



LEPC Local Emergency Planning Committee

Gem County LEPC
June 16, 2020
Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Laurie Boston, Gem Co. EM
Bill Butticci, Gem Co. Commissioner
Elbia Christensen, EOC Logistics
Robert Feeley, IOEM
Tahja Jensen, Prosecutor’s Office
Bev Martin, Sheriff’s Posse
Fire Dist. #2
Gordon Petrie, Emmett City Mayor
Bob Showalter, Boise Co. EM
Rick Welch, Gem Co Fire #1/EMS

Jay Breidenbach, NOAA
Curt Christensen, Emmett Fire
Brian Elliott, Gem Co. Commissioner
Liz Gochnour, LEPC Secretary
Steve Kunka, Emmett Police Department
Dale Mock, Gem Co. Sheriff’s Posse
Steve Nebeker, Emmett City Council
Mark Rekow, Gem Co. Commissioner
Casper Urbanek, Id. Dept. of Lands
Terry Wilson, SWDH

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Gem County Local Emergency Planning Committee is an organized gathering of community members, response agencies, organizations, and public officials, sanctioned by Congress to work together prior to any emergency, natural or man-made disaster, or hazardous material incident, in an attempt to improve planning, response, and coordination as well as the mutual understanding of capabilities and resources to the situation.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Gem County Local Emergency Planning Committee is to enhance capabilities in order to successfully mitigate, respond to, and recover from emergency situations in Gem Co community.

Meeting called to order by Curt Christensen at 8:31 am

Approval of May minutes:

- Motion to approve May minutes as written by Gordon Petrie. 2nd by Rick Welch.

Presentation: Gem County Fire Season Outlook – Casper Urbanek, Fire Warden, Idaho Dept. of Lands:

- Casper has been with the Idaho Department of Lands for six years and has been in Fire for thirty-six years.
- The Southwest Idaho fire district that Casper manages is four thousand acres. There are about nineteen firefighters, including himself. They make up four crews.
- Maintaining social distancing for COVID has been a challenge. They do not have enough engines for each person so they do have people in vehicles. This may result in restricting the number of people and resources they send to fires. One firefighter recently had a fever and as a result, the entire team had to stay home until his test result came back due to his contact with the whole force. His test came back negative.
- Here is the link to the “Seasonal Outlook–June through September 2020”:
<https://gacc.nifc.gov/gbcc/outlooks.php>
- There has been more rain early in the season which is growing more lighter fuel for fires later. The snow pack has been decreasing exponentially and will not postpone the fire season.
- They are preparing for the worst due to having a more mundane season last year and with the social distancing restrictions.

- Boise County will have a burn ban in effect from July 1st until either October 20th or before if agreed upon by County officials. A copy of Boise County's Fire Dispatch Protocols has been attached for review.
- Bob Showalter, Boise County Emergency Manager: On an annual basis they have a Boise County Inter-agency exercise to practice those protocols. (Due to COVID, they were unable to hold this exercise this year.) The Federal Forest Service, Idaho Department of Lands, area Fire Departments, and State Communications participate.
- At this time things are changing week to week in regards to assistance on fires from out of state. Alaska has sent a notice that crews will need to be quarantined for a week prior to going into Alaska. They are being told that they cannot rely on their State to State agreements. They are training two National Guard hand crews. A hand crew is about twenty people. They will wait to see how things work out when the first fires start to occur.
- Quincy Chung with the US National Forest provided information for Laurie to share in the meeting. He stated that all crews are ready for the 2020 fire season. The contract for the helicopter in Garden Valley started on June 14th and will be ready on June 16th. Quincy has accepted the Fire Management Officer position. Alaska and the Southwest are increasing in fire activity as of June 9th. The Emmett Fire Service Office is looking at Phase 1 opening around June 15th. They still need regional approval to move through the phases. Messages are being returned daily.
- Rob Feeley, Idaho Office of Emergency Management Area Field Officer: Rob took over for Dale Nalder, who retired at the end of May. He shares coverage of the area with Heidi Novich. He was been with IOEM for about 14 years and before that worked with wild-land fire. IOEM is not a fire suppressant agency, but they are here to support the land management agencies. They have two tools to help when fires do get bad. They are the State Disaster Declaration from the Governor at the request from a County and a Fire Management Assistance grant through FEMA. The State Disaster Declaration is a 50/50 cost share of resource shortfalls. The Fire Management Assistance grant can be requested from IOEM to the FEMA Region 10 Administrator outside of Seattle. If granted, Federal funding will cover 75% with the State covering an additional 15% of reimbursement of resources used from the point of a Disaster Declaration forward.
- Jay Breidenbach, NOAA: The National Weather Service will be working with the wild-land agencies this summer by running a fire weather support desk. They will issue a fire weather watch 48hrs before conditions get conducive for fire or for dry lightning.

COVID-19 Update: Laurie Boston: Gem County is at 13 confirmed and 4 probably. All 17 have recovered. Other counties around the state have become hot spots. Ada County has had over 50 new cases in the last two days. Asymptomatic testing is going to start per the Governor. At the time of this meeting Valor Health had planned to close their testing tent to transition into a waiting room, but has kept the testing tent open to continue screening and testing. Central District Health announced that a cluster of 10, 5 confirmed and 5 probable, went around to Downtown Boise bars. The Ada County YMCA was shut down overnight to sanitize after a member tested positive. Protocols are available for long term care facilities, night clubs, and employees of at-risk people. There have been changes to restaurant protocols. Those that are serving the public should wear masks and gloves.

Terry Wilson: Over the weekend, SWDH had 8 new confirmed cases. 1 in Adams, 2 in Canyon, and 5 in Washington Counties. They are paying more attention to assisted living facilities. At this time SWDH has put in close to 12,000 hours for COVID. They are starting to see an increase in cases due to more testing

availability and more people congregating as things open back up. (All numbers given were as of 6/16/2020)

Public Comments:

- No public comments at this time.

General Reports:

Mayor Petrie, Emmett City: Business is being conducted through the little window at City Hall. They are looking at installing a plexi-glass barrier in the City Clerk's office. Most people are still doing business on-line for payments. There was a great Flag Day ceremony at Bowman Park on June 14th.

Steve Kunka, Emmett City Police: Calls have been up about suspicious prowler activity. An arrest has been made over the weekend. City Officials have met with the Lions Club regarding the Show and Shine and Cruise Night. They were given a list of tasks to complete in order to hold the event on Sat. July 18th at the City Park. They met with CJ from SWDH to get guidance regarding CDC guidelines and they need to get approval from ITD for the use of Washington Ave.

Curt Christensen, Emmett City Fire: Fire is up and running again with smoke alarm installs within City limits. Smoke alarms that are over 10 years old need to be replaced. Information about a car seat installation clinic next month will be going out. They had a wonderful visit from the Idaho State Rating Board. City Fire has been looking around town doing pre-planning for building hazards.

Mark Rekow, Gem Co. Commissioner: The county has hired a new IT Director. Robert McCracken has been hired to replace retiring Wade Ray. They are working on budgets with concerns about COVID expenses and revenue sharing. There were a couple of land use matters that were handled virtually. There is a quite a back log from things being in a holding pattern.

Rick Welch, Gem Co. Fire/EMS: EMS calls in May were down, but calls in June so far have been higher than they have been in past years. They are only using full PPE for positive screening questions or intubations. Fire will be enacting a burn ban from July 1st through September 15th. They completed their Wild-land refresher practice while observing social distancing. Temperatures are being taken before crews go out.

Bev Martin, Gem Co. Sheriff's Posse/Fire #2: Sheriff's Posse training will be starting again. Members have volunteered to help with parking during the fireworks on the 4th of July. Fire #2 has extended their burn from July 1st to October 20th. They had assistance from Fire #1 on a structure fire that threatened three houses. Due to a restart of the fire, the State Fire Marshall had to come out to investigate.

Rob Feeley, IOEM: PPE distribution has slowed down a little bit. The supply chain seems to have caught up to demand. There are still requests coming in from organizations with needs and are being supplied as they come in. FEMA has declared COVID a major disaster. Some of the costs related to COVID that are eligible for funding reimbursement are cleaning supplies and PPE. IOEM is available to help with questions related to filing a claim.

Terry "TJ" Wilson, SWDH: They are starting to see a spike in COVID cases. There has been more testing and more people out in the public. Keep taking precautions: wash your hands, social distance, wear a mask, etc. when out in public. There have been 17 plans reviewed from food establishments in Gem County. They have been working on plans for the 4th of July and other events involving large crowds. PPE and hand sanitizer requests are being given out. SWDH has been training their medical reserve core and other staff on contact tracing if the cases continue to rise and contact tracing is needed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 am by Curt Christensen.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 21st at 8:30 am. Direction will be provided at a later date on whether the meeting will be in person or remote.