



PHIL NELSON | THE TRINITY JOURNAL

Transforming the bell tower

Workers Turner and Stewart Thompson from Stewart Construction are replacing shingles and rehabing the steeple of the Weaverville Congregational Church on Main Street. Built in 1891, the old-style building techniques and unbelievable craftsmanship inside have impressed these modern laborers who have been using a large bucket lift to safely reach the belltower. Pastor Jean Boals estimates the work will be done in a week's time.

Interagency fire drill to utilize helicopters

"If you see firefighting helicopters in the sky on Saturday, June 16, and Sunday, June 17, don't be alarmed," said Stewart Richter, Shasta-Trinity National Forest battalion chief. "This year we are utilizing helicopters to drop buckets of water as part of the second annual Trinity County Interagency Fire Drill."

The fire drill will be conducted in Weaverville and Hayfork. On Saturday, the fire drill will take place up Weaver Bally Road in Weaverville and on Sunday the drill will take place in Hayfork near Ewing Reservoir, off of Brady Road.

"Incorporating the helicopters into the drill

provides a more realistic training for firefighters in simulating real life fire suppression," Richter said. "I wanted to assure that the community is aware that the cream and maroon helicopters are part of the drill and not think that we have a wildfire so close to town."

The drill will provide interagency firefighters an opportunity to demonstrate and be evaluated on their skills in fighting a wildland-urban interface fire.

The firefighting crews will go through scenarios for which they will need to develop strategies and tactics.

They will be evaluated on their ability to mitigate these simulated situations through the use of established wildland firefighting techniques. This process will allow crews from the various agencies to become familiar with the equipment and abilities the various agencies possess.

Upon completion, all agencies will have a better idea of each agency's mission, how to accomplish it and a clear idea of their ability and areas that they can improve upon.

For more information about the fire drill contact Alex McBath at 623-1740.

Emergency managers hired

BY SALLY MORRIS
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A new Trinity County emergency operations manager position funded by a federal Disaster Recovery Initiative grant has been filled by two candidates hired part time to work side by side setting up the program.

Both Neal O'Haire of Douglas City and Larry Masterman of Weaverville come with extensive backgrounds, training and expertise in the field of emergency operations management "and will be a great asset to the county as a whole," said Trinity County Undersheriff Ken Langston who has worked to get the project under way.

The duties of the emergency operations manager include many that have long been part of the undersheriff's job, including planning, organizing and supervising all emergency management functions and operations within the sheriff's jurisdiction.

The sheriff's department successfully applied for Disaster Recovery Initiative grant funds linked to the 2008 wildfires, recognizing that the months-long fire siege severely taxed the emergency response capacity of agencies in Trinity County.

When initiating the recruitment for a manager position back in January, Trinity County Sheriff Bruce Haney called the communications capabilities within the county during the 2008 event "haphazard

at best. Communications will be one of our biggest criteria and we need one go-to person that works with all fire departments."

Though the county's emergency operations manual has undergone major revisions and updates in recent years, Haney said there is still need for improvement "and actual implementation of the plan. There will be a lot of training involved for public preparedness, fire departments and deputy personnel that we didn't have in place before. And this is a great opportunity to organize the emergency response structure if, God forbid, we have another 2008."

O'Haire is a retired PERS annuitant which means he is limited by recent legislation to working just for 12 months or 960 hours. Therefore, he will only be engaged half-time for the first year of the 30-month grant period with Masterman to carry on to the end of the grant. The total salary and benefits for the shared job comes to approximately \$5,321 per month and the cost to the county's general fund is zero.

Langston said the intent is to form an ongoing program with a sergeant and two corporals also assigned to work with the managers and grant money to furnish them with two vehicles. He said future grant funding will be pursued, but if it comes to an end, "those staff members will be able to step up and carry on with the program."

Attorney contract extended

BY SALLY MORRIS
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Trinity County supervisors last week voted unanimous approval of a one-year extension of their contract for county counsel services from the Roseville law firm of Cota Cole, LLP.

Though there have been mergers and name changes since the county first engaged the firm's legal services on an interim basis in July 2008, the principle parties working with the county haven't changed and the contract cost has not increased from its original \$115,000 annual retainer.

The contract was initially a cost-cutting departure from the county's previous employment of a full-time county counsel with office and staff in the county courthouse and employee benefits. Cota Cole operates as an independent contractor not entitled to county employee benefits.

The agreement continues to designate attorney Derek Cole as Trinity County Counsel and Scott Huber as Deputy County Counsel. It is usually Cole who attends meetings of the Board of Supervisors, closed sessions and other county meetings as requested, but the agreement also

provides for attending meetings remotely by telephone or webcast when possible.

The county pays the firm a monthly retainer equating to \$115,000 a year for standard legal services described in the contract. The agreement also provides for additional compensation if special services are required, but that has seldom been the case.

"We are very pleased with the services we get from Derek Cole and the other attorneys, but because they have been under contract since 2008, I do want to issue a request for proposals in the coming year to see what else may be out there," said County Administrative Officer Wendy Tyler in presenting the one-year contract extension to the Board of Supervisors for approval last week.

"It is by no means because of any dissatisfaction with what we've been receiving, but we can look at other service models potentially," she said, adding she would anticipate awarding a four-year contract to the successful bidder.

The board's action last week extended the current contract from June 30, 2012, through June 2013.

"I am very pleased and think we very much get our money's worth with this firm," said Sup. Judy Pflueger.

Big Bar fire swiftly controlled

A fire near Big Bar Tuesday afternoon was quickly contained.

The fire was reported at 3:24 p.m. west of the Big Bar Post Office and had reached approximately a quarter-acre, depu-

ties on scene reported. It burned along Highway 299 between the highway and the Trinity River. The highway traffic was stopped for a short time while crews staged to fight the fire.

A firefighting helicopter also responded.

The Sheriff's Department used its reverse 911 system to warn residents of a precautionary evacuation, which was lifted at 4:25 p.m.

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