

DEPOT: About 70 responders in all were at the fire

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until it dissipated.

Hermiston fire spokesperson J.W. Roberts at about 4:30 p.m. said the fire was 30 percent contained and mop-up and patrol operations would go on for hours. The fire burned over 3,000 acres and consumed one small building, a larger, vacant building and power poles.

About 70 responders in all were at the fire, he said, from fire agencies in Umatilla and Morrow counties, plus members of the Oregon Military Department, state police and transportation department and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. In total, 19 engines and seven water tenders were dispatched, according to information from Hermiston Fire Chief Scott Stanton.

The spark of the fire may have come from an Oregon Army National Guard member training with an "artillery simulation round," Roberts said, though the state military department considered the cause under investigation.

The U.S. Army is in the process of transferring the Umatilla Chemical Depot land to the Columbia Development Authority, a partnership of local govern-



A Hermiston Fire water tender drives along the eastern edge of a wildfire as fire burns in the distance on the Umatilla Army Depot on Monday west of Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

ment entities. Part of the land will be used for a National Guard training base, part of it will function as a nature preserve and some of it has been zoned industrial and will be marketed for economic development.

Greg Smith, executive director of the Columbia Development Authority, said the fire shouldn't delay transfer of the land, which is anticipated in spring 2017.

The nature of the National Guard activities — including firearms training — coupled with the acres of dry sagebrush always has made fire a concern on the property, he said. This fire just underscores how "critical" the conversation with the Army is about making sure there is sufficient water on site for fire suppression.

Smith said the moment the land is transferred to the CDA

they will sign agreements with area fire districts in Umatilla County and Morrow County to make sure the people and property on the land are protected, while also making sure those districts benefit from the expanded tax base that development of the property will bring.

Jade McDowell and Phil Wright contributed to this story.

REPORTER: 'I didn't ask for last names and spellings'

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Somehow, I didn't hit any of them.

Someone was calling 9-1-1 by the time I stepped out of my car. Two other men were checking on the victim. Journalists are supposed to do what they can to avoid becoming part of the story. I could have rationalized that other people were already taking care of things, leaving me free to do my job.

Instead, I asked the men in the road if there was anything I could do. They said my small first aid kit wasn't going to do much to help the man they were with, but I might check with the two men sitting a couple of hundred feet away in the median.

One said he thought his hip was dislocated. After he had crawled from his vehicle he didn't make it far before the pain became too much. The other man had a nasty-looking cut on his leg. I said the amount of gauze in my first aid kit probably wouldn't do much, but he said if I could apply it through the hole in his pants he could put pressure on the wound and it would at least be more sanitary than his dusty pants.

We exchanged first names, but I didn't ask for last names and spellings or a quote about the crash. I did ask what happened, but I also ran over to the dented Mini Cooper nearby to retrieve his cell phone a wallet.

Once the ambulances arrived and my newfound friends were being taken care of, I snapped some photos and called my editor so we could get a story online. When I got back to the office, I realized the first photo of the bunch had to have come moments after I stepped out of my car. I don't really remember taking it, but old habits die hard.

I'm sure people will have their opinions about how well I balanced reporting and helping at the scene. Maybe it was crass to take pictures of the people I was bonding with over the trauma of the scene. Maybe I should have gone back to my car for my notebook and started taking down names so people could be reassured sooner that it wasn't one of their loved ones injured.

The truth is, there is no clear-cut answer in our industry. In the Newseum in Washington, D.C. a display of every Pulitzer-prize winning photo ever awarded also displays interviews with the photographers. Their accounts of whether they stepped in to help in a crisis vary widely.

Kevin Carter took a photo of a starving child crawling to a food center, a vulture watching her hungrily. He didn't help her, saying later that journalists had been warned not to touch the local children due to concerns about disease.

Nick Ut snapped the world-famous photo of a crying Vietnamese girl running from a Napalm attack, her clothes burned away. After he took the picture he picked her up and took her and the other children to a hospital, becoming a part of the story rather than an objective third party in the process.

I wondered, after reading their accounts, how I would react in a moment where I might have to choose between being a reporter and being a helper.

I guess now I know.

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TAX: Heaviest impact would fall on wholesalers and retailers

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gross receipts tax measure backed by public employee unions and others around the state would increase the corporate tax by 2.5 percent on businesses with annual sales above \$25 million.

The initiative would not affect the taxes directly paid by thousands of smaller corporations in the state.

It would, however, be the largest tax increase in state history.

An analysis of IP 28 by Oregon's Legislative Revenue Office presented Monday morning to the Senate Interim Committee on Finance and Revenue in Salem, showed the measure would stabilize the state's budget. At the same time, the costs of the tax would likely trickle down to consumers, increasing prices on daily items.

"The impact of IP 28 on consumer prices means that the marginal impact of the tax will be regressive," the report states.

A household with median income of \$51,075 would lose an estimated \$613 in income in the form of higher prices and slower economic growth, the report shows. Job growth would slow by 1.6 percent in the private sector, but increase by 5.8 percent in the public sector.

"If it were in place for the 2012-13 fiscal year (the most recent year with complete state-by-state census data), IP 28 would have increased Oregon's per capita state and local tax burden by roughly \$600 to \$4,501," according to the state analysis. "At this level the state could have had

the 20th highest per capita tax burden in that year compared to an actual rank of 28th. As a percent of income, IP 28 would have raised taxes from an actual 10.1 percent in 2012-13 to 11.6 percent. This would have moved Oregon to the ninth highest taxes as a percent of income versus an actual ranking of 26th."

The heaviest impact from the tax would fall on wholesalers and retailers, Warner said.

The union-backed campaign, Our Oregon, submitted 130,000 signatures in support of the measure to the secretary of state's office May 20 for verification. Only 88,184 are needed to qualify for the November ballot.

In a statement, Our Oregon said the report shows that by stabilizing the state budget, the measure will help hire back thousands of teachers, reduce health care costs and enhance senior services.

"Oregon's unstable revenue stream has meant that economic crises consistently put vulnerable Oregonians at risk," the statement says. "By making large corporations pay their fair share, IP 28 will better position the state to weather a future recession without making deep cuts."

At the same time, Our Oregon spokeswoman Katherine Driessen questioned whether the analysis gives an accurate picture of the tax's impact.

The Legislative Revenue Office "couldn't model IP 28, so they, instead, applied a lower rate to all businesses," Driessen said. "Of course, what IP 28 would really do is apply a 2.5 percent rate

on sales above \$25 million to fewer than 1,000 corporations. We appreciate the hard work that went into the report, but I think that's a very important distinction to note."

Warner acknowledged the techniques his office used to analyze the measure's impact does not capture micro-level details at the individual industry or company level.

"However, we believe they do capture broad overall effects on the state economy pretty well," Warner said.

Pat McCormick, a spokesman for a coalition of 500 businesses opposing the measure, disputed Our Oregon's claim.

"This was specifically about IP 28," McCormick said. "We have great confidence in the capability of the LRO to accurately present information with the best possible modeling, and they spent years building this model to accurately represent the state's economic structures."

"The impact on the economy is going to be very difficult on Oregonians, especially those who are unable to bear those costs," he added. "All of the aspects of the economic impact on those most struggling in our economy and the impact overall on the economy, the loss of jobs and so forth is of significant concern."

"IP 28 would be a multi-billion dollar blank check for state lawmakers to spend with no plan or accountability for how the billions in new tax revenues would be used," a statement from the business coalition, Defeat the Tax on Oregon

OWYHEE: 70 percent of Oregon residents supported permanent protections for Canyonlands

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Management.

"This land is so protected that nothing has happened on it for 150 years, that's how protected it is," Bentz said. "It's already been frozen in place. Why add another layer?"

The Oregon Natural Desert Association and other environmental groups that support the monument proposal say they're not trying to eliminate grazing, but instead want to prevent mining, transmission lines and oil and gas development.

The Owyhee Canyonlands currently aren't protected from these threats under existing laws, said Brent Fenty, executive director of ONDA.

For about 30 years, the region has been a "wilderness study area," which offers temporary protections that won't become permanent unless approved by Congress, Fenty said.

He likened the situation to a marital engagement that hasn't actually led to a

wedding for decades.

"We have not made a commitment to holding this landscape together," said Fenty.

Environmental groups have pushed for Congress to designate the Owyhee Canyonlands region in southeast Oregon as a "national conservation area," but the effort hasn't gained traction, which led to the national monument proposal, he said. National monuments can be established with an executive action by the president.

"You can only bring people to the table if they agree to come to the table," he said of the Congressional proposal.

Supporters touted a poll they commissioned that showed 70 percent of Oregon residents supported permanent protections for the Owyhee Canyonlands, including 66 percent in Oregon's 2nd Congressional District where the national monument would be located.

Tourism in the region would be boosted by such permanent protections, said

John Sterling, executive director of the Conservation Alliance, which represents outdoor recreation companies.

"Protecting a place literally puts it on a map," he said. Monument opponents responded with their own poll results, which showed 73 percent of Oregonians believe that national monument designations should be approved by Congress rather than the president.

More than 60 percent of that poll's respondents said the Owyhee Canyonlands area already has enough protections.

The surrounding community has only now begun to heal after the standoff at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge earlier this year, so the monument proposal threatens to reignite those tensions, said Brian Wolfe, Malheur County's sheriff.

Wolfe said he feared for public safety if the monument proposal attracts militants to return to the region.

"I fear they will not be reasonable," he said.

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