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Lindy Magallanes & Amanda Mojarro
Lic # 201231650/201231646
Lindy.Magallanes@Century21.com
541.517.1807
c21nuggetrealty.com

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Ready from A9

is dictated to handle it," said Glaspell. "The point of the emergency plan to the City of Cottage Grove is to ensure that our emergency channels and our government keep running."

With authorities often focused on maintaining the governmental structure and overburdened by the myriad aid requests from the community during an emergency, Glaspell is looking to educate people on the dividing line of dependency.

"It's understanding your infrastructure," she said. "Where the city starts and where the people starts are two different lines. Community members

felt the city didn't help them — they weren't aware of the difference between city planning and community planning."

Glaspell hopes to capitalize on the community spirit already alive in the Cottage Grove area and enhance coordination efforts among individuals and groups.

"Being able to choreograph that with our emergency departments and government would be a real asset to the whole community, both governmental and individual," she said.

Dorena

Keeping neighborhoods and organizations connected within Cottage Grove remains an important mission, but the stakes rise the farther from the city you get. For a community like Dorena, the need for preparedness became especially evident this year.

"It's beautiful, but it's one of the areas of concern for our community," said Lane County Emergency Manager Patence Winningham.

Winningham recently attended meetings at Dorena's Row River Church where community members have so far gathered twice to devise their own emergency action plans.

Resident Tina Henderson is among the group's organizers.

"The point of these meetings is, as a whole, to get the group together and talk about stuff," she said. "We would really like little groups to get together and find out who needs help, who to check on."

Although residents already interact on a Facebook page called "Twilight Bark," which acts as a first line of information distribution for the area, this year's disasters have prompted interest in establishing more analog networks.

Henderson recalled how the snowstorm left her virtually cut off from resources in town and without power for nearly two weeks.

"It really opened our eyes up to how not prepared were," she said.

Though phones were also down for many in Dorena, certain residents were able to call others within the area depending on their phone num-

ber prefix.

"All the people that still had 946 could call other 946 people," said Henderson. "The phone threw us for a loop because I grew up out here and we've lived out here quite a while. That's the first time we've lost the phone."

Dorena resident Jesse Gray, too, was surprised at the degree of unreadiness. While he recalled instances of locals patrolling the rural roads looking for people to help, Gray felt the community could be stronger.

"You know, there are a lot of people who don't know their neighbors," he said, recommending, "Know your neighbor so that if something like that happens again, you can go check on your neighbors."

For Dorena's newly formed grassroots emergency response group, Henderson envisions blocks of eight to 10 households within walking distance forming connections that will obligate them to network with each other during a disaster — but a full emergency response plan has yet to be developed.

"What I want to do is get people to start thinking," Henderson said. "I want to do [a meeting] on alternative energy, maybe some solar."

The first two meetings have allowed organizers to collect contact information of some 60 local residents and Henderson and Gray would like to see the project expanded in quantity and quality.

"I would love to find out who has medical training, who has fire fighter training," said Henderson. "I know we have quite a few ham radio operators up here."

Even with the little done so far, Gray said the Dorena community seems to be that much more connected and prepared for the next disaster.

"I think we've woken up some people so that they'd go around and check on other people," said Henderson.

Despite having an organized community response team, however, certain emergencies will be beyond the average person's control. For Dorena residents, fires pose a particular problem.

"If your house catches fire up here, it burns," said Gray.

Fires occur in Dorena and the surrounding area with some frequency. Many residents expressed concern last year when three households went up in flames and SLCFR protected Dorena School, but seemed to make less effort to protect the houses.

According to a statement released by SLCFR at the time, the fire was contained to 12 acres.

"SLCFR response included resources from North Douglas Fire EMS and Goshen-Pleasant Hill Fire," the statement read. "The Dorena area is not protected by a structural agency."

As part of an agreement with the South Lane School District, SLCFR provided structural protection to Dorena School. Three structures, several outbuildings and vehicles were burned in the fire.

While the ambulance service area is about 800 square miles, SLCFR's fire service area is only around 132 square miles, meaning Dorena residents fall outside the fire district.

To address this, SLCFR has begun offering rural residents a "fire suppression agreement" which would guarantee a response if they pay a tax of \$1.85 per \$1,000 of property value, as reported by residents.

"As of now, we're up to 33 contracts," said Division Chief Smith.

Though this offer may be attractive for some, others are skeptical about response times.

"...that it would take them a half hour to get here, which is too late to save a house on fire anyway," said resident Dan Holt on the Twilight Bark page.

Holt and fellow Dorena resident Cal Swanson both live on Row River Road. Both have also recently purchased their own fire trucks in response to fire concerns in the area.

Swanson's 1986 Brush truck was bought off surplus site go-vdeals.com this spring.

"It will sit there protecting my property and if I see smoke around, I may respond and if someone asks me to, I will certainly respond," said Swanson.

The truck came fully functional and Swanson estimates its capable of shooting water from its 500-gallon tank about 100 feet.

Holt's engine, however, needed a little more repair. The 1962 Ford fire engine had been stashed away for years, rusting on the coast. Just getting the water flowing was a chore.

"We shoveled about 75 pounds of rust and dirt out of it," Holt said. "We've got most everything fixed on it now to where it's going to be useable in another month."

The old Ford has a water capacity of about 500 gallons as well.

With two engines about to be fit to operate in the area, Swanson and Holt are now on the lookout for volunteers. Besides needing people to simply be on call to get the trucks in an emergency, the fire engines are optimally operated with a two-man team.

"You really need one person to operate the pump and another person to hold the hose," Holt said.

While some volunteers have stepped forward to help with engine mechanics, more are needed for operation. So far two people have showed up to Swanson's for training.

"I would love to have 20 people that knew how to start the truck, move the truck, stop the truck, turn on the pump and handle the hose," said Swanson. "I could probably teach how to start the truck, engage the pump and spray 500 gallons out if it in about 30 minutes."

Holt cited his own age as the main reason for needing volunteers.

"I'm 78 years old. I'm really too old to be lugging hoses around — but I'll try," he said.

(In the next installment of our special series, we'll explore the challenges of maintaining a group of trained citizens, the question of liability, and staying in communication without infrastructure.)

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