

# Standard Response Protocol *continued from front page*

school staff, students and first responders.

The Actions included in the SRP are:

- **Lockout**, followed by the Directive "Secure the Perimeter," and is used to safeguard students and staff within the building.
- **Lockdown**, followed by "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight," and is used to secure individual rooms and keep students quiet and in place.
- **Evacuate** is always followed by a location and is used to move students and staff from one location to a different location, either in or out of the building.
- **Shelter** is always followed by a type and method and is used for group self-protection.

"It's standardized for our kids, teachers and families and they will be taught them, so, as they go through our school system, it will become automatic," says Knight about the four Action and Directive procedures.

"It gives us a common language with both first responders and parents for all the different scenarios and allows us to share, to some degree, the level of danger we might be in, because a Lockout is very different from a Lockdown in terms of the immediate threat," adds Superintendent Miller.

Miller and Knight say the District has been working on implementing the new SRP since last school year with the plan to initiate it at the beginning of this year. Miller says this was not a direct response to two incidents that occurred during the last school year.

In one incident, a man with a firearm was barricaded in his home overnight and into the following morning several blocks away from the school campus, while students were on their way to school. In the second incident, a drawing by a student, that the student claimed was a joke, was handled as a perceived threat by school administrators.

Miller noted that, while the new protocols were not officially in place last year, the District's response to those incidents were based on this SRP. "We didn't have it prepared to be shared with parents at that time, but this is the system we've been using in our responses and how we address emergencies for the last several years," said Miller.

Knight says the District's new SRP is also in direct response to Oregon House Bill 2661 which came from the work of the Oregon Task Force on School Safety and their report to the Oregon Legislature in the fall of 2015. The task force included State Senator Betsy Johnson, along with school administrators, public safety officials, school board members, other legislators, and governor policy advisors. They began meeting in August of 2014 and developed recommendations to strengthen school safety, including establishing the standardized terminology used in the "I Love You Guys" campaign.

"I was delighted to have the opportunity to serve on the Oregon Task Force on School Safety," said Senator Johnson in a recent interview. "This was an important undertaking that brought together all of these parties that were relevant to this discussion to both educate ourselves on lessons learned and then to chart a proactive path to make our physical facilities safer. I commend the Vernonia School District for beginning to implement the recommendations, specifically in the adoption of the common terminology that will now be used by school districts and first responders."

House Bill 2661 took effect on July 1, 2015, based on the task force's recommendations, and requires all Oregon Schools to instruct and drill students in the Lockdown, Lockout, Evacuate, and Shelter procedures.

Miller says that as the new policy is being implemented, staff will be trained in the procedures during in-service days in August before students arrive on campus for the new school year. Miller says once students begin the school year there will be student assemblies, along with specific trainings in each class room, along with two practice

drills each year, as well as monthly emergency drills. Miller also said SRP materials explaining the procedures will be placed in the hallways of the school facility as a way to promote the consistent language. "All of this has been developed in coordination with our Safety Committee which includes administration, assistants, teachers, maintenance and other employees," said Miller. "In the past we've included local first responder agencies in our drills and we anticipate they will continue to assist us with these practices."

In addition to implementing the new SRP, Superintendent Miller says he has also been attending regular meetings of a county-wide First Responders Group, initiated by the St. Helens School District that includes law enforcement agencies and all school districts, which is designed to facilitate common responses to all types of emergencies. "This gives us a coordinated system region-wide," says Miller. "If we have everybody on board with the same system then we're more likely to be effective with our response."

"Nobody wants to talk about these potential emergencies, but that is the whole point of the 'I Love You Guys' foundation," says Miller. "We need to talk about it if we're going to make a difference in maximizing student safety."

# The Day They Burned the Mill Down *continued from page 3*

"That night the State called me and said, 'Don't burn tomorrow,'" remembers Webb. "It was already loaded and ready to go and if we had waited and it had gone off accidentally in the afternoon, we would have had a real problem. We would not have had a way to put it out. I told the State, 'Sorry, we have it ready to go and it needs to burn in the morning.' So we went ahead and burned it."

According to Webb, the fire really took off when it was ignited. "We had fall out about five miles away," says Webb.

Webb says the filmmakers set up flame throwers to shoot into the air behind buildings on the town's main street to make it look like the whole town was burning. "I thought they were really going to burn the town down," says Webb. "I was pretty nervous."

The big final scene called for the townspeople, played by local residents, to climb aboard a train and ride to safety as the town burned around them. The train was parked at the planer shed for the filming, but the fire grew so hot that many of the actors and film crew abandoned the train, and their filming, and

ran for safety. Webb remembers producer Virginia Stone using her briefcase to shield herself from the flames; the briefcase ended up blistered at the end of the scene. With the train locomotive in danger of being consumed by the blaze, Webb remembers a local resident and railroad buff, Lynn Michener, jumping aboard and moving the train down the track and out of harm's way.

Webb says he had plenty of local firefighters on hand in case of a problem. "They all wanted to take the day off from work and be there to watch that planer shed burn," says Webb. Fortunately everything went smoothly and Webb, and the rest of Vernonia, survived the big burn.

After the filming ended the rest of the mill was dismantled, although remnants of the mill are still visible on the site. The mill pond was donated to the City of Vernonia and became Vernonia Lake, a city park. The mill office was converted into the Pioneer Museum, a wonderful spot to learn about the logging history of the region, and of course, the heyday of old Oregon-American Mill, before Hollywood burned it down.


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