



Dozens of Cottage Grove Sentinel readers submitted photos through our Facebook page, helping illustrate their own experience during the historic storm. From left: Billie Jean sent in a photo taken at Riverstone Mobilehome Park on S. Sixth Street; Sherry Creighton-Zumwalt sent a photo of her son in his own igloo; Matt Bjornn showed EPUD using his quad to get to downed lines.

affected the water system. Residents were urged to purchase drinking water at local stores. By Monday, the ration order had been lifted.

On Friday, Sheriff John Hanlin and Commissioner Chris Boice, both of Douglas County, visited the community of Elkton. In a joint press release, Douglas County reported that the power infrastructure which supports Elkton and the surrounding area sustained heavy damage and estimated that it would take several weeks to repair.

The county's Emergency Management Division, Sheriff's Office, county commissioners and American Red Cross have been working to deploy resources to assist the community.

In Cottage Grove, as the storm settled and damage was being assessed, a new problem emerged. With the city still blanketed in snow, concerns mounted that rapid melting could cause flooding. In response, sand bags have been made available to the public as a precaution.

"I don't think we're going to see, unless it really does turn to

70 (degrees) and rain, massive amounts of floods, but it is going to be localized," said Meyers on Friday. "Some of our stormwaters aren't going to be able to get into the river because the river's high. We may see some backing up in streets."

Most likely, residents on hillsides may see water coming through their property in the coming weeks. These areas are urged to redirect it to roads.

"The worst-case scenario is that one week or two weeks from now we get some sort of a warm blast of rain and we step out of this into some flood issues," Stewart said.

Either way, Mayor Jeff Gowing recommended that people prepare for the possibility of warm rain in March. "Because if it doesn't happen, alright. We're out of it. But if you don't prepare for it and it does happen, you're screwed," he said.

"All the ingredients are here for another disaster to follow," Stewart said.

**Lessons Learned**

City officials have been pleased with public and private responses to the emergency so far.

"I'd like to say good job to the city staff who have been working through this," said Gowing. "For those of us who've been here since '69, I haven't seen anything worse until this one. It's not as bad as that one, but pretty close."

"From the Public Works side, I've got to tell you, our crews have done an excellent job," Stewart said.

Keeping core infrastructure running with limited resources and damaged equipment was a challenge to the department, yet drinking water and sewage continued to flow as road-clearing units were deployed to clear city streets.

"When folks weren't delivering fuel, keeping generators running or pumping, they were in one of those pieces of equipment opening up roads," Stewart said. "I believe we addressed and assisted the fire department in every request that they had to get to an emergency response."

Welfare checks and other law enforcement responses were also assisted by the department.

"I have to tell you, I think we did a really great job," Stewart said.

Like all things, however, there is room for improvement. Stewart noted that communication between the city and county as well as communication with key power companies could improve. Even so, Stewart praised the city's use of social media to keep the public informed.

"We've tried within our ability short of knocking on everybody's door to get the message out," he said.

City Engineer Ryan Sisson was equally pleased with city workers.

"There are two types of workers I respect in the response to the emergency," he said. "One is the workers pushing the snow out of the way and keeping the pump stations going, but second it's dispatch and Public Works and call takers. They have just been hearing all the heartbreaking stories and their abilities are so fantastic."

SLCFR also gave itself a high grade in response to the disaster.

"The fire district was able to weather the storm well and is definitely prepared for the next time this occurs," said Raade. "Hopefully some of the com-

munity members impacted by the storm have gained some new insights also on how to be better prepared for future weather and disaster events." Raade's point on readiness is one echoed by many in light of the impact from a foot or two of snow.

"It should be an eye-opener for when Cascadia hits," Gowing said.

City Councilor Kenneth Michael Roberts also commented on this during a session reaffirming the city's declaration of a state of emergency.

"As far emergency preparedness, I think the people of this town, as much as we've thrown something every year about it, I think a lot of people don't take that seriously enough — having water, food, cash on hand," he said. "A lot of the stores could not take food stamps cards, it was cash only. So hopefully our community will learn even more with this incident, is what I'm hoping."

In addition to emergency management information on the city's webpage, annual events are held to raise awareness.

"Every year for at least the

last four years, the city has hosted or had an emergency preparedness fair," said Stewart.

The fair is partnered with the Party in the Park event and particular interest in this summer's event in expected to be high.

"So, it'll be big this year," said Meyers.

A vision of potential destruction from the anticipated Cascadian earthquake also weighed on the EPUD general manager's mind.

"It would be like this but then with no highways in some locations on top of it," Coe said. "This is the dry run for Cascadia."

County Commissioner Buch, too, hoped to see greater emergency preparedness grow from this event.

"This is a great learning lesson for not only the county but all communities throughout the affected areas," said Commissioner Buch. "To go back to the table and say, 'This is where we did great. This is where we need improvement and let's move through those steps because this could be much, much worse in the future and we need to be ready.'"

# Support *Your* Community

By Supporting *Local* Businesses



# 9 Reasons to Shop Local

- 1 Shopping Local Creates**  
**Jobs:** The jobs created allow spending in the local economy and helps create more jobs.
- 2 Local independent businesses invest more in our community:**  
 They support local charities, schools and community events which financially impacts our community.
- 3 Local businesses sell a wide range of great products** at affordable prices and cater to the needs and wants of the community.
- 4 Shopping Local saves you money and time!**  
 Travel expenses and personal time make the overall cost of items more.
- 5 Shopping Local retains our community:**  
 Without the support in the local community, restaurants, shops and services are forced to close.
- 6 Shopping Local retains our distinctive-ness:** Local businesses respond quicker to the needs of the customers and stock products to meet the core community's needs.
- 7 Shopping Local encourages community growth.**  
 By choosing to do business locally you help maintain Cottage Grove's diversity, charm and appeal; which in turn, attracts new community members.
- 8 Shopping Local invests in community services and city economy.** Your dollars spent in locally-owned businesses have three times the impact on your community as dollars spent outside of Cottage Grove. When shopping locally, you create funds for more city and county services through taxes. In turn, these funds are invested in neighborhood services including police, fire and ambulance as well as park and library improvements.
- 9 Local shops value you more:** Local businesses survive by their reputation and repeat business, which means you get a higher standard of service.