

## National Preparedness Month is the time for emergency plans

Oregonians should restock emergency supplies, develop an emergency plan or consider becoming a health care volunteer during September's National Preparedness Month, Oregon Health Authority officials say.

"National Preparedness Month serves as a good reminder that we should all be prepared in the case of an emergency to protect ourselves, our families and our communities," said Jean O'Connor, J.D., Dr.PH., Oregon Public Health Division deputy director. "People should take time this month to talk to co-workers, neighbors, friends and family members about their emergency plans. Doing so now will help ensure all Oregonians are ready the next time a public health emergency strikes."

September 2012 marks the ninth annual National Preparedness Month, sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. One goal is to educate the public about how to prepare for emergencies including natural disasters, mass casualties, biological and chemical threats, radiation emergencies, and terrorist attacks.

Getting prepared for an emergency takes only three simple steps:

- Be informed. Identify the hazards and risks in your community and plan accordingly.
- Make a family emergency plan. Make a plan so you know who to communicate with and how to find your loved ones if an emergency occurs. If you have relatives out of state, they may be just the ones you need when your local friends and family are affected by a disaster.
- Build an emergency supply kit. Make one for your home, at work, and in the car. Be sure to include water, food and first aid supplies to help you survive if you lose power or get stranded in your car. This is especially important for dealing with icy roads and snowstorms in the winter. Don't forget a kit for

family pets, too.

Oregon Health Authority also is recruiting medical personnel to serve as volunteers in the event of a public health emergency. Health professionals interested in helping with a public health emergency response should contact the Oregon Health Authority to learn more.

"Health and medical volunteers are critical to responding to public health emergencies. As previous emergencies have revealed, government agencies alone cannot respond effectively and efficiently to emergencies," O'Connor said. "More than 1,500 people have volunteered to help with public health emergencies in 33 Oregon counties, and our goal is to have health and medical volunteers in all 36 counties."

For more information about preparing for emergencies, visit [healthoregon.org/preparedness](http://healthoregon.org/preparedness). For more information on the State Emergency Registry of Volunteers in Oregon (SERV-OR), please visit the SERV-OR website.

## Power of the People

By W. Marc Farmer, General Manager,  
West Oregon Electric Cooperative



### Energy Efficiency Tips

With the advent of a rate increase starting this month, I wanted to be able to help our members find ways to use energy more efficiently. Knowing that a

lot of our members cannot afford to change the source of heat in their homes and some of the other methods of cutting heating and cooling costs are too expensive; we have compiled a list of less expensive ways to achieve energy efficiency without spending a lot of money. While we are in the business of providing electricity, we want to encourage and assist in the efficient use of it. Using the following energy tips will help you save energy and money throughout the year.

- Lower your thermostat at night and whenever the house is unoccupied. Close off and don't heat unoccupied rooms (unless you have a heat pump).
- Set your thermostat back at night at least 10 degrees.
- Lower the thermostat and dress warmer. As little as 1 to 3 degrees makes a noteworthy difference in energy consumption.
- Lower the temperature on your electric water heater to 120° F.
- Set refrigerator temperatures between 37° and 40° F. Clean the coils, vacuum underneath

and behind the refrigerator and freezer. Keep the refrigerator and freezer stocked; it takes more energy to cool an empty one.

Consider replacing your older model refrigerator, especially if older than 10 years. Older models can often use over 3 times the energy of newer models.

- Wash full loads of dishes and air dry.
- When washing clothes, use warm or cold water and rinse with cold. Air dry clothes whenever possible, but not indoors, as this creates unwanted mold and moisture problems.
- Shut off lights, computers and other electronic appliances when you are not using them. Use a "smart strip" to plug things in and then you can turn them all off at once when you turn off the smart strip. This greatly reduces what is called "phantom power."
- Use a microwave or toaster oven for smaller items.
- Install a low-flow showerhead. Showers use less hot water than baths; also consider taking shorter showers. Install CFL light bulbs or LED lights.
- Close your fireplace damper and seal the opening shut when not in use.
- During the heating season, open south-facing window coverings during the day. Close all window coverings at night to keep the heat in.
- Install foam gaskets behind electric-outlet and switch-plate covers.
- Examine and adjust, if necessary, weather stripping, door sweeps, and thresholds. If unable to replace old doors and windows, try additional caulking and weather stripping. At least put a rolled-up towel in front of a drafty door.

## From the Sheriff's Desk

by Jeff Dickerson,  
Columbia County Sheriff

### Recent telephone scams

The Columbia County Sheriff's Office is reporting a number of fraudulent telephone scams being attempted on county residents in recent weeks. One common scam in recent weeks has been the "grandparent" telephone scam.

In these types of scams, a perpetrator calls a grandparent or other relative pretending to be their grandchild/niece/nephew, etc. The caller sounds upset and says that he or she doesn't have much time to talk. The caller might also say that they have a cold if you don't quite recognize their voice, or they will attempt to solicit feedback from you to sound even more convincing (scam victims often report being asked, "Do you know which grandchild this

is?"). Their story generally follows a familiar line: they were traveling in another country or another state with a friend, and after a car accident or legal infraction, they are in jail and need bail money wired to a Western Union account as soon as possible for their quick release.

Sums can vary from several hundred to several thousand dollars, sometimes over the course of two or three calls. In some instances a second scammer calls back later pretending to be a law enforcement official or attorney, to confirm the story or ask for additional money. They may even claim to be an employee of a U.S. embassy or consulate overseas!

Should you be targeted in this type of scam, there are actions you can take to protect yourself. Although the supposed grandchild may plead with you not to tell their family,

you should immediately reach out to parents or other relatives to verify the information you receive. In the vast majority of cases, the real relative is safely where they should be – at work, school or home.

This scam has been going around the United States in recent years, and we've had a number of calls in recent weeks right here in Columbia County. I want to remind everyone to be very cautious about giving any personal information out by phone, and to be very wary of anyone asking you to send

them money for any reason whatever.

It is not typical for a law enforcement agency to accept money in this fashion in order to bail people out of jail.

## Action Ads

INEXPENSIVE – EFFECTIVE

503-429-9410

**Mariolino's**

**Good Food and  
Air Conditioning**

Try our Breakfast, Lunch  
or Dinner Specials

in Air Conditioned Comfort

721 Madison Ave., Vernonia • 503-429-5018

