



Gem County LEPC  
June 20<sup>th</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:**

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Bill Buttici, Gem Co. Commissioners | Curt Christensen, Emmett Fire Dist.                             |
| Melanie Chroninger, SW Dist. Health | Quincy Chung, US Forest Service                                 |
| Liz Gochnour, LEPC Secretary        | Tahja Jensen, Gem Co. Prosecutor                                |
| Steve Kunka, Emmett Police Dept.    | Bev Martin, Gem Co. Fire #2/Sheriff's                           |
| Joe Mayer, Member of the Public     | Posse/Ola Community   |
| Len McCaulou, Gem Co. EMS           | Janet Monti, Emmett Friendship Coalition/<br>Health Connections |
| Heidi Novich, IOEM                  | Margaret Romiti, Valor Health                                   |
| Mark Rekow, Gem Co. Commissioners   | Jeff Ulmer, Gem Co. Emergency Mgr.                              |
| Dave Timony, Gem Co. Sherriff       | Trudy Wadsworth, Church of Jesus                                |
| John Wallace, US Forest Service     | Christ of Latter-Day Saints                                     |
| Mike Welch, Gem Co. Fire/EMS        | TJ Wilson, Southwest Dist. Health                               |
| Kirk Wille, Gem Co. Commissioners   |   |

**Meeting called to order by Chief Christensen at 8:33a.m.**

**Approval of May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Minutes:**

- Motion to approve May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 minutes by TJ Wilson. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dave Timony. Motion passes, minutes approved.

**Gem Community Health Coalition: Melanie Chroninger, MPH, Southwest District Health, Health Coalition Co-Facilitator, Health Education Specialist, Sr.:**

- The Gem Community Health Coalition brings key stakeholders in the community together to help move the community forward through projects, grants, working together, etc. The mission of the Health Coalition is: Identify needs, share resources, and work together to improve the health of people living, working, and playing in the Gem Community. Vision is a vibrant community focused on healthy behaviors. The three priority areas are: access to mental health services, safe and active community, and food security.
- Some of the current members include Valor Health, Emmett Schools, Emmett PD, Gem Co Fire/EMS, Friendship Coalition, etc.
- One of the successes for the group was that they created a community resources guide. It is posted on several local websites and can be accessed by searching "Gem County resource guide". Here are a few links: [Gem County Resource Guide PDF Version Revised April 2023.pdf \(revize.com\)](#), [Gem-Community-Resource-Final.pdf \(valorhealth.org\)](#), and [Community Resource Guide - Emmett Connections](#).
- Melanie was able to write and was awarded a grant available through Partnerships for Success. This grant was to be used for an environmental change project to reduce substance use. The Coalition identified the Emmett City Park as a park that needed lighting or signage. With the grant they were able to add lighting throughout the park, a camera to the bandstand area, and signage.

- The group is brainstorming ideas about how to change the health of Gem County in five years, ten years, etc.
- If you would like more information or would like to join, contact by email [gemcommunityhealth@gmail.com](mailto:gemcommunityhealth@gmail.com).
- Melanie is also the Drug Overdose Prevention Coordinator for Southwest District Health. Fentanyl is being put into a lot of other drugs that are not illegal and is now affecting more than drug users. Some of these drugs are being purchased over the internet as low-cost alternatives for higher-priced prescriptions. For those that do not have an opioid tolerance, one pill can kill.
- A few trainings that are offered are: Community Partner Naloxone (Narcan) Training and Opioid Prevention and Response Training. Things that are covered include: Fentanyl trends in the community, safe storage, safe disposal, and the actual hands-on response. Melanie is also doing Fentanyl awareness events with the public to talk about trends with the community.
- Chief Kunka: Can anyone become a member of the Health Coalition? Melanie: Yes. At this time there is no formal membership process. We are always looking for members. We meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month from 1-2 pm. They meet at the Southwest District Health building in Emmett or there is a Teams meeting link to attend remotely.
- Joe: You were talking about some over the counter medications with Fentanyl. Melanie: Not over the counter medications. Fentanyl is being put into pills that look like prescription medication. Unless you get your prescriptions from a pharmacy there is no telling what you are getting. The DEA said the #1 dealer of illegal Fentanyl is the USPS, unknowingly. TJ: There is a lot of medications that can be purchased online from social media ads. People are mail-ordering medications trying to save money on prescription costs not knowing where they are really coming from.
- One of the other projects that Melanie is working on is an OD Map, an overdose detection mapping program. It looks at trends with EMS and Narcan use. It is HIPPA compliant, no patient information is used.
- Jeff: Do you have a picture of where you are headed in the future with the Gem community and the Health Coalition? Melanie: We just finished two huge projects that were successful, and we do want to vision cast where we see Gem County in five to ten years. One of the next big projects we will be working on is River Safety.

### **Public Comments:**

- No public comments.

### **General Reports:**

- **Quincy Chung & John Wallace, US Forest Service:** The Forest Service had a great spring for prescribed fires. Around two hundred acres around the Sage Hen area and just under one thousand acres around the Boise County, Garden Valley, Crouch area were burned. In about an eleven or twelve-day span, eleven different burns were done from Cascade, Idaho City, Lowman, and into the Emmett Ranger district. They are planning community meetings to education the public about prescribed burns and the purpose of them. Fire season has been delayed due to the colder weather across the U.S. There have been some fires in Canada. There has been an increase in visitor usage in the forests with huge issue of overstay limits. They may be asking for assistance from law-enforcement to evict some of the individuals.
- **Gem County Commissioners:** Thank you for everyone that was involved in YAD, especially the Sheriff's department. Their biggest challenge right now with the Road Department are wash-outs after the rainstorms taking out the roads. Work on Toms Cabin Rd. is complete and is open after straightening and adding a bridge. During Cherry Festival there was a night of lightning strikes. Dispatch was affected and due to the upgrade with the UPS system, it came right back on as expected. They are in the middle of budgeting. The new comp plans are up and active.
- **Chief Christensen, City of Emmett Fire:** They are trying to get more smoke detectors after doing hundreds of installations. They are following the Boise River trends as an indication of when to take down the river safety sign in front of the station. Intermountain Gas came out and did a three-hour

training with tips about home safety and provided some information about potential causes of CO2 gases in the home. There was a Chat with the Chiefs event with the community at Black Canyon Brewery. Chief Kunka and Chief Christensen focused on calls to the police department, community resiliency, and available resources. They explained that people need to call Gem County Dispatch not the City of Emmett Police Department and how the two work together. They also talked about the partnership between City Fire and County Fire. This is the second year in a row we have had a propane issue at the Cherry Festival with a vendor. There was a failed valve on one of the tanks and 50lbs of propane had to be dispelled over about three hours outside of town.

- **Dave Timony, Gem County Sheriff:** The Sheriff's department have been responding to shared water usage calls. They have increased patrols and are working on education for alcohol consumption while on the water in preparation for the Fourth of July.
- **Jeff Ulmer, Gem County Emergency Management:** He has been monitoring the river levels, which are currently under five feet. It needs to reach ten and a half feet for action. He will be speaking at the Idaho Search and Rescue conference.
- **Chief Welch, Gem County Fire Dist. #1:** They had 27 calls last month for service with the majority being car accidents. They are working on training more staff on car extrication. The burn ban will be in effect from July 1<sup>st</sup> – September 15<sup>th</sup> in Gem County. A house was donated for a live fire training that will be done on Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup>.
- **Len McCaulou, Gem County EMS:** They had close to 200 calls last month with an increase on double up calls involving both crews. Transfers from Valor Health have increased over the past several months. They received their SimMan with a grant from the Western Idaho Coalition for training. This will increase the advanced skills that can be learned and the trainings that can be done within their facility. They plan on inviting Valor Health and other agencies within the community to trainings.
- **TJ Wilson, Southwest District Health:** We are into the 100 days of summer. They are working on river and canal safety. They had their first case of West Nile reported not too long ago. SWDH is also keep track of algae blooms. Contact TJ or Molly Smith if you would like trainings for Stop the Bleed, CPR, or Medical Reserve Corp training.
- **Margaret Romiti, Valor Health:** There was a recent table-top exercise on pediatric burn surg and some of the gaps they identified were that the clinics do not get called and having a family notification plan. There will be an exercise in the fall with the Western Idaho Coalition. It will be a full-scale exercise about a utility outage. She will be reaching out to people about participation.
- **Chief Kunka, City of Emmett Police:** They held an ALERT training that certified six people from City Police, Gem County Sheriff, and Gem County Fire/EMS. They are now instructors and can train their own departments.
- **Bev Martin, Gem County Fire Dist. #2/Sheriff's Posse:** Sheriff's Posse will be sponsoring an Idaho State Search and Rescue Conference on Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup> at the Fairgrounds. There is a \$10 registration fee that includes dinner. Classes include Man Tracking, CPR, and Stop the Bleed. Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue, Civil Air Patrol, and Idaho Trails Association will all be doing training and presentations. Fire District #2 responded to one lightning strike fire and found two lightning struck trees.
- **Heidi Novich, Idaho Office of Emergency Management:** Declaring state disasters on damage from storm events can get a little tricky. The State will only support a cost share on paying for emergency protective measures. They will not support permanent work.

Motion to adjourn by TJ Wilson. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Len McCaulou. Motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:41 a.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 18<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. We will be meeting in person, and via zoom. Please see reminder email for more detailed direction.