

EDITORIALS

Let's get prepared

We've joined forces with the Mid-Valley Emergency Communications Collaborative to encourage Polk County residents to be among the best prepared in the state in case of emergency.

Right now, less than 10 percent of people in Marion and Polk counties consider themselves ready for disaster. The goal is to bring that up to 20 percent, and sooner than later.

While it's important to have a to-go kit — something you can carry that will help you survive for three days — that isn't enough to get you and your family through a large-scale disaster. Experts recommend two weeks of supplies.

That may seem daunting, but taken in small steps, it's totally doable.

To help, the *Polk County Itemizer-ObsERVER* will continue to publish stories about preparedness along with small lists of items the Red Cross recommends having in case of emergency.

The goal is not to create panic or fear — quite the opposite. Being prepared and having a plan removes those feelings, or at least quiets them.

When — and it is when, not if — disaster strikes, having supplies for two weeks will give you peace of mind and allow you to focus on helping your neighbors. It will mean less strain on first responders and police agencies because you will be ready to help yourself, your family and your community.

Have a plan in place for things such as gathering after a disaster. Keep in mind that driving may not be possible, and have a backup plan or two — perhaps your home is No. 1 to gather, but what if your home does not withstand the predicted 9.0 Cascadia Zone earthquake?

Just as emergency management volunteers and first responders do, practice that plan. Take a Saturday morning or Monday evening and hold a family drill. Practice makes perfect, after all.

Don't plan on internet connections or making calls on cellphones, either. In a real disaster, texts have a much better chance of getting through. Or invest in an old-fashioned, non-battery-operated phone that plugs in the wall.

Take a look at the list on Page 2A, created from suggestions from the American Red Cross and a few ideas from the newsroom, and add items to your weekly grocery shopping.

By the end of the month, you'll be on your way to preparedness.

PUBLIC AGENDA

Public Agenda is a listing of upcoming meetings for governmental and nongovernmental agencies in Polk County. To submit a meeting, send it at least two weeks before the actual meeting date to the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* via fax (503-623-2395) or email (ionews@polkio.com).

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1

- **Monmouth Historic Commission** — 6 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
- **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

MONDAY, JUNE 6

- **Central School District Board of Directors** — 6:30 p.m., Henry Hill Education Support Center, 750 S. Fifth St., Independence.
- **Independence Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Dallas City Council work session** — 5:30 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502. Council meeting will follow at 7.

TUESDAY, JUNE 7

- **Monmouth City Council** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
- **Dallas Urban Renewal Advisory Committee** — 5:30 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3565
- **Polk County Board of Commission work session** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, BOC office, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8

- **Independence Heritage Museum Commission** — 4 p.m., Independence Heritage Museum, 112 S. Third St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Monmouth Library Advisory Board** — 7 a.m., Monmouth Public Library, 168 Ecols St. S., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
- **Monmouth Parks and Recreation Board** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter-writer forgets thank yous

Shame on yours truly. In my letter published a couple weeks ago relative to the Monmouth Senior Center expansion, I neglected three very important people: Mayor John Oberst and City Manager Scott McClure.

When I wrote this letter I was going through a bit of a rough time, what with my 94-year-old brother who had just suffered a stroke and a son who was involved in a very serious motorcycle accident. Both in California. I had just returned from my second trip to California and learned of the fact that the project was going through. These two men did a fantastic job in assisting this project to proceed. The city of Monmouth should be proud to have such leadership.

Additionally, a heap of thanks goes to Mark Fancey, city planner. More telephone calls and emails went between Mark and the center than you can shake a stick at.

What could we do without these three fine gentlemen?

*Jack Hinkle
President, Friends of
Monmouth Senior Center*

Pool provides plethora of activities

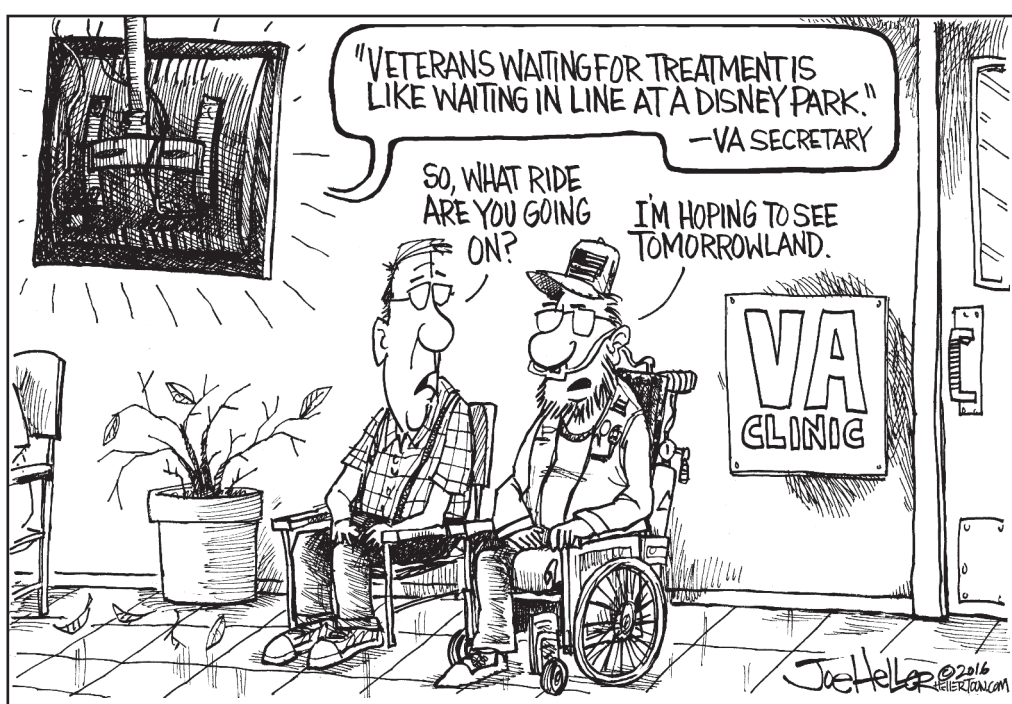
I recently heard that there is a proposal by a member of the City Council to close the Dallas Aquatic Center. The money saved would be diverted to other city services, as yet unspecified. I strongly oppose this idea.

While it has struggled financially, the aquatic center, which opened in 2000, is a "sparkling jewel" in Dallas. People come from all around, even Salem, to use it for a multitude of different reasons. Fun and fitness, rehabilitation after surgery and illness are just to name a few.

Dallas Aquatic Center offers lap swimming, water aerobics, a therapy pool, a sauna pool and a toddler and baby pool. They have a dedicated team of life-guards, instructors and staff, some of whom have been there for years. The center is used by swim teams and enjoyed by many of the children and grandchildren who live in and visit Dallas. They love the river current and pool with overhead sprinklers, the water slide, the rope swing and the diving board. My own grandchildren much prefer it over the Kroc Center in Salem. It keeps them healthily entertained, both physically and mentally; it keeps them out of trouble.

Like our schools, our hospital, our stores, our churches, our senior center and our National Guard armory, Dallas Aquatic Center is a part of our community. Please fight to keep it.

The closure is to be discussed at the city council



meeting on June 6, the first Monday of the month. I urge those who feel as I do to attend, or contact the city council members to let your feelings be known.

*E. F. Watts
Dallas*

Where would swim teams practice?

Not only residents of Dallas, but all the outlying areas including Monmouth, Independence, Falls City, West Salem and more will be affected if a certain Dallas city council member has his way and closes the Dallas Aquatic Center.

What will the schools do with their swim teams? But them out of the area for practice, or worse yet; give up their swim programs. And what about our senior citizens who depend on this facility for therapy and exercise. Let alone the many members who partake in the classes and the general public who use the facility for recreation and exercise.

Also: what of the trickle-down effect it will have on the Dallas businesses if the residents must travel out of the area to continue their use of aquatic activities. They will also do their dining and shopping at these areas instead of Dallas.

This attempted closure will, in the end, effect many.

This aquatic center is something the city of Dallas should be very proud of and certainly strive to keep in operation. Don't let one person's opinion influence the attitude of all.

*Sherrod McCaghren and
Patricia Utter
Dallas*

Pool makes Dallas a destination

Save the pool. When I heard that a certain city councilman wanted to close the pool in order to free funds for other projects, I exploded. This is one area that all ages can use together.

Dallas has lost so many businesses. This has put us as a destination among other towns in the area. Think, people, think.

*Glo Hunter
Dallas*

WANT TO WRITE A LETTER?

Letters to the editor are limited to 300 words. Longer letters will be edited.

Each writer is restricted to one letter per 30-day period. For our full letters to the ed-

itor policy, see online at www.polkio.com.

For more information: Emily Mentzer, 503-623-2373, ext. 117, or via email to ementzer@polkio.com.

Children, families use aquatic center

Save our pool. As a citizen of Dallas, I implore the city council to save our pool from closure. It is the bright star in our town. School children use it for their swim meets. Families use the facilities and seniors enjoy the exercise classes.

Out of area members also spend money in Dallas stores. In consideration of the aquatic employees who would lose their jobs, I plead with the city to save our pool.

*Judy Baker
Dallas*

Evans works for veterans in Polk

(We just celebrated Memorial Day). I am not a veteran, but thanks to my family of veterans, I grew up with great respect and admiration for those who have served our country. It is helpful to have veterans like Paul Evans in the legislature. Rep. Evans does so much to make sure we don't forget veterans, and he has made veterans programs one of his top legislative priorities. I am proud of our veterans, and I am proud of the work Paul has done on their behalf.

*Amanda Deyerle
West Salem*

City should focus on core businesses

Now that the street bond failed let's explore why. We saw our supporting business district destroyed by the new sidewalk fees. We have pretty sidewalks and a lot of empty buildings. The confusion is, what's the difference between a core business and a supporting business?

A core business brings in outside money and more revenue in fees and taxes, and increases property values, thereby increasing Dallas' share of property tax returns. A supporting business, like a hair salon or gas station, supports the workers of the core businesses. A city survives on outside money. Simple math. Dallas taxpayers are not willing to pay for pretty streets while the lack of core business hurts this town. Every dollar that the city spends right now should be spent in promoting core business. From that come jobs, tax revenue, and eventually, pretty streets. And spending

\$25,000 on consultants with no track record is not the way to bring in outside money and increases the medium income of the town, which is an indicator of when and how much to spend on infrastructure. I don't recall any ghost town having pretty streets.

*Randy Wisnia
Dallas*

Quality of life bigger than revenue

Dear city council members: I hear that you are considering closing the Dallas Aquatic Center. Why would you ever consider such a thing? It should be obvious to you that none of the Parks and Recreation services make the city any money. The baseball, basketball, soccer, and softball fields, and also the tennis courts are all financial losers. So is the huge Dallas Park that we all love. So is our library.

The purpose of each of these facilities is not to make money for the city fathers. It is to provide recreational activities and services for the community.

These facilities are what make Dallas a great place to live. The aquatic center is one of the reasons we moved to Dallas. That is true for many others as well. We have many people who regularly use the aquatic center who live in Independence, Monmouth, and West Salem. And these non-city folks pay extra for the privilege to do so. It is said that we have 125,000 annual usages of the facility and over 1,600 yearly subscribers.

I dare say that there is not a money making aquatic facility anywhere in the country. But if you wanted to improve the cash flow at the aquatic center, you should consider adding a weight room and gym facilities at the same location. This could be done at little expense and increase the revenues, using space that is not much used.

Your aquatic center is a gem. Instead of considering closing it, you should applaud how well it is managed and kept up. We, that use the facility, sure do. And many of us will attend your June 6 (Monday) meeting and voice our objection to the idea of closing our pool.

*James G. Christian, O.D. (ret)
Dallas*

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