



Gem County LEPC  
February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023  
Meeting Minutes

**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.

**In Attendance:**

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| Liz Bolts, American Red Cross   | Taylor Campbell, Idaho Power   |
| Curt Christensen, Emmett Fire Dist.                                       | Mike Darling, Emmett Police Dept.  |
| Rob Feeley, Idaho Office of EM  | Liz Gochnour, LEPC Secretary   |
| Del Gray, Messenger Index   | Tahja Jensen, Gem Co. Prosecutor   |
| Walter Jukes, Emmett Stake Church<br>Of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints | Jennifer Kharrl, Development Services  |
| Troy Lindquist, National Weather<br>Service                               | Steve Kunka, Emmett Police Dept.   |
| Joe Mayer, Member of the Public   | Bev Martin, Gem Co. Sheriff's Posse/<br>Fire Dist. #2                        |
| Dena McFarlin, Idaho Power  | Len McCaulou, Gem Co. EMS  |
| Margaret Romiti, Valor Health   | Mark Rekow, Gem Co. Commissioners  |
| Dave Timony, Gem Co. Sherriff   | Molly Smith, Southwest Dist. Health  |
| Lynsie Vickery, Emmett Fire Dist.   | Jeff Ulmer, Gem Co. Emergency Mgr.   |
| Barbara Weber, American Red Cross   | Trudy Wadsworth, Emmett Stake Church of<br>Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints |
| Mike Welch, Gem Co. Fire/EMS  | Robert Welling, Member of the Public   |
| Kirk Wille, Gem Co. Commissioners   | TJ Wilson, Southwest Dist. Health  |

**Meeting called to order by Dave Timony at 8:30a.m.**

**Approval of January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Minutes:**

- Motion to approve January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022 minutes by Len McCaulou. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jeff Ulmer. Motion passes, minutes approved.

**Troy Lindquist, NOAA, Payette River Flood Risk Probabilities:**

- Current Conditions: October started out warm and dry, below 50% of precipitation. November had a little bit more precipitation. December had a more favorable storm track with normal precipitation. January brought close to normal precipitation. So far for February we are close to normal. Looking at the weather year as a whole we are mostly a little below to close to normal. The Payette River Basin is sitting at 93% of normal. There is an estimate of 20-30 inches of water equivalent. Reservoir Content is running a little below average at 59%. Drought conditions are in the abnormally dry category with some improvement since summer. Soil moisture is showing below average, measuring the top 1 meter of soil. Water supply forecast for April through September is at 89%.
- Spring Flood Potential Considerations: Soil moisture – Saturated soil leads to more runoff. Frost depth – Deep frozen soil leads to greater runoff. Base River Flow – Where are we starting from? Are running normal or below normal? Snowpack/SWE – The amount of snow and how much water is there? Spring Weather – Weather factors can increase/decrease runoff. Spring Precipitation – Generally the biggest wild

card and can have the greatest effect on flood intensity. Reservoir Levels – How full the reservoirs are can effect the flooding potential.

- River Information – Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service: Forecast points are green dots. Hydrograph for the location. Flood stages – Historical Crests information is available. Flood impacts – What will happen when the river hits flooding stages at each stage. Probability of flooding – 10 Day River Level Probabilities.
- Forecast – Next 7 Days: 5 days – cold front moving through with chances of snow. Below normal temperatures for the rest of February into March and normal precipitation.
- Spring Outlook: March, April, May – Equal chances of below normal, normal, or above normal temperatures and precipitation.
- Website information: <https://www.weather.gov/boi>
- TJ Wilson: Will some of the drought areas have relief with the precipitation? Troy: There has been some improvement since October. It depends on what the snow pack does.

### **Lynsie Vickery, Emmett Fire & Region 3 Hazmat Response Team, Hazmat Report (New Meadows Propane Tank Accident Incident Report):**

- Incident occurred from February 9<sup>th</sup> at approx. 10am – February 11<sup>th</sup> at approx. 10am.
- Scene - A propane transport headed South down Highway 95 ran off the right shoulder of the road and into a drainage area. The propane trailer was drug against the rock wall during the wreck. The tractor came to rest on its side, facing North still connected to the trailer. The trailer came to rest on its right side. 4 bolts were sheared off the manhole cover at the top of the trailer and there was also a rupture at the cover. Liquid and vapor propane were both leaking from the cover.
- Valve access was at the bottom behind the trailer. The valves were controlled pneumatically and there was a vapor cloud that was developing as it was leaking. There was no way to access the leak. The driver was able to crawl out of the cab, which was under the tank.
- Immediately following the wreck, the Highway was closed and a State Comm call was made to gather resources. State Comm dispatched Region 3 at around 11am and they arrived at about 2:30 pm. This was considered a major spill and an evacuation of a 1-mile radius was established. Entry onto the scene was at about 12:30 am due to accessing the scene and gathering necessary equipment.
- It was decided to off-load the propane due to the risk of sparking the propane while trying to right the tank. Transferring became an issue due to liability of ownership of the tank. They decided to flare or burn the vapor and liquid propane.
- Burning went on throughout the night using battery powered fans to help control the direction of the flames. Once the level of propane was down, they were able to right the tank. At that point Idaho Power was called into shut down power due to the wreck being located under power lines. Once upright again, using fans and water to assist, they were able to start flaring liquid rather than vapor.
- This was the longest call that anyone has been on scene at, about 50 hrs. Going forward, there will be talk about switching crews out. It took about 15 hours of flaring to get the levels down before it was safe to continue with the wreckage.
- This is relevant to us due to the Highway running through town and the big tankers driving through. Knowing the local resources are huge in incidents like this.
- A big thing that could have improved the situation would have been setting up an EOC and having a PIO to provide information. I think a lot of people were relying on Facebook posts from the Highway District and it was causing a lot of people to become anxious.
- Barbara Weber: It sounds like there were no situations where residents were displaced from their homes overnight. Lynsie: The Highway was closed for around 50 hours so people within the 1-mile zone were

unable to return to their homes. Being on-scene, I was not able to experience that response, but Red Cross would have been a great avenue. Barbara: If we have something significant like that Red Cross would definitely be able to help with sheltering and feeding.

### **Chief Christensen, LEPC Meeting Plans:**

- Jeff and I were talking about how we can incorporate trainings into the LEPC meetings a few times a year. For example, when State Comm came for their presentation we could have done a walk through a call to State Comm and have our elected officials observe. On the next meeting we could do a training and delegate different tasks to different agencies. At some point, we may go into executive session for some of these because we would not want to share some processes or responses with the public. Communicate any concerns or objections to Curt.

### **Public Comments:**

- No public comments.

### **General Reports:**

- **TJ Wilson, Southwest District Health:** Flu/RSV numbers have gone down. There have been some spikes in the COVID response and we are monitoring that. There was one school that shut down and had to do some remote teaching.
- **Rob Feeley, Idaho Office of Emergency Management:** A response to an incident like they had in New Meadows can be costly. There is a cost recovery mechanism in the State Hazmat plan that IOEM administers.
- **Bev Martin, Gem County Fire District #2/Sherriff's Posse:** Fire #2 responded to a house fire that was caused due to thawing out water pipes. The fire spread from the siding to an inner wall causing a total loss to the structure. Thank you to all those that attended the Sweethearts dinner that benefited the library in Ola. Two vehicles have had to be pulled out of snow drifts in the upper country. There will be an ISSAR (Idaho State Search and Rescue) conference in Emmett at the Fairgrounds on June 24<sup>th</sup>. I will share more information at a future meeting.
- **Jeff Ulmer, Gem County Emergency Management:** Executive Emergency Management Response for Elected Officials will be held February 28<sup>th</sup>. There will be a tabletop exercise with Valor Health on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Jeff will attend a tabletop with Idaho Power in Canyon County on March 8<sup>th</sup>.
- **Chief Welch, Gem County Fire District #1:** Fire #1 responded to 16 fire calls this last month. They are making preparations for wildland fire season.
- **Len McCaulou, Gem County EMS:** They are looking forward to the tabletop exercise with Valor Health on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Those individuals attending the EMT class should be licensed around April.
- **Dave Timony, Gem County Sherriff's Department:** They have increased their patrols along Highway 16 trying to reduce accidents. They are also trying to mitigate some of the traffic to the high country and people getting stuck.
- **Chief Christensen, City of Emmett Fire:** Four people attended the Southern Idaho Fire Academy. One person took Inspection Principals and became certified to do inspections. They now have four people that can do inspections inside the city. Their prevention program is lowering the amount of call they have been receiving. They attended the lockdown at Carberry Elementary which was impressive to see how they lowered the impact and encouraged the students. Mike and Anne Gagliano presented "Go or No Go", "This House Rocks" and spoke about Firefighter marriage in Weiser. Great connections were made during that event. Fire Marshall, Knute Sandall, has been working on a communication plan with neighboring departments. Later this week they were be doing 4, 90-minute presentations at the High School.

- **Chief Kunka, Emmett Police Department:** The Health Coalition assisted with a 2020 traffic survey and during the Cherry Festival they created curb extensions and a temporary midway extension on McKinley and Johns. They took the survey to Public Works and the Road Department. It was decided to add a rapid flasher at that midway crosswalk to make pedestrians more visible to traffic. The rapid flasher has been ordered and they hope to have it installed before Cherry Festival.
- **Margaret Romiti, Valor Health:** They are looking forward to the upcoming training on March 1<sup>st</sup>. In January there was a training about triage/transportation with Charge Nurses. They will now be focusing on the PIO function during an incident.
- **Dena McFarlin, Idaho Power:** There was recently a proactive power shutoff that lasted several hours. Taylor Campbell does an outage preparedness presentation that she is available to do if anyone is interested. Please reach out to get scheduled.

Motion to adjourn by Chief Christensen. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Len McCaulou.

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 a.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 8:30 a.m. We will be meeting in person, and via zoom. Please see reminder email for more detailed direction.