

Are you ready — storm ready?

Sept. 23 Disaster Preparedness Expo plans for emergencies

Siuslaw News and Western Lane Emergency Operations Group are partnering again to produce the preparedness expo, Be Ready — Storm Ready 2017, on Saturday, Sept. 23, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Florence Events Center, 715 Quince St.

Admission is free with a donation to Florence Food Share.

Attendees at this expo will learn from speakers and demonstrations that will help prepare the community for the increasing vulnerability to extreme weather and water events. In Western Lane County, people live in an isolated area that may be cut off from resources for 10 or more days if a large disaster were to occur.

Dave Robinson, author of "Disaster Prep for the Rest of Us," is the keynote speaker at noon.

Robinson is an Air Force and Vietnam veteran who served 15 years as a police officer, including positions as a patrol sergeant and patrol lieu-



tenant. Recently retired, he worked for the U.S. Postal Service and was the Postmaster in Bandon, Ore., for the past 10 years. He currently lives in the Myrtle Point area with his wife, Dee, and two grandsons.

Robinson began teaching about disaster preparedness after the March 11, 2011, Japanese earthquake sent the Oregon coast a wake-up call in the form of a tsunami. The Port of Coos Bay had more than a million dollars of damage, and the Brookings-Harbor boat basin also sustained millions of dollars of damage.

"People up and down the

coast immediately stocked up on camping gear and some actually began prepping for "The Big One," Robinson said, referring to a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake that experts predict will cause massive damage and a tsunami. "I decided to spread the word the best way I knew, by writing a column for the local newspaper."

Robinson's disaster prep column is now published in nearly 30 newspapers all across the U.S.

In addition to Robinson's address and demonstrations, vendors will fill the floor of the events center with survival techniques and preparedness lessons.

There will also be two Emergency Suturing Classes held at the Be Ready Expo at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. PeaceHealth is sponsoring the class, and the cost is \$25.

People can call 541-997-3441 to sign up.

Florence Kiwanis Club will grill up a free hot dog lunch for attendees.

Know new child passenger rear-facing law

SALEM — Though it went into effect in late May, many may not have heard that child passengers under age two must use a child seat with harness in a rear-facing position, unless the child turned one year of age prior to May 26, 2017.

Previously, the age requirement for rear-facing was up to age one, but safety advocates have known for years that rear-facing is a best practice.

Now, in Oregon, it's law.

Over the past few weeks, law enforcement agencies around the state have been looking for opportunities to educate motorists about this new law, along with Oregon's other occupant safety law for child passengers, which says a child over age two (or who turned one year of age prior to May 26, 2017) must ride in a car seat with harness or in a booster until they reach age eight, or 4-foot-9-inches in height and the adult belt fits them correctly.

Statewide education efforts will continue during National Child Passenger Safety Week, Sept. 17-22, an event that recognizes the significant role proper child restraints play in saving lives.

"Motor vehicle crashes are the leading nationwide cause of death for children ages one through 12 years old," said Occupant Protection Program Manager Carla Levinski. "Too often it's because the child was riding in the wrong type or incorrectly installed child restraint."

In 2015, 20 percent of the 981 children aged eight and under that were injured in Oregon traffic crashes were using adult belts instead of child restraints as required by law. 19 of the injured children were using no restraint at all.

"Parental modeling can significantly affect a child's behavior with respect to nurturing consistent and proper restraint use habits,"

Levinski said. "Even though 97 percent of Oregonians surveyed report 'always' using restraints, our crash data for 2015 shows lack of safety belt or child restraint use remains a factor in 35 percent — or 79 — of the total 289 motor vehicle occupant fatalities."

Many of these tragedies can be prevented by proper use of car seats, boosters and seat belts — no matter what your age. "Proper" use is key, and Oregon has hundreds of certified child safety seat technicians that can offer help at one of Oregon's child seat fitting stations.

"Our statistics help us estimate that we could have saved 40 individual lives in 2015 if everyone had used proper safety belts and child safety systems on every trip. Short trips too," Levinski said. "That should serve as powerful motivation to buckle up properly every single time you get in your vehicle."

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