

## EDITORIAL

Making it through the storm ...

# Plenty to be thankful for

As we leave what surely must be one of Tillamook County's longest weeks behind us, many of us have suffered losses. But we also appreciate the efforts of those who helped us through last week's wind and flood waters.

High on the thankful-for list are work crews from Tillamook PUD, city and county public works departments, Oregon Department of Transportation.

The list goes on: Sheriff Todd Anderson, whose regular reports on local radio stations did much to reassure suffering county residents; to all the law enforcement, Coast Guard, National Guard, Red Cross, fire departments and other emergency responders who braved the elements on our behalf; the amateur radio operators who helped the Incident Command Team communicate with other parts of the county when all other communication was limited and unreliable.

Particularly gratifying are stories of the good-natured sharing that took place, of restaurants that fed the cold and hungry at a nominal cost; of people who didn't wait for an "official" to show up, but pulled chain saws from their vehicles and started clearing fallen trees from roadways; those who braved the elements and checked on their neighbors.

We're also thankful for lessons learned in the storms of a year ago. We're glad for the programs, financed in part with federal dollars, that resulted in the elevation of buildings above flood level in North Tillamook and Nehalem. We're grateful that Sheldon Oil installed additional generators to operate stations in North, South and Central County.

And while we're at it, here's something else to be thankful for. With the federal disaster declaration, comes an express lane for receiving federal disaster relief.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, recovery assistance will be given to residents and businesses in Tillamook County, among several others.

You may be eligible for help under FEMA's Individual Assistance program. The Individual Assistance program can help eligible applicants with temporary housing assistance, uninsured personal property and medical, dental, and funeral expenses caused by the disaster, and other serious unmet needs.

Those who suffered damage from the severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides should register by calling (800) 621-FEMA (3362) or go online at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov). The toll-free numbers are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time) Monday through Sunday.

We'll be especially grateful later if we remember lessons we've learned about this disaster and the ones in the past to prepare us for those that most certainly lie ahead.

## GUEST COMMENT

# Thanks for recovery efforts

By MARK LABHART  
Tillamook County Commission  
Chair

While many realize that we are still dealing with homes and businesses that have been without power for many days and that there are homes and businesses that have suffered significant damage, I'd like to update you on the county's plans to address the next steps toward recovery, even though we are still dealing with disaster response requests daily.

We have met personally with U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith. We have been on conference calls with the governor personally and his staff. We have met personally with State Sen. Betsy Johnson and State Rep. Deborah Boone. The County Emergency Declaration was shipped to the state,

and the State's Declaration was delivered to the federal officials shortly thereafter. And we have received a federal declaration for FEMA assistance with our recovery efforts.

Our recovery efforts among other things will include federal financial assistance. The extent of that assistance to public and private homes and businesses will be determined in the upcoming weeks. Many of our emergency services personnel are working very long hours to restore our infrastructure, which includes drinking water, power, road systems and our quality of life.

If you see any of these folks on the street I'm hoping you will join me in thanking them for what they have done and will continue to do for all of us:

- The PUD crews and their contractors for their continu-

ing emergency response to get everyone's power restored.

- The County's Incident Command Team and the 9-1-1 Center for their management of a very difficult double hit with the flood and the wind. Special recognition to Sheriff Todd Anderson for his Incident Commander leadership.
- KTL and Coast 105 for keeping the public informed throughout the event with the latest information they had.
- The Red Cross, the Salvation Army and their volunteers for their shelter and feeding operations in Tillamook, Garibaldi and Wheeler.
- The County Public Works and Oregon Department of Transportation road crews for their heroic efforts to get our county and state roads back open.
- Our local fire departments

and their volunteers for opening up their buildings to provide a warm drink and help with disaster response requests for assistance.

- The cities and their police officers and public works employees for their welfare checks, evacuations, emergency response, etc.
  - To the citizens of this great county for their volunteer efforts to help their neighbors with tree clearing, housing those without power, providing food and caring for the neighbors.
  - To the state and federal folks for offering and providing immediate assistance for any request we might have had.
- While we are far from done with this disaster, I can't tell you how proud I am to be a citizen of this county and to work with the people of this great county.

