

'THE UNSUNG HEROES'

Emergency Volunteer Corps of Nehalem Bay celebrates 10 years

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

MANZANITA — When disaster strikes, communities around Nehalem Bay are the place to be.

It's a strange badge of honor, but one that the Emergency Volunteer Corps of Nehalem Bay wears proudly.

The corps, which started with a handful of volunteers from Wheeler, Nehalem and Manzanita 10 years ago, has stepped into the spotlight as one of the largest and most effective emergency preparedness groups in Oregon.

On Monday, more than 100 people from around the region gathered in the Pine Grove Community House in Manzanita — including state Rep. Deborah Boone, state Sen. Betsy Johnson and Andrew Phelps, the director of the Oregon Office of Emergency Management — to celebrate the group's 10-year anniversary.

"Every single one of you are the unsung heroes making this (town) the gold standard of community preparedness," Johnson said. "Thanks for showing Oregon how to do this right for 10 years."

The idea to form a volunteer corps came after hurricane-force winds and flooding from the Great Coastal Gale of 2007 temporarily isolated Manzanita, Nehalem and Wheeler from emergency services.

"That's when we realized emergency preparedness was really up to us, neighbor by neighbor," Linda Kozlowski, the group's president, said. "We just don't expect to get much help."



BRENNA VISSER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

The Emergency Volunteer Corps of Nehalem Bay gave out free MREs at the group's annual meeting Monday.

From there, volunteers embarked on a mapping project, which focused on preparing each neighborhood with supplies and knowledge on how to be self-sustaining in a disaster. A decade later, the program has 300 active members — almost a quarter of the region's population.

Starting out with no shelters, each neighborhood now has one stocked with a week's worth of supplies. A water sanitation and hygiene program was formed, and volunteers offer classes on how to properly filter water when the utilities inevitably fail. The corps purchased 400 ham radios for emergency communications and each month holds classes on how to communicate with one. The group this year anticipates tapping into \$140,000 in lodging taxes to fund a countywide wayfinding and signage project, which, if completed, will be the most comprehensive in the state.

Unique approach

Part of the group's success comes from the unique approach to offer classes on a routine basis, Kozlowski said, which keeps people engaged.

She also attributes a lot of the group's success to its origins.

"We started from the ground up, getting our own funding. And then we got noticed by the city. I think other communities have had more of a top-down approach, where (emergency management) came from the city or the county," she said.

Kozlowski also believes having a population that is mostly retired is an asset.

"We are blessed with a smart retirement community that come from such different professional backgrounds and the time to give back," she said. "Or maybe it's because I have cookies at every meeting. You got to have cookies and coffee."

Whatever the reason, the effects of their efforts are extending past Tillamook County. It was volunteer corps members who worked with Johnson and Boone to pass a law allowing medical practitioners within 10 years of retirement, even if not currently licensed, to join Medical Reserve Corps units and be legally protected — a move that has helped encourage Medical Reserve Corps groups across



BRENNA VISSER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

State Sen. Betsy Johnson congratulates the Emergency Volunteer Corps of Nehalem Bay.

the state. The team is sharing its public sanitation training and strategy with Multnomah County.

"We definitely want to take this show on the road," Kozlowski said. "There's no point in reinventing the wheel."

And the group has had an opportunity to see the fruits of its labor. When a water spout ravaged downtown Manzanita in 2016, more than 60 Community Emergency Response Team members were immediately on scene.

"I remember calling and asking what could we do, what could the state do to help?" Phelps said. But he was told it was under control.

To Phelps, what appears to make the area so successful is a mix between an engaged citizenry and leadership.

"If all my communities were as prepared as this community, why that'd be a home run," Phelps laughed. "I think most emergency management (teams) are one-person shops. No matter how good that one person is, you need connected citizens to make it work."

Long road

There is still a long road ahead for the volunteer corps. A mass care plan has been created, but finding grants to fund all the plans and supplies detailed in it will always be an uphill battle. With most funding for emergency preparedness aimed toward municipalities, securing government dollars can be a challenge.

The corps is also looking for ways to be more sustainable. Kozlowski is working on succession planning, so that when board members — most of whom are founding members — inevitably move on, knowledge won't be lost and a new generation can take over.

"We're trying to find a way to not be people dependent, but position dependent. Really clearly define our roles," she said.

But no matter what the next 10 years hold, Kozlowski feels confident in one definite source of progress.

"If it happened right now, in this room, you'd be better off than if you were somewhere else," she said of a disaster. "And that's what it is about."

Manzanita woman nominated to serve on DOGAMI board

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

Linda Kozlowski, a Manzanita local who leads the Emergency Volunteer Corps of Nehalem Bay, was nominated Monday to serve on the governing board for the Oregon Department of Geology

and Mineral Industries.

The decision by Gov. Kate Brown was announced by state Sen. Betsy Johnson at the volunteer emergency preparedness group's annual conference. If confirmed by the state Senate, Kozlowski will be the first member with an emergency preparedness back-

ground to serve on the board.

"She will be bringing a whole new dimension to DOGAMI," Johnson said. "She will help humanize the work of DOGAMI by factoring in the emergency preparedness perspective."

The governing board sets policy and oversees general operations for the Department of

Geology and Mineral Industries, an agency which focuses on providing earth science information to help inform land use and safety policies.

"I'm just thrilled, overwhelmed," Kozlowski said. "I think the emergency preparedness influence will be a huge asset."

Freeda C. Haggerty

Wheeler

May 23, 1920 — April 20, 2018

Freeda C. Haggerty, of Seaside and Cannon Beach, Oregon, died on Friday, April 20, 2018, in Wheeler, Oregon. She was born May 23, 1920, to Charles B. and Lesslie Hoeman Cooper in Merom, Indiana.

She was the eldest of two girls, and graduated in 1938 from Newport High School in Newport, Indiana. After school, she moved to Estes Park, Colorado, where she met and married David W. Haggerty Jr. in 1939.

The couple settled in Portland, Oregon, where they raised their three children. They moved to Tolovana Park, Oregon, in 1975, where they co-owned The Driftwood Inn Restaurant in Cannon Beach with their daughter and son-in-law, to whom they sold their interests in 1985. Freeda also owned her own gift shop, "Something Special," in Cannon Beach.

A devout Catholic, she was an active member

of St. Peter the Fisherman Church in Arch Cape. She is preceded in death by her husband of 73 years, Dave, and grandson Matt Haggerty. She is survived by her sister, Norma Bridges of Indianapolis, Indiana; a daughter and son-in-law, Terry and John Ward of Cannon Beach; two sons and daughters-in-law, David and Peggy Haggerty of Salem, Oregon, and Paul and Claudia Haggerty of Bend, Oregon; a foster daughter, Stephanie Burk of Boring, Oregon; 10 grandchildren; and 18 great-grandchildren.

A rosary will be recited on Friday, May 4, 2018 at 10:30 a.m., followed by an 11 a.m. Mass, at St. Peter the Fisherman Catholic Church, 79441 U.S. Highway 101 S., Arch Cape, Oregon. A reception will follow in the church hall.

In lieu of flowers, Freeda requested a donation to be made to a charity of one's choice.



Freeda Haggerty

Community fest May 12

The Cannon Beach Coastal Community Festival will feature a celebrity chef "blue barrel" cooking challenge, outdoor marketplace and safety fair, along with the musical talents of blues guitarists Mary Flower, Mark Shark and Thad Beckman.

The festival is scheduled for May 12 featuring arts and crafts, food vendors and a farmer's market.

The day-long event at the city park is designed to offer a fun way to build awareness for safety and emergency preparedness.

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