

Aid:

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“We want to help our fellow Oregonians who have lost nearly everything,” Cathy Stolz, president of the Auxiliary Unit 37, said in a news release.

However, Stolz said on Tuesday, Sept. 22, that they had stopped collecting items after the Estacada post called and said they did not have room to store any more donations for now.

Fire crews beginning to contain blazes

Statewide, more than a dozen fires have burned more than a million acres, and at least 23 people have died.

The fires in and around Clackamas County are 25% contained and have burned more than 130,000 acres as of Monday, Sept. 21.

The Beachie Creek Fire in Marion County has burned more than 192,000 acres and was 38% contained as of Sept. 21.

The South Obenchain Fire in Jackson County has burned more than 32,000 acres and was 65% contained as of Sept. 21.

The Alameda Drive Fire, which was 3,200 acres, is 100% contained, but when it tore through the Rogue Valley, it destroyed 2,357 homes in a span of 24 hours. Also lost were more than 50 businesses.

Most of the homes lost were in Phoenix and Talent, two small towns between Ashland and Medford. Although law enforcement agencies and the Federal Bureau of Investigation have released statements saying most of the state’s fires have causes, such as downed power lines instead of arson as rumored, a man was arrested Sept. 11 for arson and other charges, including possession of methamphetamine, in connection with the Alameda Fire.

More ways to help

For those looking for more ways to help fire vic-



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
A horse trailer sits partially loaded with goods for fire victims in the parking lot of the Pendleton Walmart on Friday, Sept. 18, 2020. A group of Umatilla County volunteers including David Dunn, Caryn Dunn, Hailey Shepherd and Weston Simonton gathered donations from community members to take to Clackamas County.

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tims, a list of reputable organizations that are collecting monetary donations, ways to donate your time and locations where supplies can be dropped off, can be found at traveloregon.com under the Help Wildfire Victims link.

Organizations listed include the chapters of

United Way, Salvation Army and other relief organizations serving the areas affected, plus statewide organizations such as the Oregon Community Foundation, Oregon Food Bank and the Wildland Firefighter Foundation.

The American Red Cross has launched the Northwest

Response Fund in support of those affected by wildfires in Oregon and Washington. Donating is as easy as texting the word “relief” to 503-226-5088.

ACCESS, a Medford nonprofit that provides food and other services to residents in need, has been taking dona-

tions to help feed people displaced by the fires. Every dollar donated feeds four people. There is a donation link (under Ways to Help) on their website at accesshelps.org.

There are several agencies helping pets in Southern Oregon.

One of them is Southern Oregon Veterinary Specialty Center, which has set up a GoFundMe to help with food and medical costs for displaced and injured pets. The fund had more than \$81,000 on Sept. 21, but the volume of animals that need help is vast.

Committed Alliance to Strays (C.A.T.S.) in Medford has taken in several cats waiting for their families to find them. The group also is offering free cat food and litter for those in need. If you would like to make a donation to C.A.T.S., it has a donation link on its website at kitten-sandcats.org.

The Oregon Cattlemen’s Association is also collecting donations to assist farmers, ranchers and livestock evacuated during the fires through Paypal or by emailing robyn.smith@orcattle.com to donate supplies.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan, File
A fenced lot between the Agape House and the Theater Sports Park was the proposed site of the Stepping Stones project before the Hermiston City Council approved an ordinance that bans shelters within 1,000 feet of a park or school.

Stepping Stones:

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and security cameras would monitor the site. Once the shelter was up and running, Stepping Stones planned to implement a requirement that guests must earn credits to extend their stay through work, volunteering, education or other things that could help them escape homelessness.

Stepping Stones had hoped to place the camp on a piece of property behind the Agape House, allowing guests to access showers, emergency food boxes and other assistance there. But some neighboring property owners and area residents testified they were worried that the project would result in additional loitering, littering, theft and other crime in the area, including nearby Theater Sports Park.

“The warming station existed for two years at the Arc building in the middle of a park, in between two schools, and that wasn’t a problem then,” Lloyd said.

She also noted that property owners had stated that things like littering were already a problem there without the shelter, and the shelter’s board had planned to do regular clean-ups around there. She said they had hoped, since a shelter would be a conditional use that the planning commission would need to approve a permit for each year, that people would at least give it a chance to

operate for a year.

“Let’s see if there is a problem,” she said.

The planning commission proposed a blanket ban on shelters near parks and schools, however, and the city council passed the ordinance as recommended by the commission.

“We’re still in it for the long run, but frankly, we feel that with the step the city took with the ordinance, and the way it was worded, they are showing they are not interested in working on the project,” she said.

Stepping Stones had already done outreach for the proposed project and Lloyd said some of the organizations in the area that serve low-income residents had expressed an interest in a partnership. She said since the city council’s decision they have heard from a “pretty sizable list” of people who have said they were still interested in supporting the project if it found a home outside city limits. She said the Stepping Stones board was still fully committed to finding a way to make the project work.

“I asked (the board) frankly, ‘Are you guys done? What do you want to do?’ I thought there would be more discussion, but everyone was like, ‘Absolutely, let’s move ahead,’” Lloyd said.

She said since the members of the board all live on the west end of Umatilla County, that’s where they would prefer to locate the project.



Photo contributed by the Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless
A proposed emergency shelter known as Stepping Stones, would be modeled after the sleep center created by Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless, pictured here.

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