

Being prepared in Sisters Country

What can local citizens do to be prepared for a major emergency such as a catastrophic mega earthquake — or a few days snowed under?

First, recognize the vulnerabilities. In a “full-rip” Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, there is likely to be significant damage to the state’s major fuel depot in the St. Johns area of Portland. And re-routing fuel supplies, which are contracted for, won’t be a quick or easy proposition. And in a major region-wide emergency, fuel will be allocated first to emergency responders.

Even lesser emergencies could interrupt fuel supplies.

“Whatever you have in your tank when it happens is what you’re gonna have,” says Jack McGowan, a local preparedness advocate.

Ideally, you’d have some form of fuel storage for, say 100 gallons. But hardly anybody can realistically do that. So, the best practice is simply to fill your tank — and don’t let it get below half-empty. That way you’ve always got at least some fuel on hand.

A couple of safely stored five-gallon gas cans are a good idea, too — treated so that the fuel doesn’t go bad. Drop the gas into your tank every few months and get a fresh supply in the cans.

Water is critical to life. Experts recommend storing at least one gallon of water per person for three days for drinking, cooking and

sanitation. (www.ready.gov/water). That’s a lot of water in an emergency that lasts for several days or weeks.

Putting up a few flats of commercial bottled water is a good idea, as is filling several camping containers. It’s also a very good idea to have a good water purification device in case you are caught somewhere away from your water supply. It’s always a good idea to carry one in your hiking pack or your emergency car kit anyway.

The grocery supply network is likely to be severely disrupted in a major disaster scenario. Most emergency plans call for food supplies for 72 hours — but for an event like a Cascadia quake, you need to be prepared for much longer: Two or three weeks to a month.

Having a stock of canned food is fine — but you have to cycle through it. McGowan recommends purchasing a couple of containers of freeze-dried food from Costco.

“They’re not as expensive as you might think,” he said.

The food stores well and has a 20-year shelf life.

Surplus stores carry supplies of MRE (Meals Ready to Eat) and you can find tasty freeze-dried backpacking food at stores that cater to outdoor enthusiasts.

Don’t count on the ability to refrigerate food. And don’t forget that your pets will need to eat, too — so you need to lay in a backup supply of their

food as well.

You’ll also need to have the means to cook. Camping stoves are convenient, easy to use and effective.

It’s a very good idea to have an emergency backup for vital medications. Just like the food chain, the supply chain for pharmacies is likely to be disrupted.

Having an alternative source of heat is important if you heat primarily with electricity. A portable gas-powered generator is fine for a while — but in a scenario where fuel supplies are short for an extended period of time, that may not help you.

A wood stove requires nothing but some muscle to create the fuel.

Get a Red Cross solar/crank radio so you won’t be completely out of touch on vital announcements/news if the communication net goes down for an extended period.

For some folks, there is an innate, perhaps subconscious, resistance to spending money and effort preparing for something that may never happen. But preparing for the “Big One” also leaves you in great shape to handle smaller emergencies, from winter power outages to a financial crunch that forces you to tap some emergency supplies.

And, for the well-prepared, the confidence that you are ready for anything and in a position to help your family, friends, and neighbors, offers tremendous peace of mind.

Of a certain age.....

By Sue Stafford
Columnist

“The homeless” — that term we use to refer to the nameless people who live on the fringe in Sisters. They may be at home in their car, or camper, or tent, or under a stairway, or in a public restroom in the park.

When we hear that the night-time temperatures are predicted to be down in the teens or 20s, a thought may cross our minds about those who don’t have the good fortune to have a roof over their heads, or heat, or running water.

Fortunately for Sisters’ homeless population, a dedicated group of volunteers pulled together to open our Cold Weather Shelter. Doors opened January 1 and have been open every night since. For Ed Fones, who died in his car of hypothermia two weeks before the shelter opened, it was too late.

Our harsh winter so far has been inconvenient for many Sisters residents — leaks due to snow accumulation and ice dams on

roofs, running out of propane, lots of shoveling, and difficulty maneuvering by car or on foot due to deep snow and skating-rink sidewalks and parking lots.

For the homeless, this winter has gone way beyond being an inconvenience. The subzero and single-digit temperatures truly pose a life-and-death challenge. And the good people of Sisters have opened their hearts to those without adequate shelter. All the good things that have been done on their behalf have been outlined in previous *Nugget* articles.

As a shelter volunteer, who has hosted both an early and a late shift, I have had the privilege of meeting some of our homeless population. They are no longer a nameless, faceless group of strangers. They are each a unique human being with a name, a personality, and a life story.

It takes no time at all to become acquainted with the shelter guests and sincerely concerned for their

See CERTAIN AGE on page 14

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