

September is Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has joined with almost 1,200 national, state and local agencies and organizations to encourage Americans to prepare their homes, businesses, schools and communities for disasters of all kinds. According to FEMA Acting Regional Director Dennis Hunsinger, engaging citizens in homeland security and disaster preparedness is a critical first step in effective government response and recovery efforts.

"National Preparedness Month is a great time to learn how to prepare for natural disasters and the ever-present threat of terror-strikes," said Hunsinger. "This year, the Department of Homeland Security and the National Preparedness Coalition are focusing on family emergency preparedness, and urging everyone to help make themselves and their loved ones better prepared."

With summer heat still enabling wildfires throughout the Pacific Northwest, and flood

Power "blinks" BPA caused

According to West Oregon Electric Cooperative, the power outages, called "blinks," experiences on Friday, September 8 through Tuesday, September 12, were the result of two bad "insulator strings" on the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) lines about one mile out from the Tillamook substation. They were located and replaced on September 12.

Republicans to meet Sept. 29

Columbia County Republicans will be holding their monthly informal MeetUp at Mr. Joe's Coffee Cafe, 555 Columbia River Hwy, St. Helens, on Friday, September 29. Come at 6:30 p.m. to order food, with the meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m. We will be there for information and lively discussion of issues of interest to those attending. All County Republicans are welcome. Contact Fred Yaune at 503-543-6271 for further information.

season just around the corner, not to mention the ever-present threat of earthquakes and even volcanic activity, Hunsinger reminds residents that the time to plan how they'll respond when disaster strikes, is "before disaster strikes!"

"No matter how busy or hectic your daily routine, now is the time to think about what to do in the event of unexpected infrastructure failure – or any other major disaster," said Hunsinger. "A good place to start is by downloading our "Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness" from <www.w.fema.gov>, and there is a wealth of information at <www.ready.gov>. There is also a calendar of National Preparedness events." **Please see page 17**

September is healthy aging month, too

September is designated as the month to focus attention on the positive aspects of growing older. The older population – people 65 years or older – numbered 36.3 million in 2004, the most recent year for which data is available. They represented 1.4 percent of the U.S. population or about one in every eight Americans. Oregon's older population numbered more than 600,000.

Studies have found that positive relationships can help you stay healthier, live longer, and enjoy life more. A major study found that people with strong relationships had less mental decline and lived more active, pain-free lives without physical limitations.

Aging experts recommend staying involved in religious and community functions, maintaining a network of friends and family with whom you regularly interact, and volunteering in organizations that get you out and among other people. Here are some tips for staying socially connected.

- Volunteering for part-time work can contribute to your knowledge and skills. Helping others is good for the body and spirit, improves our mood and well-being and builds strong communities.
- Join a club.
- Learn a new hobby. Get together with others who have similar interests.
- Take advantage of pro-

grams offered by your local library, community or senior center, and county Extension office.

• Register for an adult education or college course in a subject that interests you. You might be amazed at how much you enjoy school.

• Stay in close contact with family or friends. Write, e-mail, or call someone daily.

• Get connected while you improve your health. Join a walking club, Jazzercise, or the local fitness center, go golfing, or take yoga or cooking classes.

• Pets can also nourish our well-being.

Source: Denise Rennekamp, Extension associate, OSU.


Unemployment still at 5.9 percent

Columbia County's seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was essentially unchanged at 5.9 percent in August. The rate was near the statewide rate of 5.5 percent but higher than the national rate of 4.7 percent. Total employment in the county rose by 70 from the previous month and the number of unemployed people decreased by 94. Total employment was 22,174 in Au-

gust and 1,336 people were unemployed.

August 2005's seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 7.0 percent. Total employment this August was 569 greater than one year before and 208 fewer people were unemployed.

Unemployment rates for other counties can be found at <http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/AllRates>.




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