

COMMUNITY RECOVERY AND REBUILDING

A Joint Newsletter for the Fire-Affected Community of Southern Oregon



Welcome to the second edition of *Community Recovery and Rebuilding*. This is a newsletter produced jointly by the Jackson County Community LTRG & R3V, two coalitions that include more than 40 agencies, organizations and individuals working to recover from the fires of the past year. Our goal is to keep the fire-affected community up-to-date and share resources available to help with individual and community recovery.

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FEMA Re-engagement planned for July 30-August 2

FEMA is holding in-person hours to meet face-to-face with fire survivors who are still working on proving their eligibility for FEMA assistance or other issues. The event is only for those individuals who have previously registered with FEMA and will take place July 30 through August 2, 2021. Walk-in appointments are available. Hours are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Friday and Monday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, at the Phoenix Civic Center, 200 N. Main Street in Phoenix. To contact FEMA, call their Helpline at 800-621-3362 (TTY: 800-462-7585). Press 2 for a Spanish-speaking representative.

Preparing for the next Wildfire

Are you wondering how to prepare for local disasters? Jackson County has put together a step-by-step guide to help people of all abilities navigate preparedness, which can be found at tinyurl.com/4b8uahm8. You can also sign up for Jackson County Citizen Alert (tinyurl.com/nnzjn9me) and the PulsePoint App (www.pulsepoint.org) to be informed as quickly as possible. If you'd like to learn more about disaster preparation, here's a presentation from the Oregon Office of Emergency Management that goes through the types of hazards, how to plan, resources, and more (<https://vimeo.com/564652611>). In case you or someone you know, such as an elder, might need special help during a disaster, the Rogue Valley Council of Governments started a disaster recovery registry: <https://tinyurl.com/3dkzwn6h>. There's also a presentation on how that works, who's eligible, and how to sign up available here: <https://vimeo.com/564661587>. Pro tip: you can use your phone to create a photo or video inventory of all the belongings in your house to make insurance claims much easier; walk through every room, open up your drawers, and don't forget the closets!

State Legislature Passes Almost \$600m in Wildfire Recovery Funds

The 81st Oregon Legislative session came to a close on Saturday, July 3, and approximately \$588 million was designated for wildfire recovery and prevention efforts throughout the state. \$150 million was allocated for housing development and land acquisition, \$75 million is earmarked to house and care for survivors, with \$10 million more set to support programs to incentivize fire-resistant building practices. A significant share of that money will be funneled to Jackson County, which suffered some of the most devastating impacts in the state. The most notable legislative bills passed address development and rising costs of manufactured homes, ongoing insurance issues, tax relief for those who lost homes in the fire, emergency alerts, mitigating wildfire risk through a wide range of measures, and ensuring public engagement in the process of recovery.

State Representative Pam Marsh, who represents Jackson County and was instrumental in the passage of many of these bills, recently wrote about her take on the legislative efforts. “My personal commitment was to secure relief and resources for the families and communities devastated in the Almeda fire, and to address the underlying issues that are driving high risk wildfire conditions on the ground.”

A link to Representative Marsh’s newsletter to get a more complete picture of how the State voted to allocate funds: tinyurl.com/3y3bwu35



FEMA TRAILERS AT THE TOTEM POLE PARK IN TALENT
-SOURCE: KOB1

State of Oregon Purchases Modular Homes for Jackson County Wildfire Survivors

KTVL recently broke the news that the State of Oregon has committed to purchase a large number of new modular housing units to help permanently house survivors of the Almeda Fire. These stackable 1- and 2- bedroom homes will be manufactured and delivered to Jackson County sites in the fall. All of the units will be transferred to the Housing Authority of Jackson County (which has already received \$15 million from the State for land acquisition and development). Most will be included in an affordable rental development. About a quarter of the homes will likely be made available for purchase through HAJC. This appears to be a promising model and the State is in conversations with other potential partners about similar efforts.

Updates on FEMA’s Direct Housing Mission

As anyone who drives through Talent on Highway 99 can see, FEMA has completed work installing 27 manufactured homes at the Totem Pole Mobile Home Park, and families are already being housed. The devastating West Coast wildfires of this last decade have caused the federal agency to consider new innovations in how its programs support survivors. There are ongoing discussions about how FEMA might be able to support displaced residents in returning to the communities they called home before the fire, as well as considering ways their trailers may be offered for purchase by survivors, though no decision has been made yet.

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“Every day is a difficult situation when you live in these kinds of circumstances,” said Talent Mayor Darby Ayers-Flood. “And when what little you have is ripped away from you, you don’t get back unless your community wraps their arms around you and does everything they can to bring you back.”

FEMA is landing houses at two more parks within the next month. The agency has indicated that 20 more manufactured homes for survivors are set to land at Rogue Valley Mobile Village by July 15, while another 69 manufactured housing units will be completed at Coleman Creek Estates in Phoenix by end of August. A major water line issue has caused delays at Coleman Creek, shifting the move-in date.

Gateway Transitional to Permanent Housing Groundbreaking

The City of Talent and Talent Urban Renewal Agency held a ceremonial groundbreaking for the “Gateway Site” on June 14. The project, at the corner of Highway 99 and W. Valley View Road, will create pads or spaces for 53 RVs, which will house survivors of the Almeda Fire. Priority will be given to families with students enrolled in the Phoenix-Talent School District. The project is financed with a loan from Oregon Housing and Community Services and grants from People’s Bank and from People’s Bank employees. The transitional or interim housing will be managed jointly by the Talent Urban Renewal Agency, Rogue Retreat, and the Phoenix-Talent School District. Construction is underway with a target for completion in early fall. The water and other infrastructure being installed to support interim housing will ultimately be put to use to serve a permanent development on the site.

Disaster Case Manager Jobs are Available

Are you interested in helping people recover from the wildfires? Catholic Charities is hiring Disaster Case Managers for Jackson County. Do you already have experience helping people manage recovery? Catholic Charities is also hiring a Disaster Case Manager Supervisor for Southern Oregon. **If interested, contact Jessica LaBerge, the DCM Regional Program Director at 503-839-7440 or at jlaberge@ccoregon.org. Spanish speakers are especially encouraged to apply.**

R3V Progress Update

After months of building an inclusive coalition of over 100 local leaders, Reimagine and Rebuild Rogue Valley (R3V) has begun to implement its vision for a more inclusive, equitable, and efficient recovery in housing, infrastructure, community building, education, and the economy.

With a generous grant from the Oregon Community Foundation, the group has contracted with a facilitator, Stephen Sloan of the Humane Leadership Institute. In the coming weeks the group will take on projects to bring systematic improvements in the way organizations across all sectors (business, nonprofits, education, healthcare, and government) collaborate on building back better.



LEADERS FROM THE KEY GATEWAY PROJECT PARTNERS, INCLUDING TALENT MAYOR DARBY AYERS-FLOOD, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PHOENIX-TALENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, PEOPLE’S BANK, AND OREGON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, PARTICIPATE IN THE CEREMONIAL GROUNDBREAKING.

Recovery Happens at the Speed of Relationships: Empowering a Community-led Recovery

THE ZONE CAPTAINS PROGRAM IS A PEER-TO-PEER NETWORK EMPOWERING THE VOICES OF FIRE SURVIVORS AND CONNECTING THEM TO RESOURCES. OUR WEEKLY MEETUP CONTINUES TO BE A PLACE FOR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND SHARING FOR SURVIVORS, AS WE BUILD TOWARD A COMMUNITY-LED RECOVERY FOR OUR VALLEY. **MORE INFO IS AVAILABLE AT WWW.ZONECAPTAINS.ORG**

We want to share two recent stories of our "boots on the ground" success.

Zone Captains Provide Priceless Information to a Senior

A 65-year old woman who has had major health challenges owned her home outright in a mobile home park. Because it was an older home, she was insured for its \$30,000 value. Her social security pension paid for all her expenses, and she was set for retirement. After the fire, the owner of her mobile home park required new homes to be installed, which are 5 times the original cost. She cannot afford to rebuild there. This woman is now living in an RV without proper water hookups at her daughter's rental house.

Through her Zone Captain, this woman received information about a forgivable loan program that is now pending which will enable her to bridge the cost between her insurance payout and the cost of a new home. Because of her health challenges, she rarely checks email, and appreciates a direct phone call to get information. The direct, peer-to-peer support of her Zone Captain enabled her to get vital information and start the process to get her back into stable housing.

Your Feedback and Ideas

We want to make this newsletter as useful as possible! If you have links to community resources, wildfire recovery news, other info to share, or questions that you'd like to be answered, please let us know by email at newsletter@jccltrg.org.

Getting a Fire Survivor the Right Resources, at the Right Time

Regina Boykins is a fire survivor and small business owner who lost her shed to fire, and her primary residence was made unlivable by smoke damage. She was uninsured at the time of the fire due to COVID-related financial challenges. Since the fire, she has been living in the back room of her business, without kitchen or bathroom facilities.

The Zone Captains Program connected Regina with Cascade Builders Association (CBA), a non-profit that is helping with small construction & remediation projects for fire survivors. The last time her Zone Captain connected with her, the CBA had done smoke remediation on her mobile home, accessed supplies through Habitat for Humanity, and were scheduling a time to rebuild her shed. Because of her ongoing work with the Zone Captains Program, Regina will be able to move back into her home much sooner than she would have without them!



REGINA BOYKINS CELEBRATES AT HER PROPERTY. SIGN UP AT WWW.ZONECAPTAINS.ORG TO GET IN THE LOOP FOR MEETUPS AND THE LATEST NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SURVIVORS!