

FEMA provides funds to fight wildfire

Funds won't go to individuals or homeowners

SEATTLE — The Federal Emergency Management Agency has authorized the use of federal funds to help with firefighting costs for the Canyon Creek Complex Fire.

FEMA Region X Regional Administrator Kenneth D. Murphy de-

termined that the fire constituted a major disaster. Murphy approved Oregon's request for a federal Fire Management Assistance Grant Aug. 14.

At the time, the fire was threatening 300 homes around John Day and Canyon City. Approximately

95 percent of the threatened homes are primary residences. The fire also threatened historic buildings, City Hall, the courthouse, post office, library and other facilities. Mandatory and voluntary evacuations orders were issued for over 200 people. The

fire was 0 percent contained.

The authorization makes FEMA funding available to pay 75 percent of Oregon's eligible firefighting costs for managing, mitigating and controlling designated fires. It does not provide assistance to individuals, homeowners or business owners and doesn't cover other infrastructure damage caused by the fire.

The grant is provided through the President's Disaster Relief Fund and made available by FEMA to assist in fighting fires that threaten to cause a major disaster. Eligible items can include expenses for field camps; equipment use, repair and replacement; mobilization and demobilization activities; and tools, materials and supplies.

SHIFT

Continued from Page A1

and those heading back out.

"When you're heading back out on a fire, you're obviously fresher; you got some sleep, you got some good food in your belly and you got some coffee in your system, so you're a little more revived," said Jesse Kiene, a Bureau of Land Management firefighter from Medford.

During your shift, "You're ramped because that shift requires your energy," he added. "But once you drive off and you're heading back into camp, that's when the exhaustion sets in."

By the time you get back to base camp, "All you want to do is eat and go to bed," Kiene said. "Those are your two priorities."

After eating and putting down some coffee, "You're generally pretty excited to go out there; every day's something new, and you're kind of excited to see what might be going on," said BLM-Medford firefighter David Way.

But when you're coming off a shift, he added, "You're pretty tired and generally sore and just want to eat as fast as you can and bed down and get as much sleep as possible, which sometimes means no shower even if they're available."

While firefighters getting off shift will generally filter in to base camp at the Grant County Fairgrounds in John Day over a few hours, depending on which area of the fire they've been stationed at, supervisors attend an in-depth shift change briefing at base camp.

After the meeting, supervisors will share specific details with their crews about what they will be doing and where they will be working.

"The actual time of the information transfer might only be 15 minutes, but the whole change from the time people leave here and get in place and the time the night shift leaves and gets back here probably is (about) one to two hours," said Canyon Creek Complex fire operations section chief Jeff Surber.

The shift change briefings at base camp are also a pep talk, safety exhortation and weather forecast.

During the night shift briefing that took place Friday, about nine hours before high winds caused the Canyon Creek Complex fire to roar out of the woods and



The Eagle/Sean Ellis

Before they begin a shift and after they finish a shift, firefighters attend a briefing. The information ranges from a status report on the fire to a pep talk and caution to be safe.

threaten Prairie City, incident meteorologist Terry Lebo warned supervisors that strong winds early Saturday morning could change fire behavior dramatically.

Fire safety officer Paul Gauchay encouraged them to be safe.

On one hand, he reminded firefighters that they are "providing comfort to a lot of families out there that might need that assurance right now."

But he also added, "Keep it in perspective. If it gets hot in there, know when to back out. Nothing's more important than your life. Know where those safety zones and escape routes are."

Neil Miler, who is in charge of night operations, reminded those at the briefing that protecting lives, including their own, is the No. 1 priority.

Firefighters are here to stop the fire and protect property, "but we're also here to come home every shift and get back to our families," he said. "Make sure you have an escape plan."

A lot of the people combating the Canyon Creek fire have been fighting fires for 75 to 90 days now, and making sure they get the proper rest between shifts is a priority, said public information officer Traci Weaver.

"If they're not getting that appropriate rest, that's when accidents happen, that's when poor decisions are made," she said.

Firefighters operate under a two-to-one rest ratio, meaning if they work for 16 hours, then they are required to get eight hours of rest. If a shift is extended because of fire behavior, then those rest

hours are also extended to meet the guidelines.

"We try to get these people rested so when they go back out, their minds are clear and their bodies are ready to go," Kennedy said. "Firefighting is unique because you can't make mistakes out there."

"The end state of a bad decision could be a life-threatening issue," he added. "The tempo is very high out there, and they have to have that clarity in their minds on what the mission focus is."

Power lines are safe for now

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – Although the Canyon Creek wildfire advanced and narrowly missed Prairie City Saturday, Oregon Trail Electric Co-op power lines are, for now, out of harm's way, according to co-op officials.

"If the wildfire goes the way that it looks like it is going to go, we dodged a huge bullet," said Ned Ratterman, OTEC's director of engineering and operations.

Two OTEC linemen were among those ordered to evacuate their Prairie City homes.

OTEC crews closely monitored the wildfire as it moved away from power line areas. There are no expectations that it will affect power poles.

"There are no major concerns on our part as of right now," Ratterman said. "But, of course, all of that can change in a heartbeat. We are in a 'wait-and-see' game, again. But, we are definitely feeling a lot better about the situation from a power utility standpoint than we were Saturday."

Electrical power was fully restored along the Canyon Creek Complex wildfire path last Thursday.

"You could hear people hooting and hollering in the hills," Ratterman said. "People were shouting 'thank you' up into the night."

The lights came back on



Contributed photo

Crews from Oregon Trail Electric Co-op repair a power line in the Canyon Creek Complex fire path.

through the efforts of dedicated journeymen working non-stop, 18-hour shifts and in full attack mode, Ratterman said.

"Journymen are hard-wired to go in and do what it takes to bring the power back up," he added. "This

is their community, too."

OTEC crews are closely monitoring the proximity of the fire to power lines in the evacuated areas as a precaution. Additional de-energizations may be required as the winds shift.

ATTENTION GRANT COUNTY VETERANS:

Did you know a service-connected disabled veteran is entitled to FREE use of Oregon State Parks?

See your Grant County Veteran Services Officer today for more information, located at Grant County Courthouse.

Open Mon, Wed, & Fri, 10 am - 4 pm, by appointment. Call 541-575-1631

I am not sure where to begin - I am one of very few who still has a home up Canyon Creek. Why mine is not gone, only God knows. I am so sad for all my neighbors and friends, and pray daily for strength for them.

I want to thank all the firefighters. The OTEC crews that are working 15 hour days to get our power back on. The highway department that's cleaning up the roads and dangerous trees. Larry & Jan Pierce for opening their home & motor home to us and our animals, and to Grant County for opening their arms and wrapping them around all of us affected by the fire up Canyon Creek.

God bless each of you.

Best Kuwe

02610

Michael Rushton, DPM

Podiatric Physician and Surgeon

Treatment and Surgery of the Foot and Ankle

In-grown Nails • Bunions • Warts • Gout • Corns & Callouses

Diabetic Foot Screening • Foot Odor • Athletes Foot

Treatment for pain in feet, shins, heels, knees, lower back.

Custom molded orthotics.

Dr. Rushton is a Preferred Provider for Lifewise and Blue Cross/Blue Shield and a Medicare participant.

2830 10th St., Baker City, OR

541-524-0122

EVERY OTHER TUESDAY

The doctor speaks Spanish— El doctor habla Español.

Grant County Chamber of Commerce

Drawing to be held

Raffle

September 8

Proceeds Benefits Fire Victims

See the list at the bottom for Locations where you can purchase your Tickets!*

Must be 18 to participate.

CASH DONATIONS: Oster Professional Group, Oregon Telephone Corp., Country Preferred Realtors, Norco Medical Supplies, Eastern Oregon Realty, KJDY, The Blue Mountain Eagle

DONOR	DONATION	VALUE	DONOR	DONATION	VALUE
Chester's Thriftway	3 Minute Shopping Spree	300.00 to 500.00	Historic Hotel Prairie	1 Nights Lodging & Drinks	119.00
John Day True Value Hardware	Quality Weber BBQ	400.00	North River Electric	Gift Card to Dayville Café	50.00
Malheur Lumber	Your Choice 1 Pallet Bricks OR Pellets	225.00	Newport Tradewinds	5 Hour Fishing Trip	Goes With Golf
Tidewater Contractors Inc.	10 yds Driveway Rock	160.00	Agate Beach Golf Course	9 Holes of Golf for 2	14.00
Life Flight	1 yr Mem., Hat, Hoody, Mug	100.00	Bed and Breakfast by the River	Gift Basket	86.00
Bob Baggett	1/2 hr Airplane Ride	120.00	Wright Chevrolet	Lube, Oil & Filter	40.00
Greg & Melody Jackson	Grant County Greenbacks	50.00	Grant County Automotive	5 Gallon Fuel Container	33.00
Radio Shack	2 Video Game Units	180.00	Len's Drug	Gift Card	50.00
Nydram Ace Haradware	Ruger 10/22 w/ Simmon Scope	310.00	McDonald's Restaurant	Gift Certificate	100.00
Len's Drug	Gift Card	50.00	Dreamer's Lodge	1 Room From 10/15 to 3/15/16	75.00
Prairie Hardware & Gifts	Gift Basket	87.00	Jim's Antiques Shop	Gift Certificate - Vacuum or Sewing Machine Repair	38.00
Andy's Plumbing & Sports	5 Day Survival Backpack	80.00	Sherry Fieger	Homemade Snack Basket	40.00
McKinley Logging	1 Cord Juniper Fire Wood	60.00	Andy's Plumbing & Sports	Zombie Bear Target	30.00
Mosier's Home Furnishings	Gift Certificate	200.00	Doug's Motor Vehicle Repair	Lube, Oil & Filter	40.00
Pat & Hedi Voigt Ranch	GIBCO Gift Certificate	250.00	Mary Miles Massage	30 Minute Session	30.00
Les Schwab Tire Center	Emergency Road Kit	35.00	Long Creek Lodge	Room for 2	60.00
John Day Eye Center	Exam	164.00	Pioneer Feed	Gift Certificate	25.00
John Day Napa Auto Parts	Black & Decker Lithium Drill & Tool Set	150.00	Prime Time Video	15 Movie Star Card	30.00
Driskill Memorial Chapel	2 Nights Wapati Cabin on Powder River	300.00	Duke Warner Realty	Gift Certificate to Dayville Cafe	35.00
1st Choice Auto Body	Credit to New Windshield	100.00	Outpost Pizza, Pub & Grill	Gift Card	25.00
MD Enterprizes	Residential Service Call	50.00	Eberhards Dairy	2 Tubs Ice Cream	18.00
Gardner Enterprises	2 Cases Beverage	60.00	Shiray Thimble Quilt Studio	Quilt Book & Gift Certificate	60.00
John Day Golf Course	2 Rounds Golf + Cart	84.00	John Day Polaris	ATV Tool Bag	20.00
Darrell McKrola Const.	1 Window and Installation	400.00	GIBCO & Gardner Enterprises	Birdseed & 2 Cases Pop	30.00
Voigt Chevron	Oil Change	49.00	Spoiled Rotten Boutique	Camo Hat & Necklace	30.00
Good Deals	Gift Certificate	25.00	1st Baptist Church	Gift Certificate & Basket	40.00
Silver Spur	Dinner for 2	40.00	Figaro's Pizza	Two Pizza and Movie Nights	40.00
Maria's Mexican Restaurant	Gift Certificate	20.00	Triangle Oil	12 Quarts of Oil	26.00
Bear Valley Roadhouse	Gift Card	25.00	Mossy Oak Properties/Cupper Creek Land Co.	Gift Certificate	50.00
Grumpy's Embroidery	2 Hooded Sweatshirts	40.00	Austin House	Gift Certificate	25.00
America's Best Value Inn	1 Night's Lodging	84.00	Tracey Raymond	Handmade Quilt	Priceless
Cloud 9 Salon	1 Cut & Style	25.00	Arrow Appliance Repair	Gift Certificate	\$100
Dairy Queen	Gift Card	50.00	Arrow Appliance Repair	Gift Certificate	\$100
King's Dept. Store	Cast Iron Cookware	49.00	Land's Inn Bed & Breakfast	1 Night's Stay	???
Hoffman's Yes We Do Cleaning	Gift Certificate	50.00	Wild Horse Casino & Resort	1 Night and Dinner Buffet for 2	\$189
Body Fitness & Dance	Gift Certificate	40.00			
JD Rents	Gift Certificate	75.00			
John Day River Vet. Clinic	1 Spay or Neuter Dog or Cat	180.00			

***TICKET PURCHASE LOCATIONS:** True Value Hardware, Len's Drug, Chamber of Commerce, Nydams Ace Hardware, Squeeze Inn, John Day Napa Auto Parts, JD Rents, PRAIRIE CITY Prairie Hardware & Gifts, MT. VERNON Silver Spur DAYVILLE Dayville Merc, Dayville Café, LONG CREEK Stampede Café, BEAR VALLEY Bear Valley Store, Bear Valley Road House