

Echo woman assists Irma victims

By **JADE McDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

When it comes to hurricanes, Cindy Parks has been there, done that.

Parks, an Echo resident and pharmacist at St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton, recently returned from a three-week stint caring for “medically fragile” Hurricane Irma evacuees in Naples, Florida. In the past she responded to hurricanes Ivan, Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, and Superstorm Sandy. She may head out to Puerto Rico to help with Hurricane Maria recovery next.

“Most people are compassionate,” she said. “Most people want to help and I’m one of the lucky ones because I get to do something to make a difference.”

Parks is part of the National Disaster Medical System, which sends teams of medical professionals to assist overloaded local professionals in responding to a disaster or public health emergency. In addition to the hurricanes, the Oregon Disaster Medical Assistance Team she is a member of deployed to the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake and has flown in to help provide support during non-emergency mass gatherings such as the pope’s visit to Washington, D.C.

Each team — which is made of a balanced group of doctors, nurses, therapists, specialists, veterinarians, command staff and others — is on call during one quarter of the year, but Parks said the rapid succession of disasters recently meant teams from fourth quarter, including hers, had to deploy early.

While some teams were directly treating victims injured in hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, this time Parks’ team was flown by military plane outside of the disaster zone to Naples, Florida, where a large high school was sheltering about 1,000 people evacuated ahead of time from Hurricane Irma. Those evacuees were all classified as medically fragile, meaning they were in a wheelchair, on oxygen or had other special medical needs.

“They were isolated with no news as to whether their home was still there, or their family was OK,” Parks said.

She said she was grateful the team includes a mental health professional, because it was a difficult time for many of the evacuees beyond just the physical discomfort of sleeping on a cot inside a school for weeks.

Irrigon nurse Kelly Sullivan and retired Pendleton paramedic James Thomas also deployed to Florida from Oregon. Usually Na-



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Pharmacist Cindy Parks of Pendleton consults with patient Jan Cavallaro of Pendleton about possible drug interactions after Cavallaro underwent knee replacement surgery on Monday at St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO FROM CINDY PARKS

Pharmacist Cindy Parks poses for a photo during her deployment to Naples, Florida for Hurricane Irma.

tional Disaster Medical System deployments are scheduled for two weeks at a time, but sometimes are extended to three or more, as was the case this time.

In some disasters Parks has been directly in the impact zone.

“During Sandy, the hospital was damaged so badly we were setting up tents in the parking lots and people were coming through there instead,” she said.

Parks said the worst of all her deployments since she joined the team in 2000 was Hurricane Katrina, which killed more than

1,800 people in total. After the initial devastation injuries continued to pile up as people had accidents wading through deep, debris-filled water or using chainsaws to try and clear through the wreckage.

“Hurricane Katrina was the most awful thing I’ve ever seen,” she said.

The National Disaster Medical System is a federal program under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Personnel are trained to support communities with medical care and mortuary assistance as requested by state governments and are considered federal employees when in the field. The system is made up of more than 5,000 professionals organized into more than 70 teams around the country.

“Hurricane Irma put people’s health and lives in jeopardy, and NDMS members are answering the call of duty to help residents affected by this disaster,” NDMS Acting Director Ron Miller said in a statement. “When a state requests our assistance, we will be there to serve until NDMS services are no lon-

ger needed.”

To provide effective assistance, teams from each state participate in rigorous training each year designed to help them work together quickly in a variety of circumstances. Parks said one recent training involved practices setting up medical tents in the snow on Mt. Bachelor.

She said she signed up to work on an NDMS team because she likes helping people — the same reason she became a pharmacist. She may be getting recognition for responding to high-profile disasters, but she said just as important are the “unsung heroes” who cover her shifts at St. Anthony and take care of other things that allow her to leave home for weeks at a time on very short notice.

Other NDMS personnel continue to provide support for Hurricane Irma.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

New food vendor ordinance

By **JADE McDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

The city of Stanfield has passed an ordinance regulating mobile food vendors in the city.

While the city hasn’t had food trucks regularly in the past, a request for a business license to run a food truck sparked concerns from the city council that permanent seating and other features would be added to make trucks more of a restaurant than a true mobile vendor.

“There was a desire to have them mobile and clean and operating as a mobile food vendor should,” city manager Blair Larsen said.

The final draft of the ordinance, which was orig-

inally based on Hermiston’s mobile food vending ordinance and then went through several revisions, was passed during the Oct. 3 city council meeting.

Mobile food vendors must be located in the downtown district or other industrial or commercial zones, and must be at least 200 feet from the property line of any restaurant unless the owner gives written permission.

The vendors must not add seating, tables, shades or other such items for use by patrons to eat on-site.

There are other rules and restrictions as well, including hours of operation.

For more information contact Stanfield City Hall, 541-449-3831.

Gas station rebranding as Sinclair



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

Workers switch the 76 sign to a Sinclair sign as the fuel station on Hermiston Avenue changes brands.

Fuel dispensers and signs are being replaced at the 76 gas station in Hermiston to rebrand the station as a Sinclair.

Linda Lancaster, store manager, said the business will still be under the ownership of Hattenhauer Distributing of The Dalles.

“It will still be the same good-quality fuel we’ve

had here,” she said.

Lancaster said the store is still open, and unless workers run into any problems the new fuel dispensers should be up and running on Thursday, or possibly even Wednesday afternoon.

The station is located at 710 W. Highland Ave. in Hermiston.

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