

Skamania County Sheriff's Office

Partnering with the Community to Continually Improve Public Safety.

DECEMBER 2017



Sheriff Dave Brown

It is December now and I can't help but feel grateful for the fact that we survived another fire season here in the county without too much damage.

Yes, we all had the opportunity to witness the disaster associated with the Eagle Creek fire on the Oregon side of the river as well as the Archer Mt., Bear Creek and East Crater fires on our side. We felt the impact of the fires through the closure of interstate 84 and the subsequent congestion of traffic on SR-14. The multitude of other issues that were a by-product of these fires were met with an outpouring of community support and volunteerism that has been unmatched.

The communities of Skamania County came forward from all directions to assist those in need. Those who needed shelter, food and care for their animals we're able to find it here in Stevenson and throughout the county.

Each day for those 2 weeks in September, a small group of professionals met in the Emergency Operations Center to evaluate both fires, support community

From the Sheriff

volunteers and provide information to the public. Our goal was to ensure that the needs of those impacted were met and assist in coordinating the multitude of offers for assistance.

We can be, and should be, extremely proud of the fact that the communities of Skamania County rallied around those in our own county and from across the river and helped make that time a little easier.

We must all keep in mind however that these incidents were relatively small in comparison to other natural or man-made disasters that we will undoubtedly encounter in the future. These recent events offered a glimpse of the potential for long term separation from the comforts of our daily lives.

We must continue to evaluate our own level of personal preparedness. Are you ready? How long can you sustain yourself and your family in the event of a major disaster? What supplies do you currently have? What do you need? What is your plan? The time to prepare is now.

The likelihood that the majority of Skamania County will be isolated from the urban centers is high. Our plan must take into consideration the reality that we will need to sustain ourselves for perhaps a week or more. Our success will be measured against our current levels of self-readiness and our willingness to prepare now for the disaster of tomorrow.

I am grateful for the support we received here at the Sheriff's Office as the fire activity was at its peak. I appreciate all your thoughts and prayers for the safety of the first responders.

We are blessed to live here and equally blessed to know we are supported by a strong community. ■

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Skamania County Sheriff's Office is to consistently earn the public's trust by providing the highest quality law enforcement services possible within the resources provided to us.

We are committed to demonstrating pride in our profession and in the Sheriff's Office, to effective communication with the people we represent, to treating everyone fairly, and to adapting rapidly to changing circumstances.

Inside

Winter Driving Tips	2
Did You Know?	3
Amateur Radio	3
Next Generation 911	4
What You Had to Say	4
History	5
Who is Who	6



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Winter Driving Tips

With the winter season upon us, it is a great time to inspect your vehicle and prepare for winter driving conditions. There are a few basic rules when it comes to driving in times of inclement weather.

You might find the following tips helpful when the snow and ice hit the Gorge:

Reduce your speed...

... when driving in snow and/or ice. Remember, a speed limit is set to be optimal during dry, daylight conditions.

Allow extra time...

... to reach your intended destination. Don't drive unless you have to. Consider carrying a few extra items in your vehicle during the winter months. Tire chains, ice scraper, blankets, flashlight with fresh batteries, high energy snacks, a few bottles of water, a small shovel, flares, a bag of kitty litter (works wonders for traction if you find yourself stuck), cell phone with car charger, and a cardboard box or tarp to lie on when putting on chains are a few good items to have.

Vehicle Condition

Check your vehicle at the start of the winter driving season. Make sure all fluids are full, the battery is fully charged, all lights are in working order including your hazard lights and check your tires for proper tread and inflation. It is always

good to have your radiator checked in the fall season for proper antifreeze mix ratio. Add de-icer to your windshield cleaner reservoir.

Tire Chains

Each year you should inspect your tire chains for wear and learn how to install them on your own during a nice day. A few minutes of practice will prevent a lot of frustration when you have to put them on in less than ideal conditions. Inspect your chains to make sure they are the right size for your tires. If you have a front wheel drive vehicle, chains should be applied to the front tires. If you have a rear wheel drive vehicle, chains are applied to the rear tires.

Skid recovery.

If you find yourself in a slippery situation the first rule is to remain calm. The biggest mistake drivers make in a skid is to panic and slam on the brakes. You will not be able to change the direction of the vehicle if your wheels are not turning. If you find yourself in a skid, let your foot off the gas and make SMALL adjustments to your steering wheel. Always steer away from the skid (the opposite direction the nose of the car is going). Do not over-correct your skid. The key is to reduce your speed during a bad weather event so that you don't lose control.



Are You Stuck?

If you find yourself stuck, take a deep breath and assess the situation. Turn your steering wheel in both directions to move snow away from tires. Apply a small amount of pressure on the accelerator to see if you can free yourself. Do not spin the tires as that will only dig you in deeper. If you can, safely exit the vehicle, install your chains and pour kitty litter under the drive wheels. Slowly ease on the accelerator and try to get out.

If you are unable to free the vehicle, turn on your hazard lights, stay inside your vehicle and wait for help. Your vehicle will provide you far more protection from other drivers and the elements.

If you have cell phone service call for assistance.

In summary, be prepared for hazardous conditions and don't drive during inclement weather unless you have to. If you must drive, take your time and be prepared for winter driving conditions. ■

Did You Know?



The Washington State Legislature passed a new law this past session which forbids virtually all use of handheld gadgets such as phones, tablets, laptop computers and gaming devices while driving. The new bill, codified in RCW 46.61.673, forbids handheld uses, including composing or reading any kind of message, picture or data. Photography while driving is illegal.

The law also prohibits drivers from using handheld devices while at a stop sign or red-light signal.

What is still legal?

A. Drivers may still use a smartphone mounted in a dashboard cradle, for instance to use a navigation app, but not to watch

video. The new law permits “minimal use of a finger” to activate an app or device. Built-in electronic systems, such as hands-free calling and maps, remain legal. Calls to 911 or other emergency services are legal, as are urgent calls between transit employees and dispatchers. Amateur radio equipment and citizens-band radio, remain legal. Handheld devices may be used if the driver has pulled off the roadway or traffic lanes, where the vehicle “can safely remain stationary.”

There are two parts to the law.

One part, the Electronics DUI offense, prohibits people from holding any electronic device in their hand while driving,

stopped in traffic or stopped at a light. Officers who see drivers holding an electronic device in their hand will be able to pull the driver over as a primary offense. You are allowed to hold your phone to contact emergency services or if you are parked or pulled over and safely stopped out of the way of traffic. Troopers say the side of the freeway is not a good option.

The second part refers to other activities that could cause distracted driving, such as, but not limited to, eating, smoking, reading or grooming. This is a secondary offense, meaning you must be pulled over for another offense, such as a dangerous lane change, to be cited for such an activity, and the activity must be determined to have interfered with safe driving. ■

Skamania County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (SCARES)

Skamania County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (SCARES) is a small team of amateur radio operators (aka hams) that volunteer to provide emergency radio communications to during emergencies and disasters when normal modes of communication are not functional.

On September 2, 2017, SCARES was providing radio communications for the Bunker-to-Bonneville (B2B) 50K run when the Eagle Creek fire blew up. Public service events, like B2B, provide SCARES members with real world practice in setting up radio networks to accurately transfer information during an event.

On Sunday, September 3rd, the practice turned to reality.

The Eagle Creek fire caused the activation of the Skamania County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) very early on Sunday morning when evacuations for Cascade Locks were ordered due to the approaching fire.

A Red Cross evacuation shelter was opened at the Hegewald Center and an animal shelter was opened at the county fairgrounds.

In addition to Hegewald, many residents of Cascade Locks evacuated in their



campers and RVs to the county fairgrounds campground.

SCARES members were assigned to provide communications and status updates between the EOC and Hegewald/fairgrounds.

When the fire jumped the Columbia River on to Archer Mt, another SCARES radio operator was assigned to the incident command post (ICP) for that fire.

SCARES was active for 12-hour workdays until Saturday, September 9th.

Although other methods of communication (landlines, cell phones, etc.) remained

operational during this emergency, having immediate direct radio communications between the EOC, ICP, and shelters proved invaluable.

In addition to radio communications, ARES members also did whatever needed to be done to support EOC operation: answering phones, helping with volunteers, following up on donations, tracking orders, monitoring weather forecasts, etc.

For their efforts during the Eagle Creek/Archer Mt. fire, the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) recognized the following SCARES members with Certificates of Commendation:

- Jon Arp, KJ7ARP
- Ann Harryman, KF7NWM
- Ole Helgerson, KI7MBR
- Guy Miller, KB6VY
- John Prescott, K7JPX
- Kevin Widener, KE7IN

SCARES is always looking for licensed amateur radio operator volunteers.

If you are interested in finding out more about SCARES or getting an amateur radio license (or both!), please contact Kevin Widener at kevin.widener@gmail.com. ■

Skamania 911 Continues Migration to Next Generation 911

— Sgt. Jason Fritz

In today's 9-1-1 environment, the public can primarily make only emergency voice calls and Teletype calls (by deaf or hearing-impaired persons). Very little data is received by the Public Safety Access Point (PSAP) with these types of calls. Only the telephone number, subscriber name and location of the caller is delivered when available.

In the Next Generation 9-1-1 environment, citizens will be able to make voice, text, or video emergency "calls" from any communications device via Internet Protocol-based networks.

The Skamania County 911 center of the future will be able to receive data from personal safety devices such as Advanced Automatic Collision Notification systems and medical alert systems. The new infrastructure envisioned by the NG9-1-1 project will support national internetworking of 9-1-1 services, as well as transfer of emergency calls to other PSAPs—including any accompanying data. In addition, the PSAP will be able to issue emergency alerts to wireless devices in an area via voice or text message, and to highway alert systems.

With an upgrade to a new 911 phone system, Skamania County has completed phase I of its transition to Next Generation 911 (NG911,) but there is still a lot of work to be done. We are currently upgrading our 911 telephone network at the PSAP level in order to be able to connect to the NG911 network that Washington State is in the process of completing. We are also updating and synchronizing our local address and GIS databases to prepare them for loading in to the location verification function. This is an essential part of the NG911 network that will increase the location accuracy of the call that is received by the PSAP. Skamania Counties transition to the new 911 network is scheduled for May 2018. ■

What You had to Say

The following thank you note was sent early this year after the January Ice Storm. The card was homemade and the artwork was something to behold. Thought we should share not only what was said but also the artwork itself.



"Dear Skamania County Sheriff and Sheriff's staff

In the thick of the worst ice storm in memory, no electricity, dangerous icy limbs falling from tall firs, we called you to check on an elderly friend. We feared he may have been trapped in his house with no heat. Two officers responded to that call. As it turned out a tree and several large limbs had fallen around the man's home making it nearly inaccessible. The officers managed to safely extract the gentleman from his home and deliver him to our home and the promise of heat, hot meals and general safety.

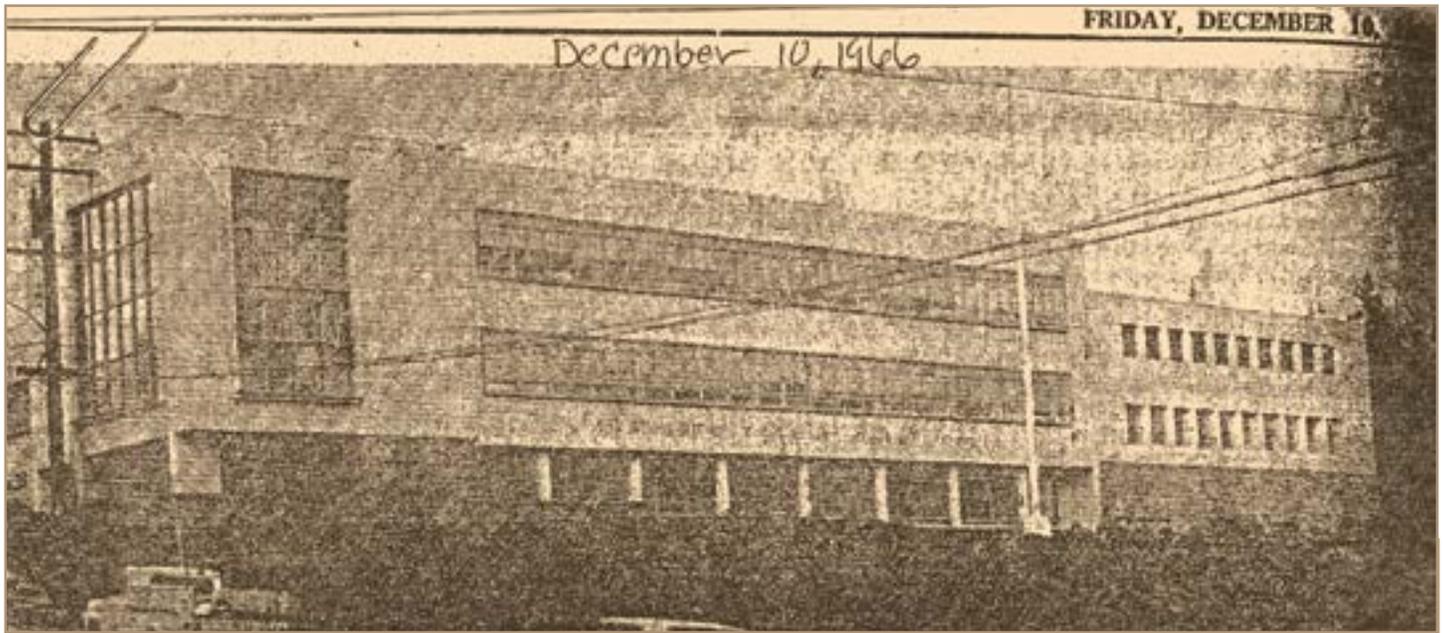
When they arrived, they found our driveway was also impossible to drive up due to large fallen limbs. This did not stop

them. They still managed to escort the man to our door. Get this: they were even smiling. They declined my offer of a hot meal as they were on their way to help more souls in need. They not only helped an elderly man who would have otherwise been in grave danger (he had just had heart surgery) but their "get er done" attitude and those smiles brought us great comfort.

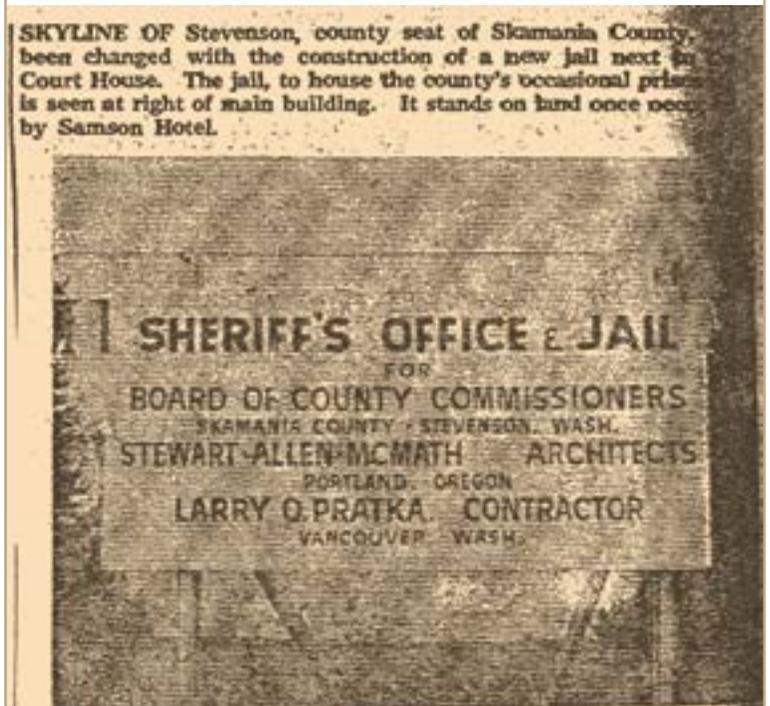
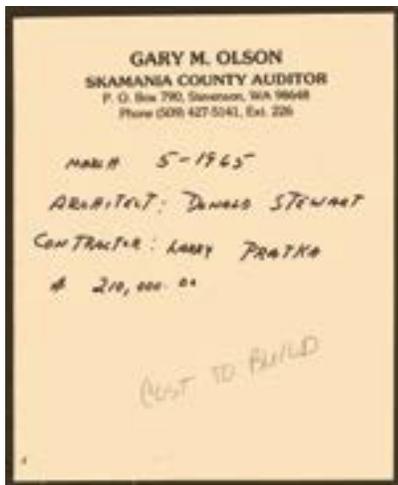
To say they went above and beyond is an understatement. They went over, around and through as well. God bless our officers as they bless our little community with such incredible acts of selfless Bravery."

Stevenson residents.

History



These photographs were run in the Skamania County Pioneer in July and December of 1966. As you can see, it was just over 50 years ago that the old jail was opened. The current jail facility was completed and dedicated in 2001.



2017 Year To Date Jail Information

Ridgefield Jail Contract	\$2,255.00	Doc Jail Contract	\$28,649.85	Clark County Jail Contract . . .	\$93,115.00
Stevenson Jail Contract	\$8,641.78	Battle Ground Jail Contract . . .	\$8,525.00	Year To Date Bookings	612
North Bonneville Jail Contract . . .	\$325.00	Bingen Jail Contract	\$4,720.00	Total New Arrests	422
Camas Jail Contract	\$21,395.00	White Salmon Jail Contract . . .	\$14,522.50	Average Daily Population	32
Washougal Jail Contract	\$8,140.00	Lacenter Jail Contract	\$990.00		

Who's who?

We have been experiencing a great deal of change in faces here at the Sheriff's Office over the past couple of years. As the old guard retires we find ourselves in the throes of testing, interviewing and selecting the future of the Sheriff's Office. In this edition of the newsletter we will introduce you to the new faces that you will see out on patrol and in the dispatch center/jail.



Deputy Tiffany Coates:

Deputy Coates was hired as a road deputy and graduated from Basic law enforcement academy in June of this year.

Deputy Coates completed her 3-month field training program after graduation and began patrolling on her own in October. Deputy Coates previously lived and worked in the Longview, WA area and grew up in Southbend, WA. Tiffany is excited to be a part of our team and loves the many recreational opportunities Skamania County has to offer.



Deputy Nick Beacock:

Deputy Beacock was hired as a road deputy and graduated from the Basic Law Enforcement Academy in October of this year. Nick is

currently in his third month of a 3-month field training program where he rides with a field training officer and is evaluated on his skills and abilities. Nick will complete field training in January and be on his own after that. Nick comes to us from Vancouver WA and looks forward to the rewards that law enforcement has to offer.



Deputy Will Helton:

Deputy Helton has actually been with us for almost 2 years now. Will grew up in the White Salmon area and was on the path toward being a

career firefighter until we grabbed onto him and brought him here to serve as a road deputy. Will is the son of Deputy Chris Helton who has been a road deputy for over 20 years in Skamania County. We are extremely happy to have Will on the team and he is equally pleased to be in a career that keeps him close to home.



Deputy Will Helton in training many years ago



Corrections Officer Ben Childs:

Officer Childs just completed his first year working in the jail. Been graduated from the Corrections Officer academy in April of 2017. Ben is a great addition

to the jail staff and brings a great deal of ambition and energy to the position. Ben grew up in the White Salmon area and loves anything outdoors. Ben has embraced the position of corrections officer and is highly energetic and dependable.



Corrections Officer Spencer Fredrickson:

Officer Fredrickson began employment at the

Sheriff's Office just over a year ago and completed the corrections officer academy in October of 2016. Spencer has also completed his 911 training and has proven to be a solid addition to the jail and dispatch center. Spencer brings a great sense of humor to the office and if he is not at home you can find him in the woods. Spencer grew up in the Woodland, WA area and he is excited to be a part of the team here at the Sheriff's Office.



Civil Deputy Ondine Obias:

Ondine joined the Sheriff's Office team in October of 2016. She serves the public from the front office as a civil deputy. Ondine deals with

all things associated to our records division. Warrant entry, protection orders, concealed carry permits and many other duties. She is a long time Skamania County resident and enjoys time with her family and her wonderful children as much as possible. Ondine has been a great addition to the team and she knows how to fill a candy bowl.