

Douglas County's Emily Ring Awarded

Named Oregon's 2025 Emergency Manager of the Year



Douglas County Commissioners Tim Freeman, Tom Kress, and Chris Boice are proud to announce that Emily Ring, Douglas County's Emergency Manager, has been selected by the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) as Oregon's 2025 Emergency Manager of the Year. The award was presented to Emily Ring by OEM's Deputy Director Patence Winningham at their 2025 Annual Conference held in Bend, Oregon, October 6-9, 2025.

"Emily's sincere commitment to serving her community was clearly demonstrated through her words and personal actions that were above and beyond the call of duty. She completely walks the walk in a field that is largely overlooked. Emily dug in, literally in some cases, to provide support and I love that. She exemplifies the very best of Oregon's already amazing team of emergency managers and we are proud to recognize her for her outstanding contributions," stated Erin McMahon, Director and Homeland Security Advisor, Oregon Department of Emergency Management.

Emily was recognized for her exceptional leadership, dedication, and tireless work during and following the March 2025 Flood Event in Douglas County. Her efforts, along with those of our County Commissioners and County staff, were instrumental in pursuing federal funding opportunities that support the county's infrastructure (road damage repair) recovery from the devastating floods. This was a milestone achievement, considering most thought it was impossible, which underscores her commitment to our community's resilience and safety. The County continues to fight hard on the appeal for Federal IA (individual assistance) for March 2025 flood victims and is working closely with our Federally assigned Long Term Recovery Group (Glide Rev) to identify any additional resources available for residents.

"Emily's leadership, calm under pressure demeanor, and relentless determination have made an enormous difference for Douglas County," praised Emergency Management Liaison Commissioner and 2025 Board Chair Tim Freeman. "First, I'd like to thank our citizens, our first responders, our amazing county staff, our cities and our community partners. I want to especially thank Emily for bringing everyone together. This recognition is well-deserved."

Emily joined the Douglas County

Emergency Management team in April 2023 and worked under former Douglas County Emergency Manager Wayne Stinson before taking the lead as Department Director in September 2023. Before being hired by Douglas County, she spent six years working for Josephine County as the assistant emergency manager, then the county emergency manager. Emily's work history includes roles as a crisis counselor, domestic violence case manager, national resource ranger and seasonal wildland firefighter. She holds a bachelor's degree in social services with an emphasis in geographic information system technology and anthropology from the University of Wisconsin and Eastern Oregon University. Emily also has a master's degree in biological sciences and resource management from Green Mountain University in Vermont.

Since its inception in 1979, the Douglas County Emergency Management Division worked largely behind the scenes under the direction of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, developing plans and procedures to prepare for and respond to disasters. In September 2023, the division evolved into a full-fledged independent county department. The Douglas County Emergency Management Department now reports directly to the Douglas County Board of Commissioners. The department collaborates closely with County Commissioners, public safety and elected officials, nonprofit organizations, and other municipal and government agencies to enhance community preparedness and resilience.

In accepting the honor, Emily expressed gratitude for the recognition and for the dedicated county and community partners she works with every day. "I was truly honored and humbled to receive this award," said Ring. "But this recognition really belongs to our entire County team, our first responders, and the community members who came together during and after the flood. Their teamwork and resilience are what made recovery possible."

For more information about Douglas County Emergency Management, visit Douglas County's official website at douglascountyor.gov. Media Contact: Tamara Howell | Douglas County Emergency Communications & Community Engagement Specialist | Public Information Officer | Phone: (541) 957-4896 | Cell: (541) 670-2804 | Email: tamara.howell@douglascountyor.gov

Veteran's Corner

OEM Director Erin McMahon Speaks at Oregon Women Veterans Conference



Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) Director Erin McMahon joined women veterans from across the state as a featured speaker at the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) Women Veterans Conference, held at the Riverhouse Lodge Conference and Events Center in Bend on September 27, 2025.

Hosted biennially by ODVA since 1998, the conference is the largest gathering of women veterans in Oregon, celebrating the contributions, diversity, and strength of women who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. This year's theme, "Stronger Together: Community and Connection," highlighted the

importance of unity, collaboration, and shared purpose among Oregon's women veterans.

McMahon, a retired U.S. Army Brigadier General, attorney, and combat veteran, shared reflections from her 24-year career in military and emergency leadership, emphasizing the power of mentorship, inclusion, and resilience in both military and civilian service.

Before joining OEM in 2023, McMahon served as Principal Deputy General Counsel for the National Guard Bureau, advising senior military leaders through major domestic disasters including hurricanes, wildfires, and the COVID-19 pandemic. She also spearheaded Department of Defense programs to improve the prevention, reporting, and response to sexual assault in the military — initiatives that continue to influence federal policy and culture change today.

The 2025 Oregon Women Veterans Conference brought together hundreds of attendees representing every era of service, from World War II to today's modern conflicts. According to ODVA, women veterans now represent more than 26,000 of Oregon's veterans, or approximately 10% of the state's veteran population.

McMahon's participation underscores OEM's ongoing commitment to community resilience, inclusion, and leadership across all sectors of service.

Federal Government Shutdown:

Information for Oregon Veterans and Families



The federal government is currently experiencing a partial shutdown due to a lapse in appropriations. While many federal agencies may be affected, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that the majority of its services for veterans and families will continue.

Importantly, Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) programs and all state-provided veterans' services and benefits are not impacted by the federal shutdown. Oregon veterans and families can continue to access state services as usual.

ODVA is sharing this information to help ensure Oregon veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors know what services remain available through the federal VA, and what services may be temporarily affected during this period.

Federal VA Services NOT Impacted by the Shutdown:

Health care: VA Medical Centers, outpatient clinics, and Vet Centers remain open.

Benefits: Compensation, pension, education, and housing benefits will continue to be processed and delivered.

Cemeteries: Burials at VA national cemeteries will continue, and applications for headstones, markers, and burial benefits will be processed.

Appeals: The Board of Veterans' Appeals will continue making decisions.

Hotlines (open as usual):

1-800-MyVA411 (general VA support, 24/7)
Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988, Press 1 (24/7)

VA Benefits Hotline: 1-800-827-1000 (Mon-Fri, 8 a.m.-9 p.m. ET)

Suicide prevention programs, homelessness services, and caregiver support will continue. Federal VA Services Impacted by the Shutdown:

Transition program assistance and career counseling will pause.

Certain call centers will close, including:

GI Bill Hotline (1-888-GIBILL-1)
National Cemetery Applicant Assistance (1-800-697-6947)

VA benefits regional offices will be closed to the public.

Outreach functions will pause, including VA newsletters, social media, and some partner engagement.

At VA cemeteries: grounds maintenance, new headstone placement, and pre-need burial applications will be suspended.

New Presidential Memorial Certificates will not be printed.

Resources and Support:

For federal VA questions: Call 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) (available 24/7)

Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988, then Press 1 (available 24/7)

Federal VA updates: www.va.gov

Oregon-specific resources: www.oregon.gov/odva

ODVA programs are unaffected. If you need assistance connecting with benefits or services, please contact ODVA directly by phone at 1-800-692-9666, email at ODVA_PUBLIC_INFO@odva.oregon.gov, or online at www.oregon.gov/odva.

Oregon Rural Veterans Documentary

"Battlegrounds and Backroads"

The Rogue Cell Podcast was just the beginning. Founded by Sean and Brad through Together With Veterans Northwest Oregon, it set out to connect rural veterans through conversation. But we quickly

realized the need for something bigger, a way to reach the veterans who feel isolated, lost, or forgotten.

Battlegrounds and Backroads is a documentary,

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