

Safety Committee Report – Skyline West Neighborhood Association Meeting: 7/27/19

Safety Committee Members: John Krochta (Chair), Carrie Berger (Firewise Chair), Hersh Crawford, Tracy McAlister, Duane Sorensen, Selma Starns, Elizabeth Waldron (Street Liaisons Chair)

Safety Committee Areas of Activity

At present, the Safety Committee has five main areas of activity:

Emergency preparedness
 Wildfire protection (Firewise)
 Earthquake preparation
 Well-water safety
 Road safety (with Road Committee)

During the course of each year, the Safety Committee emails information to Skyline West residents on the above five topics. The timing often coincides with national awareness activities in these areas, such as Wildfire Community Preparedness, Great Oregon Shakeout and Groundwater Awareness. We will continue to email information on these topics, updated with the most recent useful information. In addition, thanks to Webmaster Peter Kenyon, information on these topics is being added to the Safety Committee portion of the Skyline West website: <https://skylinewest.org/safety-committee/>

Emergency Preparedness

--Basic Recommendations

- The Safety Committee strongly encourages every Skyline West resident to **register with the Linn-Benton Alert Notification System:** <https://www.co.benton.or.us/sheriff/page/emergency-alert>

Being registered in the Alert Notification System ensures you will be notified of emergencies such as: approaching wildfire, recommended evacuations routes, and procedures to follow after a major earthquake.

Landline phones are supposed to be automatically registered, but we advise residents to make sure by registering them at the website. In addition, cell phones, tablets, and computers can be registered. When an individual or household is registered on multiple devices, the System will call each in turn until it gets a response.

- Most current recommendations for emergency readiness are that each household has **at least two weeks of water, food and other necessities for each family member.** Since an emergency may

occur when someone is away from home, **at least three days of food, water, etc. are recommended at work and in vehicles.** For emergency planning, checklists and supplies recommendations, see: <https://skylinewest.org/safety-committee/>.

- Because a large earthquake will disrupt most supply lines, **drivers are encouraged to keep gas tanks at least half-full.** Another advantage is that doing this minimizes moisture condensing in the gas tank and contaminating the fuel system.

--Development of Emergency Exit Over Sheep Farm

The extension of Fair Oaks Drive from Skyline West to Walnut Blvd will provide a much-needed second entry/exit for Skyline West. However, the lack of fire hydrants in our neighborhood would require repeated trips to Skyline West by water tankers in the event of a wildfire, in addition to the normal emergency vehicles that would respond to an emergency. Thus, it is possible that one of the roads into Skyline West will be reserved for use by these emergency vehicles only. That, plus the possibility that a wildfire may cut off either Ponderosa Ave or Fair Oaks Drive, indicates a continuing need for an additional emergency exit from Skyline West.

After exploring options, the Safety Committee has selected exiting out the west end of Ponderosa Ave over the Sheep Farm as the best alternative for an emergency exit. We have assessed the situation, and the neighbors on both sides of Ponderosa Ave at its west end are supportive of our efforts. We now have the approval of both the Corvallis Fire Marshall Jeffrey Prechel and City Engineer Greg Gescher. The Corvallis Urban Forester Jonathan Pywell can remove trees presently blocking the emergency exit as soon as we get approval for exiting over the Sheep Farm from OSU.

--Street Liaisons

With the leadership of Safety Committee member Elizabeth Waldron, Skyline West initiated a Street Liaison (SL) program last August. SL volunteers introduced themselves and left emergency information with each residence. Among their roles, SLs work to know the neighbors on their street, provide information about the SWNA, and communicate concerns and question from residents to the SWNA Officers and Committees. Although they are not to be thought of as First Responders, SLs' knowledge of residents on their streets and their important communication role mean they could be very helpful in the event of an emergency. For more information on the Street Liaisons, see:

<https://skylinewest.org/safety-committee/>

Wildfire Protection

--Firewise Program

We are fortunate to have Safety Committee member Carrie Berger as our Firewise Chair. Carrie works in the OSU College of Forestry Extension program in the Fire Science area and is on the College Executive Committee. She is also Coordinator of the NW Fire Science Consortium, a network of state, federal, universities, NGOs and private landowners. Over the past 3 years, Carrie has written proposals resulting in two \$500 grants from State Farm Insurance and \$1,000 of City of Corvallis Neighborhood Empowerment funds. The grants were used to pay for trailer and dumpster rental for collection and disposal of tons of flammable dead debris, tree removals and trimming, brush, etc. from our neighborhood. We plan to keep seeking funding for annual dumpster days to coincide with the National Firewise Wildfire Community Preparedness week in early May.

Every year, coinciding with National Wildfire Community Preparedness activities, we email to Skyline West residents materials on the Fire Resistant Home, Defensible Space, Fire-Resistant Landscape and other wildfire protection topics. We plan to continue sending these materials to residents annually, along with new information as it becomes available. This information is also available at:

<https://skylinewest.org/safety-committee/>

-- Cooperation with Adjacent Property Owners

The Safety Committee has on-going interactions with the owners of properties adjacent to Skyline West, related to their wildfire prevention efforts. Carrie Berger recently negotiated with the College of Agricultural Sciences to thin their forested property to the south of Skyline West by removing brush undercover, small trees and dead debris. Duane Sorensen is our contact person with Legend Homes on their annual grass mowing and dead-tree removal. Elizabeth Waldron is our contact person with the OSU Sheep Farm on their annual grass mowing and dead debris removal.

Earthquake Preparation

We plan to continue annual earthquake preparedness efforts to coincide with the Great Oregon Shakeout in October. This will include updated articles and videos on the earthquake-resistant home, “Drop, Cover and Hold” procedures to follow during earthquakes, and what to do after earthquakes. This information is also now available at:

<https://skylinewest.org/safety-committee/>

Well-Water Safety

Because all Skyline West residents rely on their individual wells for water, the subject of well-water safety is important. We plan to continue annual education efforts to coincide with National Ground Water Awareness month in March. Articles we send annually include information on well components, operation and maintenance; and well-water testing. Residents are encouraged to have their well-water tested annually for bacteria, nitrates and arsenic. Information on well-water safety is now also available at:

<https://skylinewest.org/safety-committee/>

Road Safety (with Road Committee)

The Safety Committee emails notices on pedestrian safety (e.g., students walking to school buses) and on road safety as affected by weather and fallen trees and limbs. We cooperated with the Road Committee on a neighborhood road safety survey and on discussions with Corvallis Public Works on road safety. The City conducted its own Skyline West traffic analysis, resulting in: a) roadside foliage trimming (by the City and residents) to improve line-of-sight vision on roads and b) installation of stop signs to improve road safety and reduce road speed.

The Safety Committee is again cooperating with the Road Committee on discussions with Corvallis Public Works on the “interim” Fair Oaks connection between Skyline West and Walnut Blvd and on the Fair Oaks-Walnut Blvd intersection. The interim Fair Oaks discussions have involved addition of a mid-road line and road-edge markers to improve safety of drivers using the road. The Fair Oaks-Walnut Blvd intersection discussions have involved reducing the Walnut Blvd speed limit from 45 to 35 mph in the area of the intersection and placement of signage at the intersection to improve safety.