

Prickett retires; Quail Valley continues process toward annexation

Fire danger is high throughout Oregon and a little rain, even an occasional good downpour, isn't enough to put moisture back into northwest forests during this unusually dry year. The Northwest has received less than two-thirds of its average rain and snow for this time of year. Even the Coast Range, normally the wettest part of the state, is suffering.

Fire season is in effect and outside burning is banned without a permit.

"Interface" areas, where homes are on the edge of forests, are of greatest concern

to all firefighting agencies. For that reason, the Oregon Department of Forestry and Central Oregon fire agencies provide the following tips to aid in fire prevention for your home:

1. Create a defensible space around your home. Have a 30-foot buffer zone with a lawn or low-growing ground covers and fire-resistant plants. Thin an additional 70 feet to help slow an approaching fire. Defensible zones larger than 100 feet are recommended for homes on steep slopes, where fire can travel more quickly.

2. The roof is most vulnerable. If you have an untreated wood shake roof, a nonflammable replacement is recommended - cement shingle, tile,

sheet metal or aluminum. Wood shake roofs, often ignited by embers, are one of the top causes of home losses in forest areas. Remove pine needles and leaves from gutters. Screen attics and foundation vents, decks and porches to protect them from wind-blown embers.

3. Have adequate water supply and pressure. Single-family homes should have at least one-inch-diameter supply mains. Also, have exterior outlets so a hose reaches all sides of the house.

4. Reduce flammable vegetation, prune and thin trees. Remove dead leaves, dry grass, underbrush and other fuel within this safety zone,

which you should water regularly. Trees near or next to buildings should be kept free of dead wood and moss. Prune branches lower than six feet on trees to prevent a ground fire from climbing into the tree canopy. Check with local agencies for guidelines on tree removal first.

5. Stack wood at least 30 feet from your home and other outbuildings. Consider alternatives to burning yard debris, such as composting or recycling. In high fire-risk zones, burning is often prohibited.

6. Electrical service lines

leading from main power lines to houses start many fires. Have installed underground when possible. Keep power line rights-of-way wide enough so wind-blown branches don't hit lines.

7. Emergency access. The driveway is your escape route and needs a firebreak on each side. Narrow, winding driveways can hamper firefighters. The road to your home should be wide enough for firetrucks to pass and turn around. Make sure roads and driveways are well-marked and not excessively steep.

Fire resistant plants good in your rural landscape

Landscaping doesn't have to be forgotten in order to plan for fire prevention. Here are some fire resistant plants recommended by Oregon State University Extension. For a complete list, call 541-548-6088.

Ground Covers - kinnikinnick, creeping phlox and creeping thyme

Perennials - sedges, daylilies and hosta

Shrubs, broadleaf evergreen - cotoneaster, daphne and Oregon boxwood

Shrubs, deciduous - butterfly bush, burning bush and lilac

Deciduous trees in the *Populus* category, such as aspen

and cottonwoods are also fire resistant.

New round of funding for Oregon Heritage grants

Application forms and information for the Oregon Heritage Commission's 2001-2003 Heritage Grant cycle are now available. Oregon Heritage Grants provide fifty-percent matching funds for projects that preserve, interpret or increase public access to Oregon's heritage resources. Grants made in previous cycles have ranged in amount from \$1,000 to \$25,000. Only non-profit organizations incorporated in the State of Oregon, federally recognized tribal governments and agencies of local governments within the State

of Oregon are eligible to apply. For the 2001-2003 cycle, the commission will give priority to projects that relate to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Projects not related to that theme will still be considered.

Detailed information about the types of projects that may be submitted, who may apply and grant requirements is in the grant application packets. Applications packets can be downloaded from the Oregon Heritage Commission web site at oregonheritage.org or paper copies can be requested by e-mail at heritage.info@state.or.us

or by telephoning the commission office at 503-378-4168, ext. 299.

Grant applications must reach commission offices at 1115 Commercial Street NE, Salem, OR 97301, no later than 4:00 p.m., August 24, 2001. Decisions on grant applications submitted by August 24 will be made at a September 26 commission meeting. All projects approved for funding will have to be completed by June 30, 2003. The next opportunity to apply for Oregon Heritage Grants will be during the summer of 2003.

Know your United Way

By Chris Kaleta, board secretary, Columbia County United Way

This is one of a series of articles meant to help inform the community about United Way funded agencies and the services they perform for Columbia County Residents.

Retired & Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP)

This program places seniors (age 55 and up) in non-profit organizations throughout the community, without displacing paid personnel. Agencies benefit from the volunteers many years of experience and knowledge and the volunteers benefit with better mental and physical health.

If you are interested in volunteering or need a volunteer for your organization, call Nancy Harwood, Agency Director, at 503-397-5655.

Community Action Team's Energy Self-Reliance Program

This program helps provide

funds to assist qualified applicants in paying utility bills. Those approved for assistance also receive energy case management to help prevent future crises by fostering individual self-reliance.

For information call Karrie Durie at 503-397-4951.

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