roadways, culverts, etc. They are targeting high-risk communities and the first was the face of the Elkhorns. They evaluated for defensible space, ingress/egress, etc. Livingstone said preplanning is big and most communities don't have that. They are often pulling the relevant information just ahead of the fire.

Timm explained the project is not invasive and not an open public document. It is completely voluntary and participatory. Agencies come out and work with homeowners to evaluate risk. Baker



Meghan Andersch / The Baker County Press

L-R: Kurt Clarke (Sumpter Fire Chief--standing), Tom Morcom (BLM), Noel Livingston (USFS), Steve Meyer (ODF), Jason Simmons (BLM), and Gary Timm (Baker County Emergency Management-Fire Division).

County has started, utilizing a system already tried and in place elsewhere, and Union and Willowa Counties are looking at following suit. Morcom said the CCPC is driven by the community and said, "Let us know what the needs are". Simmons said the plan is revised every year and if anyone has input, let Clarke know.

The Fire Danger Level Sign program was then discussed. Livingston explained the "adjective class sign" (low, moderate, high, extreme). He said Northeast Oregon is broken up into zones, which are monitored each day for fuel and weather conditions. The zones are also evaluated to figure out how dry they are on average. Livingston said they try to maintain consistency across the area. He asked the recommendations based on the sign be followed and explained for example, Sumpter may have gotten rain, but Granite could be bone dry.

There is also an industrial class sign for industrial operations and public use restrictions on national forest land.

Meyer explained ODF protects private timber ground in the state of Oregon and some range ground around it to protect timber. In the winter, they display thanks for keeping Oregon green signs. During fire season (first part of June to beginning or mid-October), they have a yellow sign. During this time burn permits for barrels and open fires are required. During regulated use, the sign is orange. This means no open burning and burn barrels can be used until 10 a.m. No chainsaw use is permitted after 1 p.m.. There are additional restrictions that can be implemented depending on conditions.

Meyer said Sumpter is unique as it's a municipality that is in ODF protection, and usually follows their regulations, but the City does its own permitting for burn barrels, etc. Clarke explained sometimes burning is allowed outside of town but he shuts off all fires in town for safety reasons.

Timm said he is trying to get a single operating system for the 12 departments across the County. Most follow ODF protocols. There is a lot of inter-agency communication about fire danger levels. Livingstone said the USFS has treated several 1000 acres around Sumpter in the last several years and

now they are looking at maintenance projects to go into areas treated in the past.

Myrna Clarke of Sumpter asked about lots of dry piles around Spaulding Ridge Road and other areas.

Livingstone asked to be notified of such areas and said his crews love to burn in the fall. He said fall is a better time for burning large piles, particularly those associated with logging operations, and they try to burn after the area has had snow and they know more is coming.

Jan Smith asked about burning the piles on her property and Livingston explained that spring is also okay for burning small piles, which tend to consume well.

Timm explained the Ready, Set, Go evacuation programming. This is a

national program marking standards for evacuation. He said the levels really got tested this summer, and by the end of the season, they were very good at utilizing the system. He said the Level 1 (Ready) warning is confusing in that it says "Level 1 evacuation notice". This is just a first step warning and means a fire is in the area. Listen to the radio, pager, or stay in touch with the fire chief to monitor conditions.

Level 2 (Set) means the fire chief and sheriff in conjunction with the 911 system have decided there is a potential threat and you should get ready to go if necessary. Timm said to think about livestock, pictures, or items of value you'd like to gather. Public meetings with fire teams may start.

Level 3 (Go) means leave the area. Timm said

once you leave you probably will not be able to get back in until the area is safe. In Oregon, a level 3 notice is a high suggestion, but you cannot be forced to leave. However, anyone who decides to stay must realize that emergency resources may not be available to help.

Timm also mentioned that a code red with the County is tied in with landlines through the 911 system. Go to baker911.org and click on code red to register cell phones and unlisted landlines for notification of local emergencies.

More information on fire prevention can be found at livingwithfire.info. The local Oregon Department of Forestry number is 523-5831 and the United States Forest Service ranger station is 523-4476.

AUCTION



MOVING AUCTION

Horse Drawn Vehicles-
Antiques/Collectibles-Tools-
Misc. Shop

Saturday Oct. 17th, 2015

Time: 10:00 A.M. PDT • Sale Located
at: 73972 Hwy. 82, Elgin, Ore.

Sale Located at: 73972 Hwy #82. East on Hwy #82 to the intersection of Hwy 82/ Hindman Rd. (mile post 25.6) Terms: Cash or bankable check day of sale.

No merchandise removed prior to settlement. 10% buyers premium.

Concessions available on site.

Auctioneers Note: Cliff and Judy Tschirgi have been business owners/ranchers in the Grand Rhonde Valley for more than 35 years. With a change in direction, they are downsizing their nice, clean property at auction. Plan on attending this unique auction sale.

Horse Drawn Vehicles: late 1800's Surrey w/fringe top; late 1800's Dr.'s buggy w/ new old stock runners included, both have new upholstery and are restored, shaves and tongue available; 4 seat sleigh w/original shaves and original mohair upholstery.

(old style); 3- 13 and 13" saddles, good quality; 3 sawbuck saddles; 1 pr. Ralhide back boxes; 1 pr. Pack bags; 2-Australian stock saddles; 1 pr. Saddlebags; more to find.

Carriage Horse: Good looking registered Morgan Palomino gelding, 14.2H, 900 lbs. (approx) 9 yo. Professionally trained to drive and ride. Point earner is different shows.

Collectibles: 3-wood burning stoves, Colonial cook stove (Portland Iron works), Dow-agic stove, Great Western Duplex wood stove; 3- cast iron bath tubs; Stanley # 35 rabbit plane, #6 jack plane; Prairie #2 25 lb. Brass spring scale; vintage logging tongs; nice 24 slot oak letter rack; Maytag wringer washer; one-lunger washing machine engine; antique tools; dual can dispenser 7-up vending machine w/key; 1920's G.E./Hotpoint automatic electric range (very clean); Duncan-Pfiffe table and chairs; nice fainting couch (ready to be re-finished); 7 ft. buffet (probably oak); 1920's bridge lamp; 5 gal. And 2 gal. Weavever cast aluminum stock pots; Ruby Red punch bowl set; 6 pt Elk mount; Black Bear head mount; neat and clean steamer trunk w/ original drawers and hangers; vintage bat wing chaps;

Furniture and Appliances: White Kenmore 400 washing machine; white Kenmore 18 cu. ft. double door refrigerator; maroon Laz-E-Boy couch w/dual recliners; beige 4' round great chair/couch; Hamilton-Beach convection oven; central vacuum system, new in box; like new NordicTrak Tread Climber exercise machine; wrought iron style patio furniture; wicker furniture; more to find.

Shop and Misc.: Bark Buster (P.T.O. Wood splitter); P.T.O. post auger w/12" bit; 16 ft. Powder River Classic gate; misc. panels; Lincoln 225 Amp arc welder; a good selection of Craftsman power tools to include, 20 gal., 2hp air compressor; 12" table saw w/extensions; Radial arm saw; 6" joiner; 12" band saw; Shaper; 5 hp single phase pump; John Deere RX75 riding lawn mower; 20+ 4 X 4 X 8 pressure treated posts; approx. 22 7' mid-weight T-posts; partial roll Red Brand barb wire; 134A Freon w/ hoses; Echo PB-1010 leaf blower; McCullough Silver Eagle 3420 chain saw; high wheel lawn mower; Hi-Lift jack; new deep sink; 4 rolls 1 1/2" fire hose; frost free hydrants; broadcast spreader; locust firewood; new Camp Chef 2 burner gas stove; new Coleman 2 burner propane stove; Coleman 2 burner gas stove; Misc. camping and fishing equipment. more to find.

Partial list only: As we find more during set up we will post those that warrant advertising on our web site. For pictures to www.snakeriverauction.com. To arrange absentee or telephonic bidding call Roger at (541)212-5918. Preview Friday Oct. 16th. 12-4:00 p.m.

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