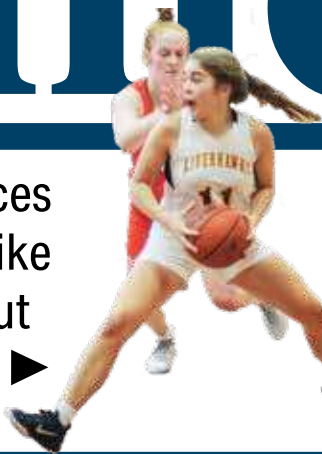


The Dalles Chronicle

Guess this week's History Mystery | A2



TD places sixth at Nike Shootout A9 ▶



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January 4-5, 2020
 The Dalles, Oregon
www.thedalleschronicle.com
 Vol. 129, Issue 2

Wildfire mitigation considered

'Public Safety Power Shutoff' plan explained

By Emily Fitzgerald
The Hood River News

The first fire season under Pacific Power's new Wildfire Mitigation Plan for Hood River and Wasco counties is past, and with the plan remaining in place and next year's fire season looming, a panel of Hood River elected officials sat down with Pacific Power representatives to discuss the frustrations of the previous fire season and the future of wildfire mitigation.

The Hood River City Council and the Hood River County Board of Commissioners met for a joint work session to hear from Pacific Power representatives Allen Berreth, director of transmission and distribution support; Carrie Laird, director of northwest field operations; and Kari Greer, senior community relations manager.

Much of the discussion centered on one policy that has worried local elected officials and emergency management personnel alike since it was announced last May: The Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS).

The policy lays out a procedure for proactively shutting off the power in certain pre-identified areas in order to reduce the risk of utility-caused catastrophic wildfires.

"This isn't reduction or elimination of all fires. We're trying to eliminate catastrophic fires like we've seen in California. That's the risk we're trying to narrow in on, the risk we're trying to reduce through this program," said Berreth.

Approximately 40-square-miles in Hood River County were identified as high consequence fire areas and included in Pacific Power's PSPS-zone.

A Hood River/Wasco Rural PSPS-zone extends from Hood River and Odell into Wasco County east as far as Rowena and Sevenmile Hill. Portions of Klickitat County are also included in the zone.

The bulk of the mitigation plan involves measures intended to reduce wildfire risks such as system maintenance, system hardening and vegetation management, and power shutdown zones are intended as "the final and last tool in the company's toolbox, as it relates to (fire) risk mitigation" said Laird.

The PSPS would be triggered by certain extreme-risk weather conditions, such as high winds, but "there is not any single condition that drives this termination. Each situation is unique," said Laird, adding that Pacific Power relies on "situational awareness" to determine a shutoff, and that it is an "incredibly infrequent occurrence."

Based on analysis of local weather data, Pacific Power representatives have previously stated that a PSPS would not have occurred in Hood River County anytime within the last 10 years.

In response to a question by Council Member Megan Saunders, Berreth said that system hardening could eliminate the need for the PSPS.

"So, there is a point in the future where this is something we would never have to do?" Saunders asked.

"I would say that's the objective," Berreth said. "It goes against a

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Christmas Tree Pick-up



Residents of The Dalles can easily dispose of their Christmas tree Saturday, Jan. 11, by placing it curbside by 9 a.m. for pick-up by The Dalles Lions Club volunteers and The Dalles Disposal. Volunteers will knock on doors for donations or leave a door hanger. The annual Christmas Tree Pick-up is a fundraiser for Lions Club programs, and all proceeds are used in the community, said organizer Bill Hamilton. The tree pick-up began in 1972, and since 1988 has been supported by The Dalles Disposal, which provides equipment and crews for the fundraiser. Over \$75,000 has been raised since the fundraiser began, said Hamilton. Pictured above are, left to right, Hamilton, representing the Lions Club and Ted Palmer and Devin Crye with The Dalles Disposal.

Mark B. Gibson photo

2019 a Year in Review

By Mark Gibson
The Dalles Chronicle

WHERE 2018 WENT down in history as a summer of fire following a series of destructive wildfires, 2019 was a cooler and calmer year.

The 2019 Neon Cruise went off without a hitch, in contrast to the previous year when bystanders were injured in a crash. But as the festivities wrapped up, a violent thunder storm moved through town, dumping record amounts of rain and flooding the city's water treatment facility and downtown streets. That storm played a role in the collapse of the roof of a downtown building under restoration when the storm struck, closing one lane of Second Street and resulting in a partial demolition of the building.

In October, Congressman Greg Walden, R-Hood River announced he won't seek re-election. His announcement continues to have repercussions in the region with the approach of the 2020 general election.

Following are highlights from the second half of 2019, July through December. A review of the first half of the year was published Jan. 1 and is available online at www.thedalleschronicle.com.

JULY

The city of The Dalles celebrated the completion of the 2 1/2 year, \$14 million upgrade of the city sewer plant July 30. The project increased capacity of the plant from 7.4 to 13.2 million gallons per day with new pumps, screening systems and sewage processing infrastructure. The project also added a "co-generation" capacity to the plant, generating electricity from the methane gas released during treatment. The project was the first use of a "progressive design/build" process in Oregon, in which Mortenson Construction



Sierra Jenkins, 18, a resident of Dallesport, watches vintage cars on Second Street during Neon Cruise Aug. 9, 2019. Following the cruise, a thunderstorm flooded the streets, setting off a chain events that resulted in partial shutdown of Second Street for almost three months.

Mark B. Gibson photo/file

and Kennedy/Jenks designed and built the facility under a single contract, with the city involved throughout.

In what a detective said is the largest seizure of methamphetamine ever in The Dalles, a local man was arrested after a search warrant revealed 3.4 pounds of meth and 22 pounds of marijuana in his home.

The Dalles Police Department began looking for an armored vehicle to provide defensive protection for officers and citizens alike, as the police chief told officials he felt the city was on borrowed time in terms of unacceptable risk to officers.

Also in July:
 • A new mural on the south wall of The Dalles Chronicle will feature iconic locations in town, hand painted in acrylic onto large wall panels from a black and white photo montage created by Portland

artist Beth Kerschen.

AUGUST

The first two RVs towed under a new city ordinance were removed, and one of them had a person in it who walked away with a few belongings after telling a police officer the removal was "a bunch of bull--". The Dalles Traffic Safety Officer Jeff Kienlen said the man who had to vacate his RV had "spray-painted several derogatory comments about the city of The Dalles stealing his home on the inside and outside of the motorhome."

The driver who crashed at the Neon Cruise in 2018, seriously injuring several people, was sentenced to 45 days in jail, ordered to pay over \$71,000 in restitution and given a one-year license suspension. Following the sentencing The Dalles Police Department announced

there would be no tolerance for reckless or dangerous behavior at this year's cruise on Friday, Aug. 9.

On Aug. 9, a Neon Night deluge that saw .79 inches of rain fall in just 20 minutes flooded parts of downtown The Dalles and put the city's sewer treatment plant off line for five and a half hours.

The sidewalk and one travel lane in front of the Recreation Building downtown on East Second Street were blocked off after it was learned the front of the building was sagging and possibly at risk of collapse. Project managers suggested the heavy rains the week before played a role in the partial collapse.

Later in the month, The Dalles Urban Renewal Agency learned that an estimated 11.6 tons of water weight fell on the Recreation Building's roof during the storm,

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