

September is a great time to prepare for natural disasters

When I was a kid, my parents' unfinished basement held dozens of milk jugs filled with water and shelves of large silver cans with words like "rice" and "oats" written across the side in black marker.

Some people might have looked at that and thought my family was some sort of weird doomsday preppers, but having a few weeks' worth of non-perishable food and water stored at home was a pretty standard part of the self-sufficiency culture I grew up in as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

It's also a pretty standard part of the advice the Red Cross, the government and every other organization involved in disaster response wish everyone would listen to. That's why this month is being celebrated as National Preparedness Month.

I've used my platform as a journalist to harp on this subject a lot over the years, but it's an important one. If the big Cascadia earthquake hits the Pacific Northwest, Umatilla County is expected to go weeks — not days, weeks — without electricity, internet, cell phone service and landlines. Failure of those services will cascade into a series of other failures, because just about everything in our modern life, from using a debit card to pumping water into homes or gas into cars, requires electricity.

To put it nicely, those of you who have to drive to a restaurant the next town over for dinner every time there's a two-hour power outage would be in huge trouble. And the government won't be rushing to save you first when there are people on the other side of the state who had whole buildings collapse on them.

The important thing is to build up your supplies a little at a time as you can afford it. If bottled water is on sale, buy an extra case and stash it in your closet. When

canned green beans go on sale, grab a couple extra (just make sure you own a can opener that doesn't depend on electricity).

Also think about the specialty items your family might need, from diapers to dog food.



JADE MCDOWELL COMMENT

My family never used our food storage for a natural disaster when I was growing up, but it did come through for us a few times when a large, unexpected expense came up and money was extra tight.

Beyond some extra food and water at home, I like to stay prepared by keeping a "72-hour kit" in the trunk of my car. I purchased a large, sturdy backpack with numerous pockets and stuffed it

with a pair of jeans, T-shirt, jacket, extra socks and underwear, fleece blanket, non-perishable snacks and a few water bottles. Then I started shoving toiletries and camping supplies such as waterproof matches into every pocket. I also keep a first aid kit and extra pair of boots in the car, just not in the kit.

I have yet to use my emergency kit while stranded in the woods or fleeing a massive flood, but I can't tell you how many times it has come in handy to be able to pull a dry pair of socks or travel-sized bottle of contact solution out of my car when I've been away from home.

Considering a natural disaster might not come with internet access, now is also the time to look up and maybe even print out information on topics such as which woodland plants are safe to eat, how to tie a tourniquet and how to start a fire without matches.

Stocking up on batteries and beef jerky is a privilege that not everyone can afford, but for those of you who can, please consider how you might prepare to be a help instead of a drain on our community in the event of a disaster.

Jade McDowell is the news editor for the *Hermiston Herald*.

Driving within the lines — and city ordinances

Recent road construction has altered my preferred route to work.

Not only is it slightly inconvenient, it takes longer — OK, it only adds maybe 60-90 seconds, but it raises my blood pressure.

As a way to help reduce stress, some professionals suggest to stop and smell the roses along the way. I'm good with that except when driving to work. I just want to get there in the quickest, most efficient way possible.

While Archimedes, the famous ancient Greek mathematician and inventor, is credited with saying, "The shortest distance between two points is a straight line," it wouldn't take a rocket scientist to figure that out. However, since I can't barrel through houses and yards, I have calculated my perfect route to work.

I didn't come up with any sort of mathematical equation. Although, I did factor in the number of stop lights, typical traffic patterns and the width of roads to set my path.

All that went out the window the latter part of July as crews began working on different phases of construction projects on Hermiston Avenue. Initially, it wasn't too much of a hassle — except driving home at night when I didn't see the "Bump" sign. It was a jarring experience to hit it while traveling 30 mph.

Those who regularly travel on Hermiston Avenue can attest that driving on the completed part is pretty sweet. But another phase of the project continues to require detours.

While trying to determine my alternate route, I've come across some interesting things — and by interesting, I mean not quite right.

A number of years ago some friends asked John and I to "babysit" their truck. After being parked in front of our house several days, it mysteriously disappeared. When I called to report it stolen, I found out it had been towed — in accordance with city ordinance. I wonder why someone didn't knock on our door and ask if we were aware of the 72-hour rule.

It's not that I want other people to have to pay to free their rigs from incarceration, but I don't understand why other vehicles in town can sit for weeks, even months — if not years. Case in point, my alternate route took me by a truck that was jacked up with tires missing. Whoever was working on it even put little reflector tabs up — which evidently kept the tow truck at bay.

Even more disturbing is a vehicle with tags that expired nearly two years ago. I don't know how long it's been derelict on the street — but certainly more than 72 hours as evidenced by the weeds that "have a prevailing height of more than 15 inches" growing around it in cracks in the pavement, which is out of compliance with property nuisances.

Looking at city ordinances has been an eye-opening experience. It appears we may have violated the law when recently draining our little swimming pool. It got me a bit heated — and don't even get me started on the ordinance about removal of ice and snow.



TAMMY MALGESINI COMMENT

Tammy Malgesini is the community editor. Her column, *Inside my Shoes*, includes general musings about life. Contact her at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539.



HH file photo

Road Construction is underway on Hermiston Avenue.

LETTER

Economic growth fuels need for new schools, helps pay for them

To the editor: Hermiston's growth is not an accident. Its location, weather, culture and even soil have created an environment ripe for development. Careful planning has made way for sustained expansion.

In 1999, when voters approved a bond to expand Hermiston High School and build Desert View Elementary, the assessed value of property in the district was \$714.8 million. In 2019, the assessed value is \$2.116 billion.

School enrollment has grown just as quickly, as new businesses bring new employees, and new employees bring families. There are no indications this era of opportunity is a passing phase.

Fortunately, with voter support, the Hermiston School District can leverage that economic growth to help build new schools needed to maintain adequate room for its students. The growing industrial, commercial and residential areas will add to the tax base and generate the property taxes needed to pay for this construction.

We all benefit from strong school districts. The Port of Umatilla relies on being able to attract qualified employ-

ees, and investments like this are keystones to a healthy economy. That's why the commissioners have formally endorsed the bond measure.

Measure 30-130 continues in the tradition of thoughtful planning, and the school board and district should be commended for offering voters a plan that keeps us growing in a positive direction.

Join me in voting Yes for Hermiston Schools in November.

Kim B. Puzey
Hermiston



PRIORITIES

A hundred years from now it will not matter what My bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove... but the world may be different because I was important in the Life of a Child.

PET OF THE WEEK

Buddy is approx 12-14 years old and he came to us with his sibling after their owner died. They were both neglected for quite some time. Buddy is working on potty training and doing well. He likes to be in your lap as often as possible. Such a sweet old dog who misses his owner and sibling. He needs a nice quiet home to live out the rest of his life in. He is scheduled for neuter. Vaccinated, wormed, vetted. Requires regular grooming



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