

CIVIL DEFENSE

Basic relocation plan is in works but poor planning and facilities could force most people to beat a hasty retreat

By David Steinmetz
Of the Emerald

What would you do in the event of nuclear war?

If you are planning to rely on an extensive, well-prepared civil defense plan, you may be disappointed.

A three-megaton bomb, when exploded at 'optimal' height above the ground — producing the most destruction — could cause "initial effects" in a 10-mile radius, says Sergeant Ned Heasty of the Sheriff's Office and assistant director of the Lane County Emergency Services.

Initial effects would include over- and under-pressure due to the blast, shockwaves through the ground, fires and high heat and initial radiation effects. Fallout would follow, contaminating this area and surrounding areas.

The City of Eugene has a Basic Disaster Operations Plan, which includes a warning system to all city departments and the general public, a City Emergency Operations Center and radiological defense capability.

But in the event of nuclear war, all of Lane County and parts of other counties nearby may need to be relocated.

With the center of the blast estimated to be right above the Lane County Public Service Building at 8th Avenue and Oak Street, where the Emergency Services office is located, the initial effects would reach east to include all of Springfield, north almost to Junction City, west to Fern Ridge Lake and south to Creswell and Pleasant Hill.

Of the 273,000 people living in Lane County, 203,000 live in this high-risk area.

Lane County's civil defense plan divides this endangered area into 10 sections and maps the routes which residents of each section would take to outlying areas.

Those evacuated would stay in fallout shelters in these areas for a couple of weeks until the radiation level is low enough, Heasty says.

A command center would be set up in the basement of the county building to direct evacuation.

The plan pre-supposes enough warning to give the people time to move — two or three days.

University residents would end up in Coos County, along with those living generally to the northwest and south of the University. These two sectors, eight and six, include 90,000 people.

However, Lane County's civil defense plan is so tentative and insufficiently researched the plan's specifics are unavailable to the public, Heasty says.

"We're doing whatever we can (to prepare), but it's not very much," Heasty says.

Heasty says the plan has developed the geographical aspects of relocation the most.

"What are we going to do with them once

they get there?" he asks.

Phil Cogan, Region 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency director, is more optimistic.

"Until you have a plan, you wing it," and due to the nature of the state, county and city agencies, they are ready to respond to unplanned emergencies, as shown by many examples, Cogan says.

In the case of nuclear war, it is estimated that a three-megaton weapon is targeted for Eugene, one of five "high-risk" areas in Oregon, Heasty says.

Although attack priority would probably go to areas with counter-defensive forces, military bases and industrial centers, Eugene would be targeted because of its population of more than 50,000 and its resources — food, hospitals, communications and transportation, he says.

The relocation plan "just appeared" last October, after being drawn up in Bothell, Washington. Bothell is headquarters for Region 10, a federal emergency district which includes Oregon, Washington, Alaska and Idaho.

Cogan says it is "not a good plan" because it is not custom-made specifically to fit the situation.

Extensively researched, more comprehensive plans are being worked out by contract planners for each potential target area in region 10. But plans for the higher-risk areas, such as Seattle — which base Trident submarines — are being done first.

Lane County's lack of preparation is the result of Eugene's fortune as a relatively low-risk target.

More comprehensive plans take into account food, water, fallout shelters, blast shelters, medical services, communications and housing.

The original comprehensive plan was scheduled for completion by 1984, Heasty says.

But it will be the end of the decade before "the bulk of the plans are done," Cogan says. He says lack of funding is delaying completion of the plan.

Civil defense funding in the United States reached its peak in the 1960s after the Cuban missile crisis. Now Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark and the USSR outspend the United States.

Although civil defense is still "not a high priority," Cogan says this trend is reversing, with the FEMA receiving 'moderate' increase in its budget this year.

The agency now receives \$154 million, a \$29 million increase from last year's budget. This comes to about 55 cents per person per year.

FEMA provides up to 50 percent of funding for state and local emergency agencies, which are set up to "get more mileage out of this money," Cogan says.

The plans, hardware and personnel for civil defense are similar to those used in other

emergencies, such as natural disasters or evacuation for hazardous materials.

Along the Gulf of Mexico, for instance, the routes used to escape a hurricane are often the same as would be used to relocate in the case of nuclear war.

The Lane County agency spends much more of its time rescuing injured climbers, finding lost hikers and searching for downed aircraft than it does preparing for a nuclear disaster. Yet it receives 30 percent of its funding from FEMA.

Cogan says former President Jimmy Carter chose the plan because it provided the most for the money.

For \$80 to \$120 billion, 80 to 90 percent of the population could be sheltered from nuclear blast in blast shelters located within the high-risk areas.

Alternatively, 80 percent of the people could be protected by relocating them from the danger areas and housing them in fallout shelters at a cost of \$8 billion over a number of years.

The cheaper plan also could be used for other emergencies, such as hazardous material evacuation, Cogan says.

Blast and fallout shelters serve different functions. Blast shelters are built to withstand the blast and initial effects of the bomb, and fallout shelters are designed to protect against fallout and are cheaper to build.

The occasional fallout shelter designations in Eugene would not apply in the case of a nuclear attack, because they do not protect against the blast, Heasty says.

The relocation plan assumes that there will be warning enough to give people time to move. Without it, the plan would be virtually useless, Heasty says.

Dick Straw, a Eugene Emergency Medical Services instructor who would help set up the medical command post in such an emergency, says there will be only about 15 minutes notice.

Then "we'll have to see what's left," Straw says.

Planning would not help much because not only would it be impossible to move the people in time but also it would not be known what supplies, routes or rescuers would be left after the disaster hit.

"The number one rule of disaster planning is if you don't have it there, you don't have it," Straw says.

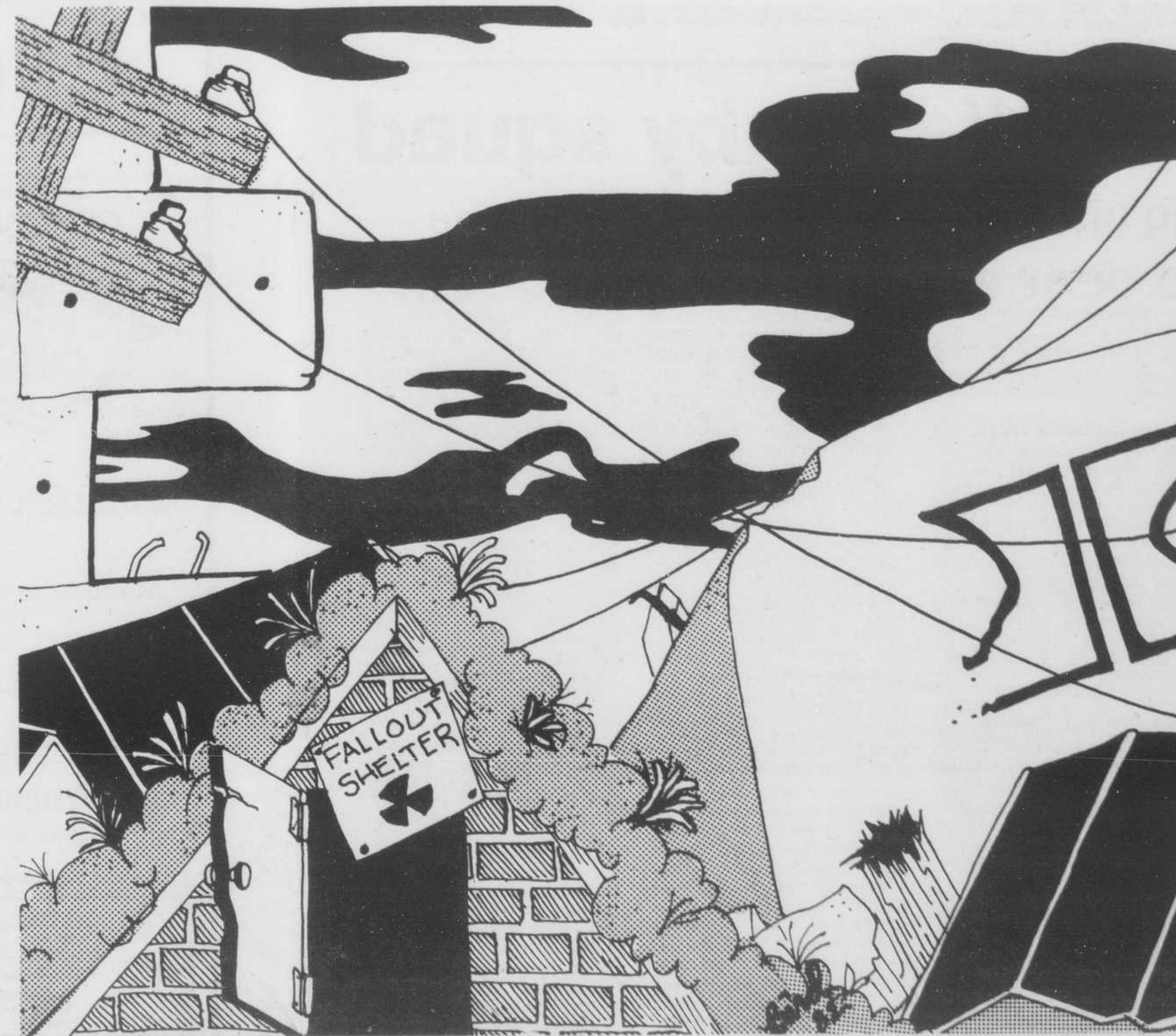
Even if there was more time, successfully moving 203,000 people out of the Eugene-Springfield area would be chaos, Straw says.

"Just look at the clogged traffic we have at five."

Both Heasty and Cogan admit the plan would not work if an attack was in progress.

"If we received an attack notice right now, there's nothing we could do," Heasty says.

But the Soviet plan to move people from all major cities to rural areas is estimated to take three to five days, and so the U.S. intelligence



system could monitor this and deteriorating relations to know when a war may break out, he says.

Relocating in such a situation would keep people from being held hostage, Heasty says, but "the impact of that (relocation) on the country would be drastic," both economically and sociologically.

The governor of each state decides when relocation is necessary after considering the president's recommendations to them and the public, Cogan says.

Relocation is also voluntary for the public, even if the governor initiates it.

Cogan estimates that about 15 percent of those who could relocate will stay behind and that another 15 to 20 percent already will have moved by the time the suggestion to relocate is given.

Therefore, only about 65 percent of those in a high-risk area would have to be relocated within the lead-time before an attack, Cogan says.

Nevertheless, plans that allow 100 percent of the population of every high-risk area to be evacuated in 72 hours are required, he says.

Eugene's plan allows for evacuation within 20 hours, while the plan for Spokane, Washington, would take a maximum of 50 hours. Portland's evacuation plan would need

72 hours, Cogan says.

Straw says people would not cooperate if they knew they were on the eve of a nuclear war, and he wonders whether the public workers who are supposed to assist in the relocation would stay around to help.

"Are they going to take care of their own family, or take care of everyone else?"

Cogan says the same sort of disobedience also occurs during impending hurricanes but he adds social scientists have found people will follow instructions if there is an authority in control.

Evidence also shows key workers would do their job if they knew their family was being taken care of, he says.

The availability of public workers is not only important for those who are relocating but also for continued operation of the high-risk area for those who stay behind.

Essential workers, including police, fire, medical and media workers would take 12-hour shifts in the area.

They would be centered in the "non-movement" area — a doughnut-shaped area a few miles wide circling the high-risk area.

People living here would not be expected to relocate, but those relocating from the high-risk area would settle beyond the non-movement area.

Dr. Glen Gordon, local Physicians for Social Responsibility co-chairman, has serious doubts about how sufficient medical resources would be in the case of a nuclear disaster, as does Straw.

Gordon worries about sufficient blood supplies and facilities for burns treatment.

Walker worries that the relocation areas also may become targets for nuclear weapons, and that extensive civil defense planning may increase the chance of nuclear war as the United States becomes more confident and our enemies become more wary and uneasy.

It is time to make a choice, Walker says. "We must decide if we will embark on a huge civil defense plan, or . . . on a freeze."

Heasty hesitates to pass judgment on relocation.

"I'm not saying whether relocation is right or wrong — it's my job. The decision is for someone else."

Cogan says "civil defense is a federal responsibility," as part of defending the people. "At present, the government's best response to this is to relocate the people."

The plans "will work, but they will not be flawless. It will not be anything but survival. They could never be used as justification for getting into a nuclear war. They will not preserve society as we know it."

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