

MONDAY

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**FIRST ALERT
WEATHER**

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LOCAL



OLLI course trains for zombie disasters

Members of OLLI will be offered a course “Disaster Preparedness: Alameda, Cascadia, Zombies” to be presented winter and spring 2021 terms via Zoom. **A2**

NATION-WORLD



Questions on the rise after Capitol siege

Lawmakers are now asking why Capitol police were so greatly outnumbered even though the force has 2,300 officers. **A5**

HEALTH





COURTESY PHOTOS

CERT has trained over 900 community volunteers in disaster response skills.

OLLI disaster class spurred by Alameda fire

By Terri Stewart and Steve Weyer for the Tidings

In the aftermath of the Alameda fire, Terri Stewart, program coordinator for Ashland's Community Emergency Response Team, and Steve Weyer, a long-time CERT member and instructor with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute



covered.

Learn more at: cdc.gov/cpr/zombie/

■ What's the difference between an "emergency" and a "disaster"?

Which kinds of help might be available for each, and when?

■ Becoming informed about what's happening and what to do: Ashland's Nixle and Jackson County's Citizen Alert system, as well as other communication methods

■ Jackson County's evacuation levels: 1. Be Ready; 2. Be Safe; 3. Get Out

Ashland's Community Emergency Response Team, and Steve Weyer, a long-time CERT member and instructor with the Osher Life-long Learning Institute at Southern Oregon University, reflected on ways to help Rogue Valley residents become better prepared for disasters.

Since 1999, CERT has trained over 900 community volunteers in disaster response skills. CERTs augment our emergency responders, who would soon be overwhelmed in a major disaster. During the Almeda and Obenchain fires, Ashland CERT assessed damage in support of public works and housing safety, and members staffed Jackson County's Emergency Call Center. Sponsored by FEMA, CERT groups serve nationwide, but in the Rogue Valley only the CERT program managed by Ashland Fire & Rescue has survived.

Through the Map Your Neighborhood program, CERT also facilitates



neighborhood groups to support each other during a disaster by sharing resources and providing aid to neighbors until outside help can arrive.

During the Almeda fire, MYN-trained neighbors in Talent checked on each other and expedited evacuation efforts.

We thought Rogue Valley residents might be interested in the lessons learned from the Almeda fire. We also wanted to provide up-to-date preparedness tips and a list of resources, since the earlier "Ashland is Ready" community-wide outreach program was discontinued. Wildfires and Cascadia earthquakes are inevitable and unpredictable — and can be even more worrisome with budget cuts and pandemics.

Our solution: offering members of OLLI a course entitled "Disaster Preparedness: Almeda, Cascadia,

Zombies" to be presented both winter and spring 2021 terms via Zoom (inside.sou.edu/olli/). Disaster planning starts at home. It is critical for residents to recognize the importance of planning and take appropriate actions to strengthen their ability to endure disaster when it strikes.

FEMA's four tenets include creating an emergency communication plan, making a disaster supply kit, staying informed and getting involved. In addition to general planning and actions that apply to any kind of disaster, we will highlight issues unique to wildfires, earthquakes and floods in this course.

After an in-depth case study of the Almeda fire, the course will delve into these preparedness topics with some videos:

■ **Disclaimer:** Zombie attacks are not actually

■ **Becoming informed** about what's happening and what to do: Ashland's Nixle and Jackson County's Citizen Alert system, as well as other communication methods

■ **Jackson County's evacuation levels:** 1. Be Ready; 2. Be Set; 3. Go!

■ **Evacuation planning,** communication, preparation and go-kits

■ **Family disaster planning** with specifics for fires (evacuation) and earthquakes (sheltering in place)

■ **Oregon's "2 Weeks Ready" program,** which lists the supplies to have on hand until outside help can arrive — enough perhaps for several weeks, since earthquakes and other disasters could seriously damage infrastructure over a wide area: roads, bridges, airports, utilities, hospitals, fire stations, stores and more

■ **Minimizing wildfire damage** to your home and property, and the nationwide Firewise program

■ **Monitoring and protecting yourself from smoke**

■ **Cascadia earthquake past occurrences and likely scenarios.** How to prepare beforehand and what to do after

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■ Floods, evacuation, sanitation, water purification and landslides

■ Finding ways to improve your readiness and help others

The devastating Alameda fire provides an opportunity for growth because we can all apply the lessons and learn the values of being prepared for another devastating event, which we will highlight in this course.

Whether you will be attending our winter or spring course, you can jumpstart your process of becoming better prepared — and safer — by visiting these sites: ready.gov, facebook.com/2WeeksReady, jacksoncountyor.org/emergency/, rvem.org (Citizen Alert; Rogue Valley Emergency Management), ashland.or.us/nixle, ashlandfirewise.org, ashland.or.us/myn, ashlandcert.org

Map Your Neighborhood, sponsored by Oregon Office of Emergency Management, incorporates individual neighbors' needs, skills, expertise, equipment and resources into planning

for a catastrophic event. While the MYN program was originally designed to provide support during an earthquake, it is becoming more utilized and proving effective in all hazardous situations such as the Alameda fire.

CERT trains individuals in basic disaster response skills, such as fire suppression and safety, utilities controls, urban search and rescue, team organization, disaster medical operations; first-aid basics, triage, patient packaging and transport; and two-way radio communications. The value is having a trained set of volunteers who are prepared to use their skills and abilities to do "the greatest good for the greatest number of people" (the CERT motto).

Terri Stewart is the CERT program coordinator for Ashland Fire & Rescue, an active OLLI instructor and adjunct for SOU. She can be contacted at Terri.Stewart@ashland.or.us. Steve Weyer is on the CERT leadership team, and has taught OLLI courses such as Passwords, Be Safer on the Internet, and Crosswords. He can be reached at saweyer@gmail.com.