

READERS' OPEN FORUM

Flood news is sad

I am saddened to read of the many businesses destroyed by the flood waters. I have family in Tillamook and love to go to the many businesses there. I hope they are able to reopen in the future.

Francis Cattuzzo-Andersen
Fresno, Calif.

Thanks to all who helped

A couple of weeks ago, a group of folks stopped by our office with a real need. They had lost their homes in the flood at the Wilson River RV Park. After listening to their stories, I invited them to come the next morning to the Tillamook Chamber of Commerce, where Sheriff Todd Anderson and Emergency Management Director Tom Manning were going to speak.

These gentlemen listened to the people's stories and said, "We will do something about your situation today."

I mentioned that I had contacted Portland TV stations to see if they would help us find used RVs that people might be willing to donate. KGW-TV (Channel 8) called and said it was coming to Tillamook to help. Its crew, led by reporter Scott Burden, met us and

agreed to do a story. The story aired, we began to receive offers of help and KGW said it would becoming back to do a follow-up.

Next, *Headlight-Herald* Editor Joe Happ said he was going to do a story. The next day, KGW's Drew Mikkelsen and crew came and did another story. It was neat to see the TV crew and the newspaper doing the same story together.

Then, into our office came the folks from the Tillamook County Disaster Response group consisting of Leslie Burkard, Dale Buck and Gregg Sands. Nobody said, "You're crazy; it won't work." All joined with a can-do spirit. Our cheerleader, John Coopersmith, called every few days just to give a word of encouragement.

Next KTEL-FM aired a story about needing help and Don Bishop volunteered to help bring in donated RVs. Dan Cain from the Vac Shop said he would help and off we went in the middle of the night to get another unit.

Every time it seemed like the project was going to fall apart, Tom and Todd put us back together. KGW and the *Headlight-Herald* gave us more needed press and, with Leslie and Dale's help, we are able to say, "That's the rest of the story."

Fine Tillamook people that my wife, Judy, and I hardly knew came together and we were able to do what some said could not be done. Thank you to all who helped. Space does not allow me to thank everyone. But, we make Tillamook proud.

Fred Rigwood
Tillamook

No-man's land on 101

Forget cleaner sloughs, forget dredging. I read that County Emergency Management Director Tom Manning feels that the sole solution to Tillamook flooding is the FEMA buyout program.

Since he is an employee of the Tillamook County Commissioners, I assume he speaks their line. For those not in the know, FEMA buyout in Tillamook means vacating businesses and residences on U.S. Highway 101, roughly from a bit south of Fred Meyer to about Burden's Towing.

It would create a veritable no-man's land half-a-mile long when approaching Tillamook downtown from the north — perhaps the least-welcome welcome to any town on the Oregon Coast. It would drive away tourism and business. It might forever cripple or kill businesses long established in that zone. Think of Rosenberg's, the Blue Heron, The Fern ... the list is long. Think of restaurants, lodging, truck repair, retail merchants, services, real estate offices, all to go.

Complicit in this, apparently, is the governor and, sadly, our local state senator, who seem to think that maybe another \$100,000 study (plus FEMA's scorched-earth program) may be Tillamook's lowly best hope.

I'm disappointed that three Tillamook County Commissioners, none of whom live in Tillamook, seem not to listen to common-sense advocates for dredging the over-silted sloughs and bay.

If the truly affected property owners, residents and businesses of that proposed desert beginning at Hoquarton Slough were to rise up and shake a cumulative fist in the face of the commissioners, Legislature, our still-absent Governor, and FEMA policy wonks, effective dredging could be resumed.

I live in Tillamook. Tillamook is worth the effort. I'm ready; are you?

John Jay Ponce
Tillamook

(Editor's Note: The Headlight-Herald last week quoted Tom Manning as telling a meeting of the Tillamook Bay Habitat and Estuary Improvement District that Federal Emergency Management Administration officials no longer see dredging as a solution to flood problems. He said FEMA now looks at hazard mitigation in terms of buyouts and relocation of businesses and homes in flood plains. At no time did the Headlight-Herald report that Manning, any of the county's three commissioners, State Sen. Betsy Johnson or Gov. Ted Kulongoski endorsed or said they agreed with that view.)