

Firefighters: Days often started at 5 a.m. and ended at midnight

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This year it was unusual to deploy four task forces in one summer for out-of-town fires, Olheiser said. Before this summer, the next most active summer was in 2015 with two task forces, and just occasional deployments every few years before then.

"Without dedication from the community, we could never do these things. It's a hard hit to a small business if you lose two or three employees for weeks," Olheiser said.

Olheiser said the number of firefighters sent and from which fire department is based on availability of personnel and resources.

"When the state gives a resource order, you go down the list of what the state is asking for and see who has it," he said. "Starting with Milli Fire, I was getting daily updates from departments of who was available and what was available."

Late night call

Lt. Josh Como, with the Gearhart Volunteer Fire Depart-



Submitted Photo
Cannon Beach firefighters near the Eagle Creek Fire.

ment, had just gotten back from a family vacation when he got the late-night call to fight the Chetco Bar Fire. He's been with the department 11 years, he said, but being called out to a

fire out of town and of this size was a first.

"I got the call at 11:14 p.m., and by 3 a.m. we were on the road to Brookings," Como said. "I think it first set in what we were doing when the sun started coming up over I-5, a couple of hours in. If you weren't ready — it was too late. You have to try picturing yourself there."

Days were long — often starting at 5 a.m. and ending at midnight — and the number of tasks to complete plentiful. But between moments of exhaustion, Como said, were feelings of excitement.

Como was in charge of a truck designed for fighting brush fires. He and the other volunteers were in charge of trimming back foliage close to houses that could catch on fire and turning on sprinkler systems as preventative measures. The team would also help protect livestock and watch for spot fires.

Together the task force triaged almost 50 homes.

"Being in a fire is a finely-tuned machine," Como said. "If you look at the big picture,

it seems like it will never get done. But when you break it down into parts, it's like a lawnmower: there's a blade that cuts the grass and shaft that connects to the engine — each thing plays its own little part in making it work."

"Maybe we were just a team of 13 people out of 1,800, but if we weren't there to protect those homes then that job

wouldn't have gotten done."

Put people at ease

Often people envision dramatic battles between firefighter and flame. But, sometimes, the job of a firefighter is not only to put out the fire, but just to put people at ease, Benedict said.

"We were cutting weeds around one family's house who

were on Level 1 evacuation, which just means be prepared if you need to go, and they were visibly scared," Benedict said. "So we showed the kids around the truck, showed them what we do with the sprinklers. It gives us an opportunity to talk to people to bring them down from that fear and help them know what they can do in the future to be safe."

Warrenton: Fees vary depending on the size and scope of the building

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The adjustments bring the city's building department back in line with recommendations and guidelines established by the Oregon State Building Codes Division. The increases mean the city will be collecting "the appropriate amount of tax revenue." The increases could also help the building department better provide services "as the demands from the construction community continue to grow," according to a city memo.

"So what we're trying to do is just get back online with Salem and their suggested costs," Goodwin said.

The fees vary depending on the size and scope of the building. Future adjustments to these fees will not be as large, City Manager Linda Engbretson said.

"Again, this represents nine years of not adding to it," Goodwin said.

City Commissioner Mark

Baldwin, a general contractor who runs his own construction company, was in favor of the fee increases, saying, "We definitely need to."

In other business:

- The commission held a first reading of an ordinance that requires voter approval before the city can transfer or dispose of assets — such as property or services — with a value of \$100,000 or more. The value is based on 2014 dollars and the ordinance outlines a 3 percent annual adjustment. This amendment to the city charter was first passed by voters last year; the city and commissioners have worked with the chief petitioners on the wording of the ordinance in several meetings since.

- Commissioners finalized two agreements related to Pacific Coast Seafood's rebuild of its Warrenton seafood processing facility that they had deferred at their last meeting. These agreements enable the city to distribute

a \$150,000 grant from Oregon Business Development Department to Pacific Coast Seafood.

- The commission approved a contract for \$29,690 with Firebird Bronze, the foundry that will do the mold and casting of a planned Veterans of Foreign Wars memorial. The project is being paid for by a grant from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

- The commission approved a contract with TMG Services for the purchase and installation of a sodium hypochlorite system for Warrenton's Water Treatment Facility. At \$101,603, TMG came in with the lowest bid. A bid from another company came in only a few hundred dollars higher, but Bob Bingham, water treatment plant superintendent, said even if the bids had come in at the same price, he would have chosen TMG. He told the commissioners he believed TMG would provide the best product.

Olvey: 'I'm going to bury it with signs'

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owners of run-down or abandoned properties in Astoria — like the Flavel home on 15th Street and Franklin Avenue — into compliance.

"The object of the city was not to get money, it was to clean the property up," City Attorney Blair Henningsgaard said.

Paying the fines does not buy Olvey any time with the city, it simply halts the process set in motion by the City Council. Henningsgaard said he plans to talk with city councilors about how they want to proceed if Olvey continues to ignore the city's requests.

"We're going to be looking at other ways to address this chronic issue," Estes said.

Olvey maintains his house began to go downhill, literally, after the city installed a sewer in his front yard that turned his property into the drainage point. Every year, he says, his yard floods and his house sinks. He has given up on trying to improve the property and believes he could have grounds for a lawsuit against the city, though he has yet to secure a lawyer. He did not seek legal help in dealing with the fines and the nuisance property designation levied against him this summer.

Though he paid these most recent fines, he says he has no intention of cleaning up the property. Instead, he is working on new signs.

"I'm going to bury it with signs," Olvey said.

Sold: Sold properties part of effort to wrap up estate

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"It was my intention to purchase all the properties from Mitch, but I'm getting old," Paavola said, adding that selling them is part of an effort to wrap up his estate.

The two bought 1312 and 1332 Commercial St. from Columbia State Bank in 2015. The two buildings long housed Abeco and Columbia Chocolates, which have since moved west along Commercial Street into the former Link's Sporting Goods storefront.

Luottamus Partners sold 1312 Commercial St., the historic Dealey & Malone Building, to Elizabeth Harris earlier

this year. The building houses Lee's Attic antiques store. The company still owns the Astoria Event Center at 255 Ninth St. and the Odd Fellows Building and Sanborn Building at 10th and Commercial streets.

Paavola separately owns the iconic pink 433 13th St., where she ran Columbia Travel Bureau until retiring recently. The building is being remodeled into office space for Peter Tadei's company, Myriad Commercial Properties, and other firms. But after their lease expires, Paavola said, she will be back inside doing her own thing.

"I'm going to be buried in that building," she said.



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