President Trump Invites Commissioner Freeman to Washington D.C.

Douglas County Commissioner, Tim Freeman was amongst a group of individuals who were honored to be invited to the White House on Monday, July 8, 2019, by President Donald Trump to attend a speech on "America’s Environmental Leadership."

“This invitation was quite the honor to receive, and I was excited to represent Douglas County, as well as O&C Counties to continue to help educate individuals at the Federal level of the issues we face here in the West,” commented Commissioner Freeman.

Commissioner Freeman believes his invite was due in part to his unrelenting commitment over the years to help protect the O&C Forest land and the varied habitat that includes fish, wildlife, and the economy in Southern Oregon, an issue that we and all of Oregon struggle to combat. Additionally, Commissioner Freeman had the opportunity to meet several cabinet members, including the new Secretary of the Interior, David Bernhardt. As President of O&C Counties, Commissioner Freeman was grateful the new Secretary was familiar with the O&C Timber issue, and that Secretary Bernhardt expressed his renewed commitment to working with O&C Counties to find a better management solution for O&C Timber Lands.

This trip comes just a few months after Commissioner Freeman was in Washington D.C., with the Oregon Governor touring the O&C board of county offices to talk to officials about O&C Timber Management, and move the dial to better forest management on O&C Lands.

President Trump Approves a Second Disaster Declaration for Douglas County

The Douglas County Commissioners are pleased that President Trump has approved a Federal Disaster Declaration for Oregon, for the “April Storm Incident.” The declaration will make Federal disaster assistance available to Oregon households, businesses, and local governments affected by the severe storms and flooding that occurred on April 16 - 21, 2019. After receiving disaster declarations from Commissioners in each of the six affected counties, the state declared a State of Emergency on March 29, 2019, and FEMA districts working with the Oregon Office of Emergency Management submitted a request for a Federal Disaster Declaration to President Trump. Douglas County is among the six counties named in the April declaration, along with Curry, Grant, Linn, Umatilla and Wheeler counties. The President’s action, now goes to the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) for review.

This is marks the second Federal disaster declaration for Douglas County in 2019, as the April declaration follows in the wake of the February declaration that was approved by President Trump in early May. The February Federal Disaster Declaration for Oregon was issued in response to severe storms in Curry, Douglas, Jefferson and Lane counties. Those counties were devastated by the ‘February Severe Winter Storm Incident’ that resulted in county-wide power outages, landslides, mudslides and caused trees to buckle and create massive amounts of timber debris between February 23 and February 28, 2019.

The process to apply for reimbursement of disaster expenses from FEMA is incredibly daunting. County Emergency Managers, like our Emergency Manager, Wayne Stanway, must coordinate with federal and state officials to verify and submit all submitted data and continue to follow up throughout the process in order to be eligible for possible disaster reimbursement from FEMA. Each disaster incident must be declared separately, and must meet and pass a series of very specific criteria. For example, there are predetermined expense thresholds that the state must meet to move to the federal level. Maine, for example, had to reach a per incident expense threshold of $450,000 (An amount that is adjusted yearly by FEMA and based on a per capita formula), and receive a disaster declaration from the County Commissioners in order to submit to the state level for an emergency declaration. Then, the State must meet a per incident expense threshold of $5.7 million in order to submit to the federal level for an emergency declaration. Next, the President has to approve the Federal Disaster Declaration for each specific incident. Once the order is signed, FEMA will assign a Federal Coordinating Officer to oversee the federal recovery operations in the affected areas. At that point, FEMA will conduct a complete assessment, coordinate trainings and schedule onsite meetings directly with applicants to go through their applications line-by-line and determine the eligibility for reimbursement of expenses. The process time line is entirely up to FEMA, and can take 8 months to a year or longer to be finalized. Additionally, because of the approved federal declaration, funding could also be made available on a cost-sharing basis for future hazard mitigation measures.

Douglas County listed an initial placeholder of $781,000 in estimated expenses on their disaster application for “April Storm Incident.” According to the National Weather Service, Douglas County received more than 3 inches of rain in the 72-hour window, that resulted in flooding, road closures and large amounts of debris being washed into rivers and lakes. It is believed that the already oversaturated ground contributed to landslides, mudslides and flooding, in addition to the damage caused by the April Storm Incident. The declaration will clear the way for review of those expenses, and hopefully provide some reimbursement of county funds already spent for the April disaster recovery.

"We are grateful to the President for the approval of both declarations. It is important to remember that during an emergency the County responds, regardless if it is going to be a FEMA reimbursable event. The most important thing is to take care of our citizens during these emergency events, that is the fundamental responsibility of County government. Please note that this is not additional funding coming into Douglas County. This is the opportunity for the affected counties to be able to recoup some of the expenses incurred from the recent storms." Commissioner Tim Freeman said.
Mammoth 50th Anniversary Celebration

The Douglas County Museum is turning 50 and to celebrate they are hosting a free ‘Mammoth 50th Anniversary’ celebration on Saturday, July 20, 2019.

The ‘FREE’ family friendly ‘Mammoth 50th Anniversary’ event will take place from 2:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the Douglas County Museum grounds and will be filled with tons of kid’s activities, games, face painting, booths, food trucks, libations and live music. Plus, the Douglas County Museum will be open and free to ALL visitors that day. Event highlights include live musical performances by Dan Harmon and Cascade County at 3:00 pm, TY Curtis at 5:00 pm and Phil’s Icicle, A Journey Tribute at 7:00 pm.

The Douglas County Museum was established by the Douglas County Board of Commissioners in 1969 and opened its doors for the first time in August that year, in conjunction with the opening day of the 1969 Douglas County Fair.

Our museum is the 1989 recipient of the Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History for excellence and leadership in the field of local history, as well as the recipient of a Top 10 Best Family-Friendly Destination in Oregon award for 2019. It boasts Oregon’s largest natural history collection on display with over 7,500 items that are used to help tell the ancient and contemporary stories of the Umpqua River Valley. In addition, the museum houses one of the Northwest’s most comprehensive plant collections in its research herbarium with nearly 3,000 cataloged specimens.

Join us for a fun-filled day of history, adventure and music on Saturday, July 20th at the Douglas County Museum. It's going to be Mammoth! For more information, call the museum at (541) 957-7007 or visit online at link below.

Important Notice About Flammable and Hot Waste Disposal

A low-level cover fire at the Douglas County landfill on Sunday, July 7, 2019, has prompted the Douglas County Solid Waste Department to issue a notice about disposing flammable and hot waste items into your trash bins, refuse containers and at county transfer stations. Landfill fires are most common in the spring and summer months, with the greatest risk peaking in July when temperatures are seasonally at their highest.

Landfill fires are especially dangerous, not only with the potential to start a wildfire on neighboring lands, but also, because they can emit dangerous fumes from the combustion of the wide range of materials contained within the landfill.

The recent fire was burning in garbage on the upper portion of the landfill and is approximately one quarter acre in size. Fire crews were quickly able to contain the fire, and prevent the spread to nearby hillsides.

“We are asking citizens to take a little extra time to properly dispose of flammable and hot waste items before they place them in a garbage can or dispose of them at a transfer station,” commented Scott Adams, Douglas County Public Works Director. “It is extremely dangerous for our solid waste staff, as well as fire crews, to fight fires at a landfill. Between navigating the steep terrain with fire equipment, enduring the extreme heat caused by combustible materials and avoiding potentially toxic fumes, there is a huge safety risk.”

While the cause of the Sunday landfill fire is still under investigation, one likely culprit is discarded lithium ion batteries, which are used in a wide range of consumer electronics, toys and tools; such as cell phones, laptop computers, RC cars and rechargeable drills.

Lithium ion batteries were determined to be a possible cause of recent landfill and transfer station fires. Due to the sensitivity of the lithium ion batteries, many local recyclers and landfill collection centers have asked their patrons to bring in their used batteries at a reduced charge. Landfill staff are also asking those who collect the lithium ion batteries to want to alert citizens that landfill or transfer station fires can occur when the following materials haven’t been properly disposed: home electronics, charcoal briquettes, wood stove ashes, cigarettes, propane fuel tanks and cylinders, fireworks, explosives, radioactive materials, lighters, oil soaked rags, chemicals and cigarettes. The Douglas County Solid Waste Department offers a guide to properly dispose of flammable and hot waste items. Click on the link below to view the guide.

Summer Road Improvement Update and Safety Reminder

Douglas County Public Works Department recently started two summer road improvement projects.

Project #1: A.R.T.S. CURVE SIGN IMPROVEMENTS: A safety improvement project will entail the installation of new curve warning signs and chevron signs on routes with severe crash history in Douglas County. Signs will be installed on North Bank Road (Wilbur/Glide), Garden Valley Road (West of Roseburg), Glenbrook Loop (off of your return or yard debris).

The project is funded by ODOT-All Roads Transportation Safety (ARTS) Program. The project is expected to run until the end of July, pending weather and material availability.

Project #2: FROZEN CREEK CURVET REPLACEMENT: This project is located on North Myrtle Road, approximately 7.5 miles North of Myrtle Creek. The project consists of replacing an existing culvert that takes Frozen Creek under North Myrtle Road with a wider pre-cast concrete arch and restoring fish passage through engineered channel restoration. The existing pipe and surrounding fill were damaged during a storm event in December 2015, and an emergency repair project was conducted to stabilize the fill and restore vehicular access, until a permanent solution could be implemented. The replacement is necessary to provide fish passage and meet other environmental regulations that could not be met through rehabilitation of the existing structure. The project is funded by FEMA and is expected to run through September 30, 2019.

Safety of the traveling public, as well as our road construction crews is always a high priority. We are asking motorists to use caution as they travel in all construction areas and to seek alternate routes whenever possible. All posted signs, warnings and flagging instructions. For more information, call (541) 440-4481 or click on the website link below.

FREE MULCH

It's dirt cheap (while supplies last)

Douglas County Landfill 384 NE Myrtle Creek Road Roseburg Wednesday - Saturday 8 am - 4 pm

Calling all gardeners! We have FREE MULCH! Our mulch piles are over-flowing, so while supplies last, the Roseburg Landfill is offering FREE LOADS OF MULCH. Mulch is made up of ground up yard debris, leaves, grass and yard trimmings.

While it may be Summer, adding extra nutrients to your garden is always a good idea. Even if you don’t have a green thumb, you can still use the mulch to spruce up those flower beds, tree bases and landscaping projects. Make it a two way trip and pick up a FREE LOAD OF MULCH after you drop off your return or yard debris.

You can load up bags, buckets, even a truck load. Pick up your free mulch and if our loader is available, we will load it for you too.