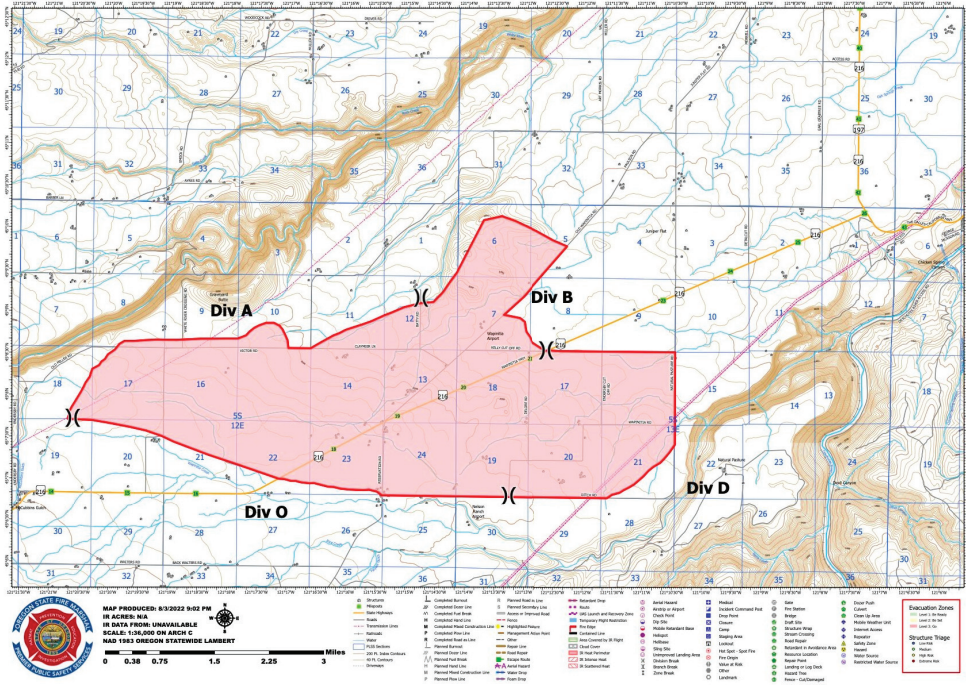


STRUCTURE OPERATIONS

MAP TILES - 1 WEST - MILLER ROAD FIRE



Oregon Fire Marshal

Miller Road Fire in Wasco County.

Clatsop County task force responds to Miller Road Fire

Firefighters respond to Emergency Conflagration Act

Seaside Signal

Clatsop County firefighters responded after Gov. Kate Brown invoked the Emergency Conflagration Act in response to the Miller Road Fire in Wasco County last week.

Seaside Fire sent two vehicles out and four personnel, Div. Chief David Rankin said.

Chief Joey Daniels serves as county task force leader and Lt. Matt Keefer is assistant task force leader.

Gearhart, Astoria, Lewis and Clark and Knappa fire departments each sent personnel and apparatus. A seasonal firefighter and a part-time fighter affiliated with Nehalem Fire are deployed with a separate task force.

"As always, when we send out crews, the No. 1 priority of all of the fire departments in the county is to ensure we keep a response to our normal day-to-day business," Rankin said. "As soon as the task force left, the phones started ringing among the chiefs and everyone coordinated to see what each other needed or provide mutual aid options. Seaside, Clatsop County and the state of Oregon fire service don't work without mutual aid. When our neighbors need us we go, because it won't be very long before we are call-



Seaside provided mutual aid response to the Miller Road Fire. Teams returned on Saturday.

ing for help."

The Miller Road Fire was reported on Aug. 2, in an area about 13 miles southwest of Maupin, on the Deschutes River.

The governor's declaration cleared the way for the state fire marshal to mobilize firefighters and equipment to assist local resources in battling the fire.

By Aug. 4, the fire had spread to more than 10,500 acres. Crews worked to create fire containment lines with support from air operations, the Wasco County Sheriff's Office reported. Dozer lines and hand lines were established in the southeast corner of the fire.

Deployments are always planned for a maximum of 14 days, Rankin said.

"Under special circumstances we can swap out personnel or equipment," he said. "While we plan on 14 days, the state can release our units back home or send them to another fire if necessary."

The task force returned Aug. 6, Div. Chief Genesee Dennis said.

Expanding access to broadband in Jewell proves difficult

By ERICK BENGEL
The Astorian

A project to bring broadband to the Jewell area is undergoing a reboot.

Last year, Clatsop County and the Jewell School District signed an intergovernmental agreement to deliver improved internet access to areas where service, if it exists at all, tends to be spotty and sluggish. A 2020 survey of school district families found that less than 40% of people in the Jewell area had reliable internet.

The task of upgrading internet service in this remote corner of the county has proven more difficult than the proposal initially suggested.

Meanwhile, the school district — the project's community anchor — has faced upheavals in leadership.

Steve Phillips, the former superintendent who originally presented the broadband idea to the county Board of Commissioners in September, was placed on administrative leave pending an independent investigation. In May, Phillips became the new superintendent at Newberg Public Schools.

Brian Gardner — who served as acting superintendent earlier this year before Cory Pederson was hired

along with a new principal — continues to work as a consultant on the broadband project.

Gardner said he has put a stop to spending any additional money on it.

"It's not a boondoggle," he said, "and I'm trying to make sure that it doesn't become one."

An early phase of the project called for a \$500,000 contribution from the county and \$250,000 from the school district.

A little over \$140,000 has gone into the project so far, Gardner said. That amount has paid for a trunk line — a dedicated fiber-optic cable — connected to Jewell School, a tower — called "tower zero" — atop a school building, and a roughly \$80,000 deposit with American Tower Corp. to build towers to serve the wider region. If the project doesn't pan out, about \$50,000 of that \$80,000 is recoverable, since there is a \$30,000 restocking fee on materials already purchased.

In total, roughly \$90,000 has been spent, Gardner said.

The intergovernmental agreement stipulates that the county pays for two-thirds, the school district the other third. If the project were to end at this point, the county would be out roughly \$60,000, the school district about \$30,000, Gardner said.



Gearhart firefighters returned from fighting the Miller Road Fire in Wasco County.

Gearhart Fire calls, Miller Road response

Seaside Signal

Gearhart Fire reported 410 calls since the start of the year and 89 calls for the month of July. The call level exceeds last year's record pace of 378.

Of calls, 39 were inside the city and 35 within the Gearhart Fire District. Aid

was sent 15 times in July. Aid was sent to Cannon Beach one time, Warrenton four times and Seaside 10 times.

Gearhart received aid five times.

In addition, three Gearhart firefighters responded with mutual aid to the Miller Road Fire in Wasco County. Gearhart firefighters and a

brush truck responded after a state emergency conflagration was declared.

Along with Clatsop County Task Force 9, Oregon also has three task forces in California assisting with the fire seven miles from the Oregon border, Gearhart Fire Chief Josh Como said at the Aug. 3 Gearhart City Council meeting.

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