



LEPC Local Emergency Planning Committee

Gem County LEPC
September 15th, 2020
Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

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| Laurie Boston, Gem Co. EM | Jay Breidenbach, Natl Weather Svc |
| John Bumgardner, Natl Weather Svc | Curt Christensen, Emmett Fire Dept. |
| Elbia Christensen, EOC Logistics | Bryan Elliott, Gem Co. Commissioner |
| Liz Gochnour, LEPC Secretary | Tahja Jensen, Prosecutor’s Office |
| Steve Kunka, Emmett Police | Bev Martin, Sheriff’s Posse/Fire Dist. #2 |
| Heidi Novich, ID Office of EM | Gordon Petrie, Emmett City Mayor |
| Mark Rekow, Gem Co. Commissioner | Denise Sorensen, Emmett City Councilman |
| Brad Turpin, Valor Health | Terry Wilson, Southwest Dist. Health |

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 8:30a.m.

Approval of August minutes:

- Motion to approve August minutes after grammatical errors are corrected by Mayor Petrie. Second by Bev Martin.

Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador Program – John Bumgardner and Jay Breidenbach, NWS-Boise:

- John is a Meteorology student at Ohio State University in his Senior year, graduating in December. He worked with the National Weather Service (NWS) over the summer to expand the Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador Program.
- The Ambassador program was initiated in 2011. There was a significant tornado event over three days effecting mostly the Southern States. Two hundred tornados touched down in one day. The goal of the NWS up until that point was to try to get as much warning out to the community as possible. After hearing stories about people dying and loss of property during the event, the NWS realized that even with warning the community did not know how to prepare for significant weather events.
- NWS partners with organizations to help educate on areas of: Risk Perception, Perception of Action Effectiveness, and Educate to Prepare. The Hazards and Climate Resilience Institute (HCRI) at Boise State University is one of those partners. They held a workshop about how wildfires spread and provided education about how to create less fuel around a house in case of a fire.
- Ambassadors can help by distributing or posting education materials about local risks such as: flooding, micro-bursts, lightning, wildfires, etc. NWS periodically sends a newsletter to the ambassadors and there are resourced available on the HCRI and NWS websites.
- Here is the website to sign up to become an ambassador: <https://www.weather.gov/wrn/ambassadors>

- John's email is john.bumgardner@noaa.gov if you have any questions.
- See the attached for more information.

COVID-19 Update:

- **Laurie Boston, Gem County Emergency Management:** Gem County is at 265 cases. There has been an upswing in the last couple of weeks with 23 new cases since last Monday. SWDH is reporting that 181 have recovered. There was a cluster at one of the local boarding schools with at least 46 cases. SWDH will not be including this cluster to determine the alert level for Gem County since it is self-contained. Although staff that works at the school are part of the community. They are working on an MOU with SWDH for closed PODS to distribute the vaccine to 1st responders when it is available.
- **Terry Wilson, Southwest District Health Department:** SWDH is working with Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and Emergency Managers for when the vaccine is available. They are also working on the upcoming flu season. Keep washing hands and taking precautions.

Public Comments: No public comments at this time.

General Reports:

- **Brad Turpin, Valor Health:** Valor Health continues to run Incident Command in response to COVID-19. They are having weekly meetings. Testing capabilities and PPE are doing fine. They are monitoring staff for burnout. Testing results over the last 30 days is still showing a positivity rate of over 10%. They have remained in Stage 2 on campus for their visitor policy and universal masking policy. They are starting a campaign for flu vaccines and how to care for patients with strep and flu.
- **Mayor Petrie, City of Emmett:** The City continues to wash hands and maintain social distancing. More projects are going ahead due to the hard work of City Officials applying for grants and recognizing the growth within the City.
- **Curt Christensen, City Fire:** The air quality is in the Red category, so they are going to recommend that the bonfire be postponed. On the State level resources are very low for responding to a wildfire. Several agencies have resources assisting agencies in other states. The Woodhead fire is at 75,000 acres and is expected to be contained around October 7th. The fire department will be building a training facility at the Wastewater Treatment Plant which has been funded by grant dollars. A new command vehicle has also been obtained and was funded by California deployment dollars.
- **Laurie Boston, Gem County Emergency Manager:** Laurie has been working on the 2020 SHSP Grant through IOEM and has met the deadline.
- **Tahja Jensen, Gem County:** The Idaho Supreme Court has lessened the restrictions with jury trials. They will be working through the backlog of cases with limited jury selection and significant COVID screening.
- **Bev Martin, Fire District #2/Sheriff's Posse/Ola Community:** Fire #2 is back to it's normal training schedule with equipment ready. The board has reviewed their mutual aid agreement with their joint counties. The Sheriff's Posse has resumed their meetings in person. Chief Marci DeWitt will be stepping down to move back to Wyoming at the end of September. Jennifer Harlin will be Acting Chief for the rest of the year. The Ola Community Center is still being used as the school. The heat pump and the AC coil was replaced last week and the test hole was dug and tested Yesterday at the expense of the community. They are waiting on the school district to start the phased construction plan with the grant funds.
- **Heidi Novich, Idaho Office of Emergency Management:** There have been reports of out of state individuals dry camping in areas around the fairgrounds due to wild land fires. If you notice anyone camping in areas where it is not permitted, please contact the IOEM.

- **Jay Breidenbach, Nation Weather Service:** No change to the current weather pattern at least through Thursday. It will be smoky and dry with temperatures in the low 80's. There will be a front coming through later in the week, but not much rain. Long range models show possible rain at the end of the month. An Ambassador's note was sent out earlier in the year about the hazards of poor air quality due to fire smoke.

Meeting adjourned at 9:22 am. Mayor Petrie moved to adjourn. Bev Martin seconded the motion.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20th at 8:30 am. Direction will be provided at a later date on whether the meeting will be in person or remote.