



Jackson County Fire Incidents

After Action Report and Improvement Plan

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For more information or to request permission to use all or any of this report, please consult the following points of contact:

Danny Jordan
County Administrator
Jackson County
(541) 774-6035

jordandl@jacksoncounty.org

Harvey Bragg
Senior Deputy County Administrator
Jackson County
(541) 774-6009

bragghd@jacksoncounty.org

Executive Summary

On September 8, 2020, Jackson County, Oregon experienced a rare multi-fire event with the Almeda Drive and South Obenchain fires igniting less than 25 miles apart from each other and both threatening major population centers within the County. The Almeda Drive fire, driven by 35- to 45-mile-an-hour winds and low humidity, quickly burned along a 13-mile northern path beginning in Ashland before finally being stopped just south of Medford. While fighting the Almeda Drive fire, the South Obenchain fire erupted, presenting fire districts with a challenge to allocate county resources. In an already active fire season across Oregon, California, and Washington, regional and statewide mutual aid resources were depleted before September 8th. These fast-moving wildland fire events prompted mass evacuations of tens of thousands of Jackson County residents with three residents sadly losing their lives. Temporary emergency shelter centers for evacuated residents were established, which created a further challenge due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and public health protocols.

Considering the rapid movement of the fire, the close proximity of the fire to large residential areas, and the necessary closures to main transportation arteries, the limited loss of life and the ability to quickly establish shelter to support evacuated residents is a testament to the quick coordination and strong relationships among fire officials, law enforcement, Jackson County agencies, state agencies, community organizations, and the communities in which they serve.

The After-Action Report (AAR) process offers a chance to compare planned and documented procedures and processes with real-world response activities to evaluate those things that worked well and those that need to be revisited and revised. Emergency planning is a continuous process, and incidents such as the Almeda Drive and South Obenchain fires present an opportunity to review and document successes and areas for revision and enhancement. The AAR process prompts a necessary and beneficial review of existing emergency plans and annexes both at the city and County level to highlight and address any areas of contradiction and reinforce processes for coordination and communications, thus ensuring that all emergency response personnel are able to share information and resources effectively in times of emergency.

Review and evaluation of the response coordination and communications are essential for ensuring that Jackson County, in collaboration with local jurisdictions, emergency response agencies, and response partners, continues to build readiness and resilience to respond to and recover from fires and other types of emergencies to which the county is at risk. This AAR accomplishes the following:

- Identifies strengths and successes, response actions that worked well, and processes that were implemented during the response;
- Identifies capability or capacity gaps as areas for improvement; and,
- Provides recommendations to address areas for improvement for Jackson County Emergency Management, in collaboration with local jurisdictions, emergency responder agencies, and response partners to use as a blueprint for future planning, organization, training, and exercise efforts across the region.

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The findings of this AAR include observations, analysis, and recommendations along with an improvement plan. Primary strengths, areas for improvement, and a brief highlight of recommendations are summarized below and are discussed in detail in Section 2. The Improvement Plan is included as Appendix A.

Scope

The scope of this Jackson County AAR is focused on the first 10 days of the fire events (September 8, 2020 through September 19, 2020) and consists of an analysis of coordination and communication activities among the Jackson County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), local jurisdictions, and response agencies. This process included a review of public information, media outreach, and evacuation notifications provided by the Jackson County EOC, responding agencies, and local jurisdictions as well as the temporary shelter operations for both residents and animals affected by these fire events. This evaluation of the response coordination and communications is essential for ensuring Jackson County and its response partners continue to build readiness and resilience to respond to and recover from fires and other types of emergencies to which the County is at risk.

This AAR identifies strengths and successes, response actions that worked well, and processes that were implemented during the response. This AAR also identifies capability or capacity gaps as areas for improvement. Recommendations are included to support areas for improvement for Jackson County to consider as emergency management planning, organization, training, and exercise efforts continue across the region. This process will serve to improve emergency management coordination and continue to strengthen the response capabilities for all stakeholders within Jackson County.

Primary Strengths

The major strengths identified for Jackson County are noted below:

- **Rapid response from multiple disciplines and agencies.** People from across many disciplines quickly responded to the fire events and were able to easily pivot to address the aggressive behavior of the fires. Representatives from the Fire Defense Board, Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Jackson County Emergency Management (EM), Jackson County Information Technology (IT), Jackson County Roads and Parks, City of Medford EM, Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon (ECSO) staff, and Oregon State Police (OSP) were among the responders to the EOC in the initial 24 hours.
- **Staffing the Expo to provide support for evacuees.** The Expo was quickly set up as a temporary evacuation center to accept evacuees from both fire incidents. Expo staff and Jackson County personnel coordinated to ensure needed services were provided to residents affected by the fires. Additionally, Jackson County Animal Services staff were quickly able to support the evacuation and care of animals affected by the fire.
- **Relationships and coordination between technology disciplines.** Jackson County IT Department staff and ECSO Geographic Information System (GIS) staff built on

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their existing relationship to quickly produce live evacuation mapping to aid in evacuation planning.

- **Pre-incident regional relationships.** Both fire and law enforcement agencies across the Rogue Valley have strong, established relationships. Additionally, Jackson County Emergency Management (EM) has strong coordination and relationships with neighboring Josephine County EM staff.

Primary Areas for Improvement

The primary areas for improvement and recommended mitigative actions are noted below:

- **Situational Awareness.** County EOC responders were challenged to gather situational awareness in the early hours of the fire incidents. The intensity and speed of the fires coupled with so many agencies responding and the difficulty in establishing static command posts, there was no centralized flow of information.
- **Regional Planning, Training, and Exercising.** Jackson County and its regional partners would benefit from more coordinated emergency operations-related training and region-wide exercises to improve response coordination and communication.
- **Emergency Management Staff.** At the time of the fire incidents, Jackson County had one staffed and one vacant position in the EM Department.
- **Coordination between County and Cities.** Jackson County activated the County EOC, and local cities implemented necessary response mechanisms, but, during the early stages of these events, overall communications were not established between the County EOC and city leadership, creating a gap in understanding conditions on the ground and affected jurisdictions' needs.

Primary Recommendations

- **Increase regional planning, training, and exercising.** Jackson County EM, local jurisdictions, and response agencies within Jackson County will greatly benefit from increased opportunities for planning, training, and exercises for building stronger understanding and coordination of regional resources. These efforts will also improve communications mechanisms and procedures to enhance situational awareness for all response partners during emergencies.
- **Institutionalize processes and procedures.** Many positive collaborations and processes were implemented throughout these fire incidents, such as the effective collaboration between ECSO and the Jackson County IT Department and the organizational structure implemented by County shelter-management staff. These successes should be memorialized and integrated into city- and County-level emergency plans for future emergency responses. Additionally, the intergovernmental agreement between Jackson County and Josephine County for emergency management support was helpful.

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- **Fully staff the County Emergency Management Department.** At the time of the fire incidents and subsequent EOC activation, Jackson County had vacant positions within the EM Department. While not specifically assigned to the Jackson County EM program, many County and external agency staff responded to the County EOC to support response activities, in addition to many staff who were supporting activities remotely. As of this writing, Jackson County has filled the position of Emergency Manager and is in the process of recruiting a Deputy Emergency Manager.

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1. Introduction

The Almeda Drive and South Obenchain wildfires broke out in Jackson County, Oregon, on September 8, 2020, less than 25 miles apart, overwhelming response agencies throughout the Jackson County area. Given the numerous and simultaneous fire events occurring across the State of Oregon as well as in California and Washington, mutual aid resources were limited. These new wildfires prompted evacuations and required Jackson County to establish temporary evacuation points for both affected residents and animals. Providing a safe temporary shelter environment for evacuated residents was a bigger challenge due to the public health measures in place to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

This After-Action Report (AAR) focuses on the first 10 days of the fire events in Jackson County and includes a review of existing emergency plans, incident documentation, and agency AARs completed to develop a baseline of expected emergency response and support procedures. Activities reviewed include coordination and communication activities among the Jackson County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), local jurisdictions, and response agencies. This report also encompasses public information and media outreach, such as evacuation notices and incident updates, and sheltering operations provided to both residents and animals affected by both fire incidents.

Review and evaluation of response coordination and communications are essential for ensuring Jackson County continues to build readiness and resilience to respond to and recover from fires and other types of emergencies to which the County is at risk. This AAR highlights areas of strengths, response actions that worked well, and processes implemented during the response that should be incorporated into emergency planning. This AAR also identifies areas for improvement and associated recommendations to address identified gaps and provide a blueprint for future planning, organization, training, and exercise efforts across the County.

1.1. County Response

The Jackson County EOC was activated on September 8, 2020, at approximately 11:30 A.M in response to the Almeda Drive fire, which began in the City of Ashland. The EOC monitored fire-response activities and coordinated public notifications and evacuation notices. Governor Kate Brown had previously declared a statewide state of emergency due to an ongoing imminent threat of wildfire on August 19, 2020. Soon after the fires started in Jackson County on September 8th, the Governor invoked the Emergency Conflagration Act for both the Almeda Drive fire (Executive Order 20-44) and the South Obenchain fire (Executive Order 20-51) in accordance with ORS 476.510 - 476.610, determining a threat to a life, safety, and property due to fire existed and the threat exceeded the capabilities of local firefighting personnel and equipment. These declarations authorized the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal to mobilize resources to assist local resources battling the fires. As part of this AAR, a detailed timeline, including key aspects of fire activities, is included in Appendix B. As of this writing, the Jackson County EOC remains activated, although virtually, to coordinate and oversee recovery activities for residents affected by the Almeda Drive and South Obenchain fires.

1.2. AAR Methodology

To develop this report, numerous documents and caches of information were reviewed to understand existing processes in place at the time of the fire incidents and how stakeholders are meant to coordinate and interact with the Jackson County EOC. This review also served as a baseline to compare data collected through interviews and debriefs. Table 1 lists the documentation reviewed for this AAR.

Table 1: Documents and Information Reviewed

Reviewed Documents and Information	Reviewed Documents and Information
Jackson County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)	City of Ashland Public Notification Records and AAR
Jackson County Animal Shelter Plan	City of Butte Falls Fire Incident AAR
Jackson County EOC Incident Actions Plans (IAPs)/Daily Reports	City of Medford Evacuation Information/Public Notifications
Jackson County Press Releases	City of Phoenix Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
Jackson County Sheriff After-Action Report (AAR)	City of Talent EOP
City of Central Point EOP	Medford Water Commission Notices
Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon Dispatch Records	Mercy Flight AAR
Oregon Department of Transportation Communications	One-on-one interviews
Citizen Alert (Everbridge) Records	Jackson County IT GIS Data

Supplemental to the document and information review, one-on-one interviews were conducted with stakeholders across the County from multiple agencies and organizations involved with the fire response. Appendix C includes a detailed overview of the AAR process. Table 2 lists those entities that were available for interviews. One item of note related to interviews is that the individual serving as the Jackson County Emergency Manager during the fire incidents departed the position at the beginning of the AAR process; although she did provide some documentation from the event, she did not participate in the interview process.

Table 2: Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder Agencies Interviewed	Stakeholder Agencies Interviewed
Jackson County Administrator's Office	City of Ashland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management - Fire Department - Public Works - Human Resources

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Stakeholder Agencies Interviewed	Stakeholder Agencies Interviewed
Jackson County Animal Services	City of Butte Falls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management - Fire Department
Jackson County Commissioners	City of Central Point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management
Jackson County IT Department	City of Medford <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management - Emergency Management - Fire Department
Jackson County Roads and Parks Department	City of Phoenix <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management - Police Department
Jackson County Fire Defense Board	City of Shady Cove <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management
Jackson County Fire District 3	City of Talent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Police Department
Jackson County Fire District 5	5 O'clock Marketing
Josephine County Emergency Management	Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon (ECSO)
American Red Cross	Oregon Department of Transportation
Oregon State Police	Follow up with community members who requested an opportunity to provide feedback
Oregon Department of Forestry	

2. Analysis

This section reviews major strengths and areas for improvement identified throughout the AAR process. Each observation is identified as a strength or an area for improvement, identifies associated core capabilities, is based on observations documented through the data-collection process, and, if appropriate, presents recommendations that are specific and actionable.

The following eight core capabilities are included in this AAR:

- Situational Awareness
- Operational Coordination
- Public Information and Warning
- Operational Communications
- Mass Care Services
- Planning
- Critical Transportation (Evacuation Support)
- Community Resilience

2.1. Situational Awareness

This section provides strengths and areas for improvement related to all situational awareness-related activities during the response to the Almeda Drive and South Obenchain fire incidents.

2.1.1. Strength: Strong working relationships among ECSO, Jackson County Information Technology (IT), and EM

Observation: ECSO GIS personnel, Jackson County IT, and Jackson County EM have an established working relationship and were able to coordinate quickly.

Core Capabilities: Situational Awareness, Operational Coordination

Analysis: GIS personnel from ECSO worked closely with Jackson County IT and EM staff very early in the response. ECSO embedded a staff member within the EOC to ensure timely information sharing occurred between 9-1-1 dispatchers and EM staff. They quickly ramped up mapping efforts. The team was able to establish connections and mapping coordination in the early hours of the incident to provide dispatchers with live updates to pass along to residents looking for information. They collaborated to develop live evacuation maps, which assisted with public notification and planning. Initially, maps were internal and used to generate static PDFs that were shared through press releases, on the website, and through social media posts. Once the interactive map was made publicly available, subsequent press releases and public web and social media posts shared the link to the live map.

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Recommendation:

- Encourage continued collaboration among ECSO, County IT, and EM staff by conducting exercises to fine-tune mapping and GIS capabilities during EOC activations.

2.1.2. Strength: Creation of IT Section in County EOC

Observation: Jackson County EOC created an IT Section to centralize IT efforts.

Core Capabilities: Situational Awareness, Operational Coordination

Analysis: Days into the incident, Jackson County EOC created the IT Section and added it as a full section in the County EOC to centralize IT and GIS functions. The IT Section elevated IT needs; expedited coordination with Public Information Officer (PIO) activities, including posting maps to the County website and social media; and maintained the IT needs (including equipment and connectivity) of the EOC and Command Posts.

Recommendations:

- Memorialize effective operational practices established during the fires, including development of operational procedures and establishment of the IT Section within the EOC.

2.1.3. Area for Improvement: County EOC challenged to establish situational awareness

Observation: In the early hours of the incident, the County EOC had difficulty gathering timely and accurate situational awareness and evacuation information which impacted the ability to send out detailed public alerts. Both law enforcement and fire response personnel were present in the County EOC, however due to the speed and intensity of the fires, radio traffic and field reports were conflicting and unclear.

Core Capabilities: Situational Awareness

Analysis: The County EOC, field response, and some cities did not establish communications with each other early in the response, which created a gap in situational awareness of the conditions on the ground and the support needs in some of these areas. Some cities did not officially activate their EOCs and were under the assumption that, because their responder agencies were communicating with ECSO Dispatch, a connection to the County EOC had been established. Some cities did not activate their EOCs due to the incident causing staffing shortages. Additionally, ECSO dispatchers fielded a high volume of radio traffic from responder agencies and calls from residents through 9-1-1 looking for information regarding actions they should be taking. Many times, the information received by dispatchers was incomplete or inaccurate, and dispatchers spent valuable time deconflicting and confirming information.

Due to the speed and intensity of the fire, establishing a static incident command post was challenging for field agencies in the early hours of the incident. Response activities occurred but were not centralized between fire and law enforcement personnel, making situational awareness more difficult to gather for the County EOC. To complicate matters further, upon arrival of the state and federal Incident Management Teams (IMTs) on September 10, the County EOC

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struggled to establish contact and receive information or briefings from the IMTs. Information flow across the County and with state and federal partners notably improved after the incident stabilized.

Recommendations:

- Develop and implement a situation status data-gathering process that includes essential elements of information (EEI). A developed form/template and sharing process could be developed by local jurisdictions to be used in all EOCs to allow for effective information sharing within the County.
- Upon County EOC activation, immediately determine whether to activate the Citizen Hotline. If opened, broadcast hotline information via media, website, social media, etc. as a primary number for residents looking for information rather than calling 9-1-1 dispatch.
- Develop and update distribution lists to share incident status and situational awareness information among key stakeholders, agency liaisons, and partners. Identify partners with responsibilities for gathering or sharing information during emergencies, such as ECSO, and support deconfliction of information.

2.1.4. Area for Improvement: Key stakeholders absent from briefings

Observation: Some stakeholders working within the EOC were not aware of EOC briefings and, at times, missed opportunities to gather updated response information.

Core Capabilities: Situational Awareness, Planning, Operational Coordination

Analysis: Once the leadership structure within the EOC was established and routine briefings began, some stakeholders working in or within proximity of the EOC were not aware of the briefing schedule.

Recommendations:

- Update the EOC Activation Checklist to include establishing a briefing or information-publishing schedule and ensure the schedule is posted in the EOC and made available to all agency liaisons and key stakeholders.

2.2. Operational Coordination

This section provides strengths and areas for improvement related to all operational coordination-related activities during the response to the Alameda Drive and South Obenchain fire incidents.

2.2.1. Strength: Pre-incident relationships increase coordination

Observation: Established relationships between multiple agencies across the County increased coordination.

Core Capabilities: Operational Coordination, Public Information and Warning

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Analysis: Routine quarterly meetings are held between partner agencies across Jackson County. This regular coordination has built a strong network and culture of collaboration.

2.2.2. Strength: Agency liaisons increased operational coordination

Observation: Local Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Oregon State Police (OSP), and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) representatives and an Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) liaison were able to provide good situational awareness information and support to Jackson County.

Core Capabilities: Operational Coordination, Situational Awareness

Analysis: Representatives from OEM, ODF, OSP, and ODOT were readily available to coordinate with the County EOC. They were able to provide a valuable connection to state agencies and coordination of information and resources from the state. Jackson County was able to secure much-needed portable toilets and laundry trailers with the assistance of the OEM representative that was present in the EOC.

2.2.3. Strength: Established regional relationships

Observation: The Jackson County EOC coordinated well with Josephine County when additional support was needed.

Core Capabilities: Operational Coordination

Analysis: Jackson County has a strong working relationship with Josephine County. They share an intergovernmental agreement for emergency management support. During the fire response, the Jackson County EOC anticipated a need for support with evacuees from assisted living centers and the access and functional needs associated with this population. The Jackson County EOC also coordinated with Josephine County EM for the possibility of needing support with moving evacuees into Josephine County, creating more capacity in the event the fire continued to grow or threatened the temporary evacuation shelter at the Expo. Josephine County also assisted with phone calls and support with the Citizen Alert system and support in coordinating resources such as moving the animal evacuation trailer to the Expo.

2.2.4. Strength: Adaptability and flexibility across County and partner agencies

Observation: Jackson County and partner agencies displayed adaptability and flexibility in their response to the wildfires.

Core Capabilities: Operational Coordination

Analysis: Established relationships between Jackson County and partner agencies resulted in a quick response to the fires. Agencies quickly activated and implemented necessary response activities even though the situation was fast-moving and chaotic in its early hours. Conditions rapidly evolved, and information was difficult to coordinate at first; but, due to strong relationships developed over time, agencies were able to quickly pivot and adapt to the ever-changing conditions to serve communities across the County.

2.2.5. Strength: Strong law enforcement relationships

Observation: Law enforcement agencies across the Rogue Valley are very close knit and communicated well with each other.

Core Capabilities: Operational Coordination

Analysis: Local police departments and the Jackson County Sheriff's Office work closely together on a daily basis. These established connections made coordination during the early chaotic moments of the response as smooth as possible considering the quickly changing environment and the uncertainty of the fire behavior and direction.

2.2.6. Strength: Prior Incident Command System (ICS) training

Observation: The Jackson County IT team previously completed ICS training, but not all staff tasked with working in the EOC had received ICS or other necessary training.

Core Capabilities: Operational Coordination

Analysis: Having completed ICS training, Jackson County IT staff felt comfortable within the EOC environment. They were very flexible and able to fill necessary roles quickly.

2.2.7. Area for Improvement: Response structure and EOC activation not well-communicated to all stakeholders

Observation: The response organizational structure and location of the Incident Command Post (ICP) were not shared effectively with all appropriate emergency response partners. In addition, some response partners were not aware of the County EOC activation or its location.

Core Capability: Operational Coordination, Situational Awareness

Analysis. Due to the dynamic nature of emergency incidents, ICPs may be relocated to a safer location, and any relocation changes should be reported to all incident personnel (e.g., fire and law enforcement). City and County EOC locations are fixed locations that may be relocated to alternate facilities is needed. ICPs address specific incident command and control functions, and EOCs are designed to support ICPs and a broader coordination of policy, leadership, and logistical supply.

The fire was extremely fast moving and dynamic leading to more fluid ICP locations. During the initial 24–48 hours of the incident and due to the erratic fire behavior and rapidly changing situation, one ICP was established for both fire incidents and moved multiple times because of the threat from fire and smoke. Establishing a base command took some time. This information was not widely shared with all stakeholders. In addition, some stakeholders indicated they were unaware the County EOC had been activated, and there was observed confusion regarding the location of the ICP versus the EOC.

Recommendation:

- Develop and disseminate incident action plans (IAPs) and/or EOC Action Plans and situational reports at regular intervals during emergency response activities as soon it is feasible.

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- Update the EOC Activation Checklist to include standard messaging to County personnel and County stakeholders to announce the activation status of the EOC and communicate expected actions.

2.2.8. Area for Improvement: Limited available EOC staff resources

Observation: There was a limited capacity to activate the EOC with the appropriate number of staff and key positions within the early hours of the incident.

Core Capability: Operational Coordination, Planning

Analysis. With limited opportunities to activate and staff the County EOC in recent years, the initial number of EOC responders pre-identified and trained among Jackson County department staff and partner agencies was not adequate in the beginning to support large-scale, sustained EOC operations. This lack of readily available and trained EOC responders presented a challenge in the early hours of the response to establish the EOC organization and leadership. This was addressed during the first operational period of the response, and a functioning EOC leadership and organizational structure was put into place. As mentioned in 2.1.3, some cities experienced staff shortages early on in the incident, which created a gap in information sharing capabilities between some cities and the County EOC. Efforts to broaden engagement with jurisdictions across the county has been attempted in the past with limited success.

Recommendations:

- Provide increased opportunities for ICS– and EOC–specific trainings across all sections to build a stronger cadre of EOC staff.

2.2.9. Area for Improvement: Coordination of road closure

Observation: There was a gap in coordination regarding road closures among ODOT, some city officials, and the County EOC.

Core Capability: Operational Coordination, Planning

Analysis. Some cities indicated that their established evacuation plans were affected by road closures and having advanced notice of the closures would have provided an opportunity to amend those evacuation plans. Some initial road closures had far reaching cross-jurisdictional impacts. And created secondary impacts for cities within Jackson County, creating response challenges such as increased traffic for local officials. Additionally, the lack of information flow meant that local officials did not have the most accurate information on evacuation routes to provide to residents.

Recommendations:

- Consider developing a multi-jurisdictional evacuation planning team or task force to evaluate cascading impacts of evacuation decisions.
- Integrate agency representatives, such as ODOT, into the ICP and EOC environments early in the response to assist in evacuation coordination between impacted jurisdictions.

2.3. Public Information and Warning

This section provides strengths and areas for improvement related to all public information and warning-related activities during the response to the Alameda Drive and South Obenchain fire incidents.

2.3.1. Strength: Designated PIO in Jackson County EOC

Observation: Having a designated contact working within the EOC to coordinate information with incident PIO allowed for accurate and efficient transfer of evacuation information to be included in press releases.

Core Capabilities: Public Information and Warning

Analysis: Jackson County used the services of 5 O'clock Marketing to lead PIO efforts given their existing networks and familiarity with the local media landscape. Jackson County also used a local ODOT representative who routinely performs PIO duties for ODOT. He was able to report to the County EOC and work closely with 5 O'clock Marketing to develop and disseminate press releases and other media information.

2.3.2. Strength: Use of the Citizen Alert notification system

Observation: In many cases, the Citizen Alert system was used to provide timely and targeting evacuation alerts to residents affected by both fire incidents.

Core Capabilities: Public Information and Warning

Analysis: Thirty-nine alerts were issued between September 8 at 11:52 a.m. and September 24 at 5:25 p.m. through the Citizen Alert system. Fifteen of these alerts were issued during the first 48 hours of the fire incidents. The Citizen Alert system contains landline phone number information for address located within the County; However, residents must opt-in (sign up) to receive additional email, text messages, or phone calls on mobile devices. Reaching residents who had not opted in presented a challenge. The Citizen Alert system was used for this incident because of its ability to designate specific evacuation areas within the geo polygon and provide detailed and targeted instructions, including maps.

Media accounts after the initial fire response indicated that the communities may not have an understanding on the various alerting methods available to Jackson County and under what circumstances and conditions certain alerting tools would be most appropriate to provide the most effective information to residents during emergencies. Some jurisdiction officials interviewed also seemed confused as to why the Emergency Alert System (EAS) was not used. AS described in more detail below, EAS is a more general alerting method that uses television and radio to disseminate information. Necessary detailed maps and other directional tools are not available through EAS, which is a benefit to using a more targeted alerting method such as Citizen Alert.

The EAS, accessible through the Citizen Alert system, is intended to broadcast general messaging such as severe weather and other emergencies through television and radio. The EAS, compared to the Citizen Alert tool, has limited capabilities to include details such as maps

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and specific instructions for different areas of the incident. Closures of main transportation arteries were necessary due to erratic fire conditions and heavy smoke, resulting in an added challenge to evacuation efforts. Detailed evacuation notifications including specific mapped areas needing to evacuate were necessary to avoid unintended evacuations and unnecessary traffic.

Throughout this AAR process, fire and law enforcement officials expressed concern that a broad emergency message across the county with limited details and no way to customize the message for different areas would have resulted in increased chaos and possibly injuries and death. Residents would either evacuate when they were safer sheltering in place, or may try to enter fire-affected areas to check on home status or collect belongings or pets, which would have exacerbated traffic congestion and possibly put residents at risk of being trapped on congested roadways.

Recommendations:

- Collaborate with Jackson County jurisdictions to create a crisis communications plan to memorialize processes implemented throughout this incident. It could include a description of the various public alert methods and appropriate uses for each.
- Continue to use public awareness campaigns to increase socialization and awareness of the Citizen Alert system, including the types of alerts a resident may receive and expected actions. Specifically, education on evacuation levels and expectations for each level (1, 2, and 3 and "Be Ready, Be Set, Go!").

2.3.3. Strength: Effective door to door evacuations

Observation: Local law enforcement officials conducted door-to-door evacuations successfully throughout the fire affected areas

Core Capabilities: Public Information and Warning

Analysis: Door-to-door evacuation notifications were conducted by multiple law enforcement agencies resulting in most residents being evacuated to safety.

2.3.4. Strength: Multi-tiered public information approach

Observation: The County and some cities implemented a multi-tiered approach to public notifications.

Core Capabilities: Public Information and Warning

Analysis: Jackson County used many methods to provide residents with vital incident updates including the Citizen Alert System, the County EM webpage and Facebook page, press conferences, press releases, availability of officials for press statements, and the Citizen Hotline. Additionally, the County EOC created an interactive evacuation map with the latest evacuation areas and provided them to the public through press releases and the County website. One local jurisdiction created a page on its city website for the Alameda Drive fire and provided direct links to Jackson County Sheriff's Office to avoid duplicative or erroneous information.

2.3.5. Strength: Use of Jackson County Citizen Hotline

Observation: The County Citizen Hotline was activated and staffed to handle increased call volume from residents.

Core Capabilities: Public Information and Warning

Analysis: Activation of the County Citizen Hotline is a noted strength, but, originally, it was co-located in the EOC. The concurrent operation added noise and competition for space in an already challenging operational environment. The Citizen Hotline was subsequently moved to an alternate location, which allowed for additional staff and a dedicated environment. There are currently two locations identified for the EOC and Citizen Hotline, they have the ability to be interchanged as needed.

2.3.6. Area for Improvement: Limited staff with access to Citizen Alert system

Observation: At the time of the fires, a limited number of people had authority, access, and training to disseminate emergency messages through the mass notification system, Citizen Alert (Everbridge).

Core Capabilities: Public Information and Warning, Planning

Analysis: At the time of the fire, people available with training and access to the Citizen Alert system were limited to two, the Jackson County Emergency Manager and the Josephine County Emergency Manager. The Jackson County Emergency Manager was also initially responsible for EOC activation during the beginning of the fire events. Multiple people working in the EOC indicated that the Emergency Manager had a significant number of responsibilities in the early moments of the incident and was unable to distribute emergency notifications in the incident's early stages. This was resolved with the designation of an EOC Incident Commander (IC), allowing the Jackson County Emergency Manager to focus on emergency alerting duties. The State of Oregon recently rolled out "OR-Alert" for all counties in Oregon. Additional training and resources are available through the State contract with Everbridge.

Recommendations:

- Develop a SOP to outline the process for the Citizen Alert system, including authorities, access capabilities, and contingency plans for system outages and identify additional staff to support emergency public information and mass notification. Cross-train staff to back-up the primary individual using the mass notification system.

2.3.7. Area for Improvement: Coordination for evacuation messaging amongst stakeholders

Observation: There was confusion within some local jurisdictions as to who was responsible for evacuation alerting and whether alerts were being disseminated.

Core Capabilities: Public Information and Warning, Planning, Operational Coordination

Analysis: Some local jurisdictions reported that they were not sure whether the County was executing emergency alerting to residents. According to many local jurisdictions' EOPs,

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emergency alerting to residents for things such as evacuations is the responsibility of local officials. The County provides emergency alerting to the unincorporated areas of the County as well as support if requested by a local jurisdiction. Some local jurisdictions did implement local emergency-alerting processes, and other jurisdictions associated with both the Alameda Drive and South Obenchain fires reported that they primarily relied on door-to-door evacuation notification with reported success. Because the County EOC and some of the cities included in the evacuation areas were not communicating, the County initiate some evacuation alerts through the Citizen Alert system.

Recommendations:

- Develop an emergency management working group (if one does not already exist) with representatives from Jackson County, cities, and other jurisdictions within the County to review or develop emergency communication plans and guidance.
- Develop a strategy for coordinating emergency messaging and information between alerting authorities. The strategy would serve to clarify emergency alerting responsibilities for both local jurisdictions and the County.

2.3.8. Area for Improvement: Registration for Citizen Alert

Observation: Public awareness for various emergency alerting systems and registrations for Citizen Alert need to be increased, and residents need better understanding of the opt-in requirement.

Core Capabilities: Public Information and Warning, Community Resilience

Analysis: The Citizen Alert system has multiple data sets, including landline phone numbers, yellow pages, white pages and resident opt-ins which can include text message and email notification information. Additionally, based on media reports regarding the use of EAS, the public could benefit from more information regarding the types of emergency alerting used throughout the County, when they are appropriate, and what sort of actions may be expected.

Recommendations:

- Continue to collaborate with Josephine County on public education and outreach covering signing up for Citizen Alert, what to expect during an emergency, and where to find information in times of emergency.

2.3.9. Area for Improvement: PIO responsibilities were unclear to some stakeholders

Observation: It was not always clear to some key stakeholders who was responsible for PIO activities in the County EOC.

Core Capabilities: Public Information and Warning, Planning

Analysis: While those working within the County EOC were aware of who was assigned PIO responsibilities, this was not widely communicated to all stakeholders. Some city officials reported not being clear on who they should have reached out to coordinate media and public information. Additionally, it was reported that, on September 9, 2021, the State of Oregon Fire

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Marshall's Office dispatched a Type II Incident Management Team (IMT), which included a PIO. Once they arrived, the State of Oregon PIO indicated to Jackson County EOC leadership that they would be overseeing all media relations related to both the Almeda Drive and South Obenchain fire incidents moving forward. Communications between the State PIO team and the County EOC were not effectively integrated. The State IMT remained in the lead role for all communications and briefings until September 15, at which time they returned management of the Almeda Drive fire to Jackson County. The Oregon State Fire Marshall's IMT remained the lead for the South Obenchain fire for several more weeks. This created confusion and lack of situation awareness for the County EOC and did not allow for free flow of information from Jackson County officials through the local media to residents.

Recommendations:

- Identify and train a cadre of staff to fill the PIO role in the event of an EOC activation

2.3.10. Area for Improvement: Integration of Citizen Hotline operations

Observation: Citizen Hotline operators, at times, received delayed incident-update information.

Core Capabilities: Public Information and Warning, Planning

Analysis: Citizen Hotline management reported they would have benefitted from more timely and accurate updates from the County EOC to ensure effective information sharing with residents who called in. There was not a well-established information flow between information shared in EOC briefings and Citizen Hotline staff.

Recommendations:

- Review and update appropriate plans to ensure consistent messaging and information dissemination to key stakeholders, including the Citizen Hotline management.

2.4. Operational Communications

This section provides strengths and areas for improvement related to all operational communications-related activities during the response to the Almeda Drive and South Obenchain fire incidents.

2.4.1. Strength: Real time mapping and CAD capabilities

Observation: In the early hours of the incident, ECSO used the CAD system to provide up-to-the-minute mapping updates to field responders.

Core Capability: Operational Communications, Situational Awareness

Analysis: ECSO was able to work closely with County IT staff to use its CAD system to provide live evacuation map updates to field responders. Additionally, ECSO has the capability to share real-time mapping data through a CAD screen in the EOC, which would have been useful in providing up-to-the-minute evacuation and fire-activity data.

Recommendation:

- Integrate requesting a liaison from ECSO into EOC activation SOP to improve coordination and information-sharing.

2.4.2. Strength: Strong communications with fire and law responders

Observation: Jurisdictions involved with the South Obenchain fire reported good communication with the Fire District and the Jackson County Sheriff's Office.

Core Capability: Operational Communications

Analysis: Jurisdictions involved in the South Obenchain fire reported that communications with the Fire District and Jackson County Sheriff deputies worked very well. Sheriff deputies were instrumental in supporting evacuation and information sharing, and fire officials checked in routinely to gather information on support needs and conditions on the ground.

2.5. Mass Care Services

This section provides strengths and areas for improvement related to all mass care-related activities during the response to the Alameda Drive and South Obenchain fire incidents.

2.5.1. Strength: County, private sector, and community-based organization collaboration

Observation: Staff from many County departments and community-based organizations came together to quickly prepare the Expo facility as a Temporary Evacuation Point (TEP) to provide assistance to evacuees.

Core Capability: Mass Care Services

Analysis: Many evacuees were from assisted living facilities and were medically fragile. One local area hospital provided staff to the Expo to address the needs of medically fragile evacuees and assisted in securing much needed oxygen. Mercy Flights activated its explorer program to support the triage area at the Expo.

2.5.2. Strength: Communications with the Rogue Valley Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD)

Observation: The Rogue Valley COAD was able to successfully communicate needs to the County EOC in regard to shelter activities.

Core Capability: Mass Care Services, Operational Communications

Analysis: The EOC was able to effectively publicize the needs of evacuees located at the shelter so that donations requests (e.g., clean blankets) were quickly fulfilled. Community-based organizations and individuals were very responsive to the needs of residents affected by the fires. Many local nonprofit and faith-based organizations provided services, and they could have been better organized and coordinated if they were part of the COAD.

Recommendation:

- Jurisdictions and the County work together to promote coordination and membership of the Rogue Valley COAD.

2.5.3. Strength: Temporary Evacuation Point (TEP) coordination and support

Observation: Jackson County staff from various departments were able to quickly prepare the Expo as a temporary evacuation center. County agencies coordinated to provide needed support service to the evacuees.

Core Capability: Mass Care Services

Analysis: The Expo was being used as a COVID-19 quarantine area before the fire incidents, so the transition to a temporary evacuation center was seamless. Jackson County staff at the Expo collaborated with the Jackson County Sheriff's Office to create a mechanism for evacuees to report online that they were safe. On the second day of the incident, the Jackson County Crisis Team was deployed to provide crisis services, which eventually transformed into a larger, more robust resource area for evacuees to access various social services.

2.5.4. Strength: Well-positioned resources

Observation: The Expo had the necessary resources for shelter operations readily available.

Core Capability: Mass Care Services

Analysis: Due to the COVID pandemic, and public health activities staged at the Expo, such as quarantine areas and personal protective equipment (PPE) staging, the Expo had appropriate resources readily available as it transitioned to a temporary evacuation center for fire evacuees. The Expo also had readily available space and resources to support the animals which had also been evacuated. Jackson County Animal Services staff were able to support evacuated animals at the Expo with a mobile emergency pet shelter trailer as the usual animal shelter location had to be evacuated due to fire progression. Jackson County Animal Services staff also supported livestock affected by the South Obenchain fire that had to shelter-in-place.

Recommendation:

- Consider developing additional caches of emergency supplies to support shelter management and stage them at key facilities (such as the Expo) to expedite shelter activation.

2.5.5. Strength: Public health protocols maintained

Observation: No cases of COVID-19 transmission were traced to the shelter.

Core Capability: Mass Care Services

Analysis: No reported cases of COVID-19 were traceable to temporary evacuation activities. The Expo provided a staging and storage area for PPE for COVID-19-related support, so, once the Expo transitioned an area for fire evacuees, PPE was readily available to ensure public health measures were immediately in place and maintained.

2.5.6. Strength: ICS structure implemented by County staff at Expo

Observation: County staff managing shelter activities implemented an internal ICS structure made up of staff from various County departments. This greatly increased coordination efforts.

Core Capability: Mass Care Services, Operational Coordination

Analysis: Jackson County staff assigned to the Expo implemented an ICS-type structure to coordinate staff and ensure effective collaboration and communication flow.

Recommendation:

- While the ARC remains the primary sheltering partner for the county, memorialize the processes used to implement and coordinate shelter activities in plans and procedures. Conduct training and exercises in shelter operations to expand the County's internal shelter-management capabilities to initiate or supplement sheltering operations when American Red Cross may not have the capacity to support emergency efforts to its fullest extent.

2.5.7. Strength: Successful evacuation and shelter of animals

Observation: Jackson County Animal Services staff were heavily involved in both fire incidents supporting animal evacuation and shelter efforts.

Core Capability: Mass Care Services, Operational Coordination

Analysis: Jackson County Animal Services staff provided a trailer for housing animals to the Expo to support animal evacuation activities, in addition to performing rescue for injured animals. They were also involved in supporting the needs of livestock and assisting in locating animals left behind in the South Obenchain fire area. Animal Services staff provided care and feeding for livestock not able to be evacuated. Additionally, the permanent animal shelter location which was being used to house animals for evacuated residents became threatened by fire and had to be evacuated.

2.5.8. Area for Improvement: Limited capacity of American Red Cross

Observation: The American Red Cross (ARC) had limited capacity to support sheltering operations for evacuees at the start of the incident.

Core Capability: Mass Care Services

Analysis: With 2020 being one of the most destructive fire seasons in Oregon's history, ARC Cascade Region, which covers the State of Oregon and southern Washington, was responding to many fires simultaneously, which limited its capacity to respond swiftly and with the adequate numbers of personnel.

Recommendation:

- See Recommendation in Section 2.5.6.

2.5.9. Area for Improvement: Pre-identification of potential shelter locations

Observation: Additional mass care and shelter locations should be identified.

Core Capability: Mass Care Services

Analysis: During the Alameda Drive fire, a few localized temporary shelters were opened and/or planned. These activities were not coordinated through ARC or the County EOC but through local community-based organizations wanting to assist residents affected by evacuations. These activities could have been better supported through the County EOC if they had been activated as part of the overall county response.

Recommendation:

- Jurisdictions and the County work with ARC to continue to identify potential shelter locations.

2.5.10. Area for Improvement: Delay of implementation of hotel voucher program

Observation: Due to COVID-19 public health guidance on non-congregate sheltering, the Red Cross was to implement a hotel voucher program. There was a significant delay in implementing this program to support the evacuees.

Core Capability: Mass Care Services

Analysis: Due to COVID-19 and public health challenges related to traditional sheltering, the plan was to activate a and have ARC provide hotel vouchers instead of traditional congregate sheltering, which was based on information provided to counties across Oregon prior to the beginning of fire season. Complications arose in providing these vouchers, and the number of evacuees was overwhelming, which resulted in implementation of congregate sheltering instead of the planned non-congregate sheltering during the early days of the incident.

Recommendation:

- In addition to the recommendation referenced in Section 2.5.8, continue routine meetings with local ARC representatives to ensure communications are maintained and capacity expectations are shared.

2.5.11. Area for Improvement: Communication challenges between American Red Cross and Jackson County EOC

Observation: Jackson County EOC and County shelter operations staff experienced communication failures at multiple levels from the ARC.

Core Capability: Mass Care Services

Analysis: Consistent ARC staffing at the County EOC and the Expo presented coordination challenges. ARC staff assigned as liaisons to work within the County EOC changed regularly, making it difficult to establish consistent communication between the EOC and the Expo. Additionally, the local district level ARC staff changed multiple times, resulting in Jackson County shelter operations staff needing to provide a recap of shelter activities, needs, and available resource, which wasted valuable time and slowed progress. There were also discrepancies between the messaging coming from the ARC shelter managers and the information being received through the ARC liaison and ARC leadership. This created a disconnect between shelter activities at the Expo and the County EOC.

Recommendation:

- For County EOC activations, request that the ARC provide a consistent, management-level ARC representative who has the capability to remain involved, updated, and knowledgeable on incident events to address duplication of effort, inconsistent messaging, and loss of incident continuity. In addition, the County should consider developing a shelter staff contingency plan to support onsite shelter operations if ARC staff are delayed or unavailable.

2.6. Planning

This section provides strengths and areas for improvement related to all planning-related activities during the response to the Alameda Drive and South Obenchain fire incidents.

2.6.1. Strength: Forward planning preceding wind event

Observation: Upon receiving heightened fire weather report and prior to the start of the fires, Jackson County EM and fire response agencies communicated to discuss possible response needs.

Core Capabilities: Planning, Operational Coordination

Analysis: Having warning of the wind event provided an opportunity for communications between various fire-response agencies and County EM to establish a more forward-leaning posture.

Recommendation:

- Implement a multi-jurisdictional coordination procedure with key partners when inclement weather or other potentials hazards are forthcoming. Partners should include various Jackson County departments, the National Weather Service, fire agencies, law enforcement, mass care partners, and cities' leadership to ensure everyone understands the possible threats and hazards and expectations of response.

2.6.2. Strength: Pre-planning with state agencies

Observation: County fire officials met with the State Fire Marshal's office upon notice of wind event.

Core Capabilities: Planning, Operational Coordination

Analysis: County fire officials met with the State Fire Marshal's office prior to the onset of fire weather, providing important intelligence on the status and lack of available statewide resources should a fire occur. Jackson County officials understood that, because of the high number of fire incidents across the state, state resources would most likely be unavailable or delayed if a fire started in Jackson County. While the statewide resource shortage created operational challenges, understanding these limitations in advance of a threat greatly enhances local resource planning.

2.6.3. Strength: Use of county staff in EOC and shelter operations

Observation: Many Jackson County staff responded to support shelter activities and the EOC that may have not participated in emergency response activities before.

Core Capabilities: Planning

Analysis: County staff from multiple departments responded to the EOC and to the Expo to assist in supporting evacuees and sheltering activities. Some responding staff were new to these environments, and many had not been involved in emergency response activities before this event. This presents an opportunity to build on the experience gained by many staff members by formalizing training opportunities to build a stronger cadre of shelter operations and EOC response teams.

2.6.4. Area for Improvement: Lack of regional training and exercise opportunities

Observation: Prior to the fire, limited cross-jurisdictional opportunities existed to train and exercise response and recovery objectives.

Core Capabilities: Planning

Analysis: Many stakeholders reported a lack of opportunities for emergency response trainings or exercises preceding the fire incident. This could have contributed to some of the reported challenge in communications and in establishing good situational awareness.

Recommendation:

- Develop a multi-year training and exercise plan and include cities and emergency response agencies in the plan development.

2.6.5. Area for Improvement: Lack of familiarity to the County EOC location and function

Observation: Some County staff indicated that they lacked knowledge about the function of the EOC. They were not certain of its location or its role in a response.

Core Capabilities: Planning

Analysis: Some County personnel reported that they were not sure of the location or function of the County EOC. Orientation or information provided to all County staff would be useful to help staff at least be familiar with the EOC and its activities in the event they are asked to respond to future events.

Recommendation:

- County EM could develop a County Emergency Management and EOC overview document to be included with new employee orientation materials. Additionally, refresher information should be disseminated to all County staff to include training opportunities to develop EOC staff.

2.6.6. Area for Improvement: Challenge activating traditional EOC structure

Observation: The County EOC initially lacked a traditional ICS structure, such as established Logistics and Planning Sections, in the early hours of the incident.

Core Capabilities: Planning, Operational Coordination

Analysis: Jackson County noted that it took time to activate the Planning and Logistics Sections, but they were staffed and operational within the early days of the response. Based on the IAP dated September 8–12, 2020, a Planning Section Chief was requested. In the early days of the response, the Logistics Section was led by Expo staff working on-site at the Expo but not reporting to the EOC. Stakeholders may not have been fully aware of the structure being implemented in the EOC because they may not have received IAPs and daily reports that would have communicated this information.

Recommendation:

- Implement a standard NIMS compliant EOC organizational structure and develop a cadre of Jackson County personnel who are trained on the various ICS Section Chief positions.

2.6.7. Area for Improvement: Fill vacant EM positions

Observation: At the time of the fire incidents, Jackson County EM had one staffed position and one vacant position.

Core Capabilities: Planning

Analysis: Any incident of this magnitude requires a large amount of human resources to carry out successful coordination activities. At the time of the fire incidents, Jackson County EM consisted of two full-time positions, although one was vacant at the time. According to the County's EOP, the County EM is responsible for establishing and maintaining an effective public warning system, maintaining the current EOC call lists and duty assignments, and documenting the disaster, among other duties. Although, while not specifically assigned to the Jackson County EM program, many county and external agency staff responded to the County EOC to support response activities, in addition to many staff who were supporting activities remotely. Jackson County EM was supported by these EOC responders, however, there were many responsibilities for EM that would have better served with a fully staffed EM department.

Recommendation:

- The County would greatly benefit from a full staff and possibly a more robust emergency management program with additional staff positions and a focus on county-wide planning, training, and exercising.

2.7. Critical Transportation and Evacuation Support

This section provides strengths and areas for improvement related to all critical transportation- and evacuation support-related activities during the response to the Alameda Drive and South Obenchain fire incidents.

2.7.1. Strength: Coordination for anticipated evacuation needs

Observation: Fire officials, law enforcement and Jackson County EM coordinated within the EOC to anticipate fire direction and evacuation levels that would be needed.

Core Capability: Critical Transportation/Evacuation Support, Operational Coordination

Analysis: Fire District personnel in the EOC collaborated with Jackson County EM to anticipate fire direction and strategize evacuation levels for areas expected to be in the path of the fire. Jackson County Sheriff's Office coordinated to develop and use evacuation maps to assist troopers and deputies from neighboring counties who were conducting door-to-door evacuation notifications.

2.8. Community and Infrastructure Resilience

This section provides strengths and areas for improvement related to all community and infrastructure resilience-related activities during the response to the Alameda Drive and South Obenchain fire incidents. Review of community and infrastructure was not included within the scope of this AAR but these items were discussed during the data gathering phase and were deemed noteworthy.

2.8.1. Strength: Activated alternate facilities

Observation: The County EOC and ECSO both have identified alternate locations.

Core Capability: Community Resilience, Operational Coordination

Analysis: The County EOC and the ECSO facility are co-located in the same building. To ensure resiliency and continued service delivery in the event of an emergency affecting the primary County EOC and ECSO facility, both have identified alternate locations at the Jackson County Sheriff's Office. During the fire response, ECSO used the alternate location for added capacity for backup 9-1-1 services. Additionally, the County Citizen Hotline (i.e., the call center) was also relocated from the EOC to this alternate facility.

3. Conclusion

Jackson County experienced a rare fire event on September 8, 2020, when many factors occurred to create a worst-case emergency scenario. The Alameda Drive fire, driven by 35- to 45-mile-an-hour winds and low humidity, quickly burned along a 13-mile northern path beginning in Ashland before finally being stopped just south of Medford. While fighting the Alameda Drive fire, the South Obenchain fire erupted approximately 25 miles away, presenting fire districts with a challenge to allocate county resources. Conditions across the State of Oregon were such that mutual aid resources for Jackson County were sparse at best, given that the state was experiencing a historically busy fire season. Tens of thousands of Jackson County residents were forced to quickly flee their homes, and, sadly, three residents lost their lives.

Considering the rapid movement of the fire, the close proximity of the fire to large residential areas, and the necessary closures to main transportation arteries, the limited loss of life is a testament to the quick coordination and strong relationships among fire officials, law enforcement, Jackson County agencies, state agencies, community organizations, and the communities in which they serve.

Jackson County undertook this AAR process to highlight successes and review processes and protocols implemented during the response. This report provides key findings that demonstrate strengths for codification as best practices and areas for improvement that can be addressed immediately, further improving Jackson County's ability to respond to future emergencies and disasters.

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Appendix A: Improvement Plan

The Improvement Plan was developed for Jackson County as part of the Jackson County 2020 Fire Incidents After-Action Report (AAR) process. Observations and recommendations in the Improvement Plan were established as part of the AAR process. This Improvement Plan also includes Completion Targets for tracking planning and progress for recommendation implementation, which is intended to be updated and revised as conditions change over time. This Improvement Plan includes recommended items to address observations made throughout the AAR process. While this AAR focused primarily on activities conducted through the Jackson County Emergency Operations Center, many of the recommendations are designed to encourage coordination and collaboration among Jackson County departments, local jurisdictions, and emergency responding agencies and organizations and will have shared responsibilities. Additionally, it greatly benefits local jurisdictions to review these recommendations and determine how some can be incorporated into local emergency planning efforts to build more congruent emergency planning across Jackson County.

Section	Core Capability/ Capabilities	Observation	Recommended Action(s)	Lead Agency	Completion Target (Short-Mid-Long)
2.1.1	Situational Awareness, Operational Coordination	ECSO GIS personnel, Jackson County IT, and Jackson County EM have an established working relationship and were able to coordinate quickly.	Encourage continued collaboration among ECSO, County IT, and EM staff by conducting exercises to fine-tune mapping and GIS capabilities during EOC activations.		
2.1.2	Situational Awareness, Operational Coordination	Jackson County EOC created an IT Section to centralize IT efforts.	Memorialize effective operational practices established during the fires, including development of operational procedures and establishment of the IT Section within the EOC.		
2.1.3	Situational Awareness, Operational Coordination	In the early hours of the incident, the County EOC had difficulty gathering timely and accurate situational awareness and evacuation information which impacted the ability to send out detailed public alerts. Both law enforcement and fire response	Develop and implement a situation status data-gathering process that includes essential elements of information (EEI). A developed form/template and sharing process could be developed by local jurisdictions to be used in all EOCs to allow for effective information sharing within the County.		
			Upon County EOC activation, immediately determine whether to activate the Citizen Hotline. If opened,		

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Section	Core Capability/ Capabilities	Observation	Recommended Action(s)	Lead Agency	Completion Target (Short-Mid-Long)
		personnel were present in the County EOC, however due to the speed and intensity of the fires, radio traffic and field reports were conflicting and unclear.	broadcast hotline information via media, website, social media, etc. as a primary number for residents looking for information rather than calling 9-1-1 dispatch.		
			Develop and update distribution lists to share incident status and situational awareness information among key stakeholders, agency liaisons, and partners. Identify partners with responsibilities for gathering or sharing information during emergencies, such as ECSO, and support deconfliction of information.		
2.1.4	Situational Awareness, Planning, Operational Coordination	Some stakeholders working within the EOC were not aware of EOC briefings and, at times, missed opportunities to gather updated response information.	Update the EOC Activation Checklist to include establishing a briefing or information-publishing schedule and ensure the schedule is posted in the EOC and made available to all agency liaisons and key stakeholders.		
2.2.7	Operational Coordination, Situational Awareness	The response organizational structure and location of the Incident Command Post (ICP) were not shared effectively with all appropriate emergency response partners. In addition, some response partners were not aware of the County EOC activation or its location.	Develop and disseminate incident action plans (IAPs) and/or EOC Action Plans and situational reports at regular intervals during emergency response activities as soon it is feasible.		
			Update the EOC Activation Checklist to include standard messaging to County personnel and County stakeholders to announce the activation status of the EOC and communicate expected actions.		
2.2.8	Operational Coordination, Planning	There was a limited capacity to activate the EOC with the appropriate number of staff and key positions within the early hours of the incident.	Provide increased opportunities for ICS– and EOC– specific trainings across all sections to build a stronger cadre of EOC staff.		

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Section	Core Capability/ Capabilities	Observation	Recommended Action(s)	Lead Agency	Completion Target (Short-Mid-Long)
Error! Reference source not found.	Operational Coordination, Planning	There was a gap in coordination regarding road closures among ODOT, some city officials, and the County EOC.	Consider developing a multi-jurisdictional evacuation planning team or task force to evaluate cascading impacts of evacuation decisions.		
			Integrate agency representatives, such as ODOT, into the ICP and EOC environments early in the response to assist in evacuation coordination between impacted jurisdictions.		
2.3.2	Public Information and Warning	In many cases, the Citizen Alert system was used to provide timely and targeting evacuation alerts to residents affected by both fire incidents.	Collaborate with Jackson County jurisdictions to create a crisis communications plan to memorialize processes implemented throughout this incident and to identify potential PIO staff and resources they may need. It could include a description of the various public alert methods used both from the county and from individual cities and appropriate uses for each.		
			Continue to use public awareness campaigns to increase socialization and awareness of the Citizen Alert system, including the types of alerts a resident may receive and expected actions. Specifically, education on evacuation levels and expectations for each level (1, 2, and 3 and "Be Ready, Be Set, Go!").		
2.3.6	Public Information and Warning, Planning	At the time of the fires, a limited number of people had authority, access, and training to disseminate emergency messages through the mass notification system (Everbridge).	Develop a SOP to outline the process for the Citizen Alert system, including authorities, access capabilities, and contingency plans for system outages and identify additional staff to support emergency public information and mass notification. Cross-train staff to back-up the primary individual using the mass notification system.		
2.3.7	Public Information and Warning,	There was confusion within some local jurisdictions as to who was responsible for evacuation alerting	Develop an emergency management working group (if one does not already exist) with representatives from Jackson County, cities, and other jurisdictions		

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Section	Core Capability/ Capabilities	Observation	Recommended Action(s)	Lead Agency	Completion Target (Short-Mid-Long)
	Planning, Operational Coordination	and whether alerts were being disseminated.	within the County to review or develop emergency communication plans and guidance.		
			Develop a strategy for coordinating emergency messaging and information between alerting authorities. The strategy would serve to clarify emergency alerting responsibilities for both local jurisdictions and the County.		
2.3.8	Public Information and Warning, Community Resilience	Public awareness for various emergency alerting systems and registrations for Citizen Alert need to be increased, and residents need better understanding of the opt-in requirement.	Continue to collaborate with Josephine County on public education and outreach covering signing up for Citizen Alert, what to expect during an emergency, and where to find information in times of emergency.		
2.3.9	Public Information and Warning, Planning	It was not always clear to some key stakeholders who was responsible for PIO activities in the County EOC.	Identify and train a cadre of staff to fill the PIO role in the event of an EOC activation.		
2.3.10	Public Information and Warning, Planning	Citizen Hotline operators, at times, received delayed incident-update information.	Review and update appropriate plans to ensure consistent messaging and information dissemination to key stakeholders, including the Citizen Hotline management.		
2.4.1	Operational Communications, Situational Awareness	In the early hours of the incident, ECSO used the CAD system to provide up-to-the-minute mapping updates to field responders.	Integrate requesting a liaison from ECSO into EOC activation SOP to improve coordination and information-sharing.		
2.5.2	Mass Care Services, Operational Communications	The Rogue Valley COAD was able to successfully communicate needs to the County EOC in regard to shelter activities.	Jurisdictions and the County work together to promote coordination and membership of the Rogue Valley COAD.		

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Section	Core Capability/ Capabilities	Observation	Recommended Action(s)	Lead Agency	Completion Target (Short-Mid-Long)
2.5.4	Mass Care Services	The Expo had the necessary resources for shelter operations readily available.	Consider developing additional caches of emergency supplies to support shelter management and stage them at key facilities (such as the Expo) to expedite shelter activation.		
2.5.6	Mass Care Services, Operational Coordination	County staff managing shelter activities implemented an internal ICS structure made up of staff from various County departments. This greatly increased coordination efforts.	While the ARC remains the primary sheltering partner for the county, memorialize the processes used to implemented and coordinate shelter activities in plans and procedures. Conduct training and exercises in shelter operations to expand the County's internal shelter-management capabilities to initiate or supplement sheltering operations when American Red Cross may not have the capacity to support emergency efforts to its fullest extent.		
2.5.9	Mass Care Services	Additional mass care and shelter locations should be identified.	Jurisdictions and the County work with ARC to continue to identify potential shelter locations.		
2.5.10	Mass Care Services	Due to COVID-19 public health guidance on non-congregate sheltering, the Red Cross was to implement a hotel voucher program. There was a significant delay in implementing this program to support the evacuees.	In addition to the recommendation referenced in Section 2.5.8, continue routine meetings with local ARC representatives to ensure communications are maintained and capacity expectations are shared.		
2.5.11	Mass Care Services	Jackson County EOC and County shelter operations staff experienced communication failures at multiple levels from the ARC.	For County EOC activations, request that the ARC provide a consistent, management-level ARC representative who has the capability to remain involved, updated, and knowledgeable on incident events to address duplication of effort, inconsistent messaging, and loss of incident continuity. In addition, the County should consider developing a shelter staff contingency plan to support onsite shelter operations if ARC staff are delayed or unavailable.		

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Section	Core Capability/ Capabilities	Observation	Recommended Action(s)	Lead Agency	Completion Target (Short-Mid-Long)
2.6.1	Planning, Operational Coordination	Upon receiving heightened fire weather report and prior to the start of the fires, Jackson County EM and fire response agencies communicated to discuss possible response needs.	Implement a multi-jurisdictional coordination procedure with key partners when inclement weather or other potentials hazards are forthcoming. Partners should include various Jackson County departments, the National Weather Service, fire agencies, law enforcement, mass care partners, and cities' leadership to ensure everyone understands the possible threats and hazards and expectations of response.		
2.6.4	Planning	Prior to the fire, limited cross-jurisdictional opportunities existed to train and exercise response and recovery objectives.	Develop a multi-year training and exercise plan and include cities and emergency response agencies in the plan development.		
2.6.5	Planning	Some County staff indicated that they lacked knowledge about the function of the EOC. They were not certain of its location or its role in a response.	County EM could develop a County Emergency Management and EOC overview document to be included with new employee orientation materials.		
2.6.6	Planning, operational coordination	The County EOC initially lacked a traditional ICS structure, such as established Logistics and Planning Sections, in the early hours of the incident.	Implement a standard NIMS compliant EOC organizational structure and develop a cadre of Jackson County personnel who are trained on the various ICS Section Chief positions.		
2.6.7	Planning	At the time of the fire incidents, Jackson County EM had one staffed position and one vacant position.	The County would greatly benefit from a full emergency management staff and possibly a more robust emergency management program with additional staff positions and a focus on county-wide planning, training, and exercising.		

Appendix B: Incident Timeline: 2020

The Incident Timeline presented below includes key activities occurring from September 8 through 19, 2021, for both the Almeda Drive and Obenchain fire incidents. This timeframe correlates to the scope of focus for this AAR. Activities included are fire updates, Citizen Alerts, key road closures, and additional public alerting information.

Date	Time	Action	Detail	Fire Incident
9/8/2020	11:04 AM	Initial report of Almeda Fire	Initial report of a fire at 164 Almeda Dr., Ashland, Oregon	Almeda
9/8/2020	11:21 AM	Evacuations start on Glendower; Jackson County EOC begins operations	Evacuations begin on Glendower St.; Jackson County EOC begins operations	Almeda
9/8/2020	11:24 AM	All of Coventry is evacuated	All of Coventry Pl. is evacuated	Almeda
9/8/2020	11:52 AM	Citizen Alert	Evacuate Now Notice W. Nevada/Glendower St, Northwest to Eagle Mill Rd/Jackson Rd - Citizen Alert, September 8, 2020, 11:52 a.m.	Almeda
9/8/2020	11:54 AM	I-5 closed between exits 14 and 19	I-5 is closed between exits 14 and 19	Almeda
9/8/2020	12:05 PM	Citizen Alert	Evacuate Now, Ashland	Almeda
9/8/2020	1:25 PM	Citizen Alert	Citizen hotline is activated	Almeda
9/8/2020	1:45 PM	First Obenchain Call	Initial report of Obenchain fire received	Obenchain
9/8/2020	2:56 PM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 3 "GO" evacuation notice for residents in the area of Worthington Road and N Obenchain Road	Obenchain
9/8/2020	3:00 PM	Ashland EOC begins operations	Ashland EOC begins operations	Almeda
9/8/2020	3:51 PM	Obenchain evacuations begin	Level 3 evacuation ordered for Obenchain fire	Obenchain
9/8/2020	4:01 PM	Citizen Alert	"All residents are asked to please stay home unless under an evacuation order. Avoid South County including Ashland, Talent, and Phoenix. There are multiple fire operations and many first responder vehicles. Public traffic is creating dangerous impacts. Please stay home and avoid all active fire scenes."	Almeda

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Date	Time	Action	Detail	Fire Incident
9/8/2020	4:04 PM	Level 3 evacuation ordered for Almeda fire; Phoenix EOC begins operations	Level 3 evacuation ordered for Almeda fire; Phoenix EOC begins operations	Almeda
9/8/2020	4:36 PM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 3 "GO" evacuation notice for 3000 block of Brohpy Rd to Ball Rd. and Butte Falls Highway from Reese Creek to Mile Marker 10	Obenchain
9/8/2020	4:48 PM	Additional evacuations issued for Almeda fire	Additional evacuations issued for Almeda fire	Almeda
9/8/2020	5:00 PM	Citizen Alert	Evacuation Notice for City of Phoenix, between I-5, north to Voorhees Road, west to Coleman and south to Pioneer and Culver Road	Almeda
9/8/2020	6:23 PM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 2 'Be Set' evacuation notice for Highway 62 from Eagle Point up to and including Shady Cove	Obenchain
9/8/2020	6:52 PM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 3 "Go" evacuation notice for Phoenix and small part of Medford	Almeda
9/8/2020	6:59 PM	I-5 closed	Additional sections of I-5 are closed	Almeda
9/8/2020	7:30 PM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 2 "Be Set" evacuation notice for N. Phoenix/Foothill Road to the East, McAndrews Road to the North, Griffin Creek to the West and Stewart, Coleman Creek to the south.	Almeda
9/8/2020	8:16 PM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 2 "Be Set" evacuation notice for North Obenchain Rd and Butte Falls	Obenchain
9/8/2020	8:24 PM	Greenway fire	Grass fire on the Greenway north of Railroad Park	Almeda
9/8/2020	9:32 PM	I-5 Reopened	I-5 closure is cancelled.	Almeda
9/8/2020	9:42 PM	Central Point evacuations begin	Level 3 evacuation ordered for Central Point	Almeda
9/8/2020	9:42 PM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 3 "GO" evacuation notice in Central Point	Almeda
9/8/2020	10:20 PM	Central Point evacuations cancelled	Central Point fire extinguished; evacuation order cancelled	Almeda
9/8/2020	10:20 PM	Citizen Alert	Cancellation of Evacuation Notice for Central Point - Citizen Alert	Almeda

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Appendix B: Incident Timeline: 2020

Date	Time	Action	Detail	Fire Incident
9/9/2020	9:04 AM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 3 "GO" evacuation notice for Butte Falls Road north along both sides of Oregon HWY 62 - west to the Rogue River – to Brophy Road, at the south end of Shady Cove. Shady Cove will remain in a LEVEL 2 "Be SET"	Obenchain
9/9/2020	10:43 AM	Citizen Alert	Evacuation Downgrade to LEVEL 2 "Be Set" for South Medford	Almeda
9/9/2020	12:40 PM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 3 "GO" evacuation notice for Shady Cove and Trail	Obenchain
9/9/2020	3:05 PM	Costco area fire starts	Costco area fire begins	Almeda
9/9/2020	3:40 PM	Citizen Alert	Evacuation Notice for Central Point	Almeda
9/10/2020	10:50 AM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 3 "GO" evacuation notice for the Obenchain fire for areas North from Butte Falls Hwy to Hwy 62 outside of Trail, Crow Foot Road to the East, and Hwy 62 to the West	Obenchain
9/10/2020	4:22 PM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 3 "GO" for Butte Falls, Cobleigh Rd., the McNeil Creek Area, and Crowfoot Road	Obenchain
9/10/2020	5:06 PM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 3 "GO" evacuation notice for all of Salt Creek Road up through Wassen Canyon, the Lake Creek Loop area and Hwy 140 to Gardner Road	Obenchain
9/10/2020	5:19 PM	Citizen Alert	LEVEL 2 "Be Set" evacuation notice for S. Fork Little Butte Creek Road and Lake Creek Loop	Obenchain
9/11/2020	2:01 PM	Citizen Alert	Downgraded evacuation notice, areas opened include east of Phoenix and Talent, including those outside the city limits. West side of Phoenix, west side of the railroad tracks. Portions of Talent west of Talent Avenue. East of Interstate 5, including Suncrest Road, Payne Road and Fern Valley Road, and East Phoenix	Almeda
9/11/2020	3:01 PM	Citizen Alert	The Obenchain fire continues to grow and behave erratically. A LEVEL 2 "Be Set" evacuation is active in your area	Obenchain
9/12/2020	12:39 PM	Citizen Alert	Downgraded evacuation notice to LEVEL 1 "Be Ready" for Central Point	Almeda

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Date	Time	Action	Detail	Fire Incident
9/12/2020	2:51 PM	Citizen Alert	Downgraded evacuation notice to LEVEL 1 "Be Ready" for All of the South Medford area North of South Stage Road The Area West of Phoenix, including: Carpenter Hill Rd, Coleman Creek Rd, Camp Baker Rd, Pioneer Rd, and Dark Hollow Rd. Also included are the areas on the East side of Interstate 5 including: Fern Valley Rd, Payne Rd, Royal Crest Rd, Suncrest Rd, and West Valley View Rd	Almeda
9/12/2020	6:07 PM	Citizen Alert	Fire Weather Warning for all of Jackson County, LEVEL 1 "Be Ready"	Almeda
9/14/2020	2:05 PM	Citizen Alert	Evacuation levels are being reduced in the city of Shady Cove and Trail community	Obenchain
9/15/2020	10:36 AM	Citizen Alert	Downgraded evacuation notice LEVEL 2 "Be Set" for City of Ashland and North Phoenix	Almeda
9/16/2020	12:54 PM	Citizen Alert	Downgraded evacuation notice to LEVEL 2 "Be Set" for City of Phoenix, South Pacific Hwy and railroad tracks. Areas on the north boarded by Bolz Rd., Cheryl Lane, Dano Way and portions of North Rose St. Areas on the west side bordering the railroad tracks and Colver Rd. The south end is bordered by the Phoenix City Limits.	Almeda
9/16/2020	1:13 PM	Citizen Alert	Evacuation Levels lowered from a LEVEL 3 "GO" to LEVEL 2 "Be Set". Properties north of Highway 140 between Salt Creek Road west to South Obenchain Road and north to the fire perimeter.	Obenchain
9/17/2020	2:41 PM	Citizen Alert	Downgraded evacuation notice to LEVEL 2 "Be Set" for areas in City of Talent including Properties on Poppy Way, Clearview and Winter Sage. The Anjou Club apartments and those townhouses just to the north of the Anjou apartments	Almeda

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Date	Time	Action	Detail	Fire Incident
9/18/2020	12:48 PM	Citizen Alert	Downgraded evacuation notice LEVEL 2 "Be Set" for Cities of Talent and Phoenix	Almeda
9/18/2020	3:24 PM	Citizen Alert	"Most evacuation Levels for the Obenchain Fire have been reduced from a Level 3 "Go!" to a Level 2 "Be Set!", this change allows residents to return home. Areas include the community of Butte Falls, and all areas from Butte Falls Rd.to Hwy 62. Residents may return home."	Almeda
9/18/2020	3:46 PM	Citizen Alert	Downgraded evacuation notice LEVEL 1 "Be Ready" Cities of Talent and Phoenix	Almeda
9/19/2020	9:17 AM	Citizen Alert	Areas outside of the immediate burn area reduced to a green Level 1 "Be Ready", residents may return to their homes. Areas inside the immediate burn area remain at a red Level 3 with restricted entry.	Almeda
9/19/2020	11:26 AM	Citizen Alert	Areas outside of the immediate burn area reduced to a yellow Level 2 "Be Ready", residents may return to their homes in the areas east of Salt Creek Rd. and north of Hwy 140. Areas inside the immediate burn area remain at a red Level 3 with restricted entry.	Obenchain
9/19/2020	3:49 PM	Citizen Alert	Evacuation levels in the areas of Talent and Phoenix reduced to green Level 1 "Be Ready!"	Almeda

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Appendix B: Incident Timeline: 2020

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Appendix C: After Action Report Review Methods

Creating the After-Action Report (AAR) and the Improvement Plan involved a multi-step process moving from data collection through establishing the Improvement Plan and included a thorough document review and one-on-one interviews. The following overview notes the implementation of this approach.

Step 1: Data Collection and Document Review

The AAR data-collection process used a combination of review of existing plans and incident documentation. **Table 1** lists documents included in the review process.

Table 3: Documents and Information Reviewed

Reviewed Documents and Information	Reviewed Documents and Information
Jackson County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)	City of Ashland Public Notification Records and AAR
Jackson County Animal Shelter Plan	City of Butte Falls Fire Incident AAR
Jackson County EOC Incident Actions Plans (IAPs)/Daily Reports	City of Medford Evacuation Information/Public Notifications
Jackson County Press Releases	City of Phoenix Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
Jackson County Sheriff After-Action Report (AAR)	City of Talent EOP
City of Central Point EOP	Medford Water Commission Notices
Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon Dispatch Records	Mercy Flight AAR
Oregon Department of Transportation Communications	One-on-one interviews
Everbridge Alert Records	Jackson County IT GIS Data

Step 2: Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with Jackson County personnel who supported the fire response, along with city officials, first-responder agencies, state representatives and nonprofit partners. The interviews focused on identifying strengths and areas of improvement in the areas of Emergency Operations Center collaborations and communications, public notifications, evacuation and shelter operations, and operational coordination. Table2 lists interviews completed.

Table 4: Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder Agencies Interviewed	Stakeholder Agencies Interviewed
Jackson County Administrator's Office	City of Ashland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management - Fire Department - Public Works - Human Resources
Jackson County Animal Services	City of Butte Falls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management - Fire Department
Jackson County Commissioners	City of Central Point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management
Jackson County IT Department	City of Medford <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management - Emergency Management - Fire Department
Jackson County Roads and Parks Department	City of Phoenix <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management - Police Department
Jackson County Fire Defense Board	City of Shady Cove <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Management
Jackson County Fire District 3	City of Talent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Police Department
Jackson County Fire District 5	5 O'clock Marketing
American Red Cross	Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon (ECSO)
Josephine County Emergency Management	Oregon Department of Transportation
Oregon State Police	Follow up with community members who requested an opportunity to provide feedback
Oregon Department of Forestry	

To provide consistency in data collection, each interview consisted of the same set of questions, which are included below.

1. Interview date
2. Name and title of interviewee
3. Jurisdiction/agency
4. What was your role in the wildfire responses?
5. When were you notified of the fires? What notifications did you receive and from who? What notifications did you make about the fire events, if any? How were notifications made to others in your jurisdiction/agency? What notifications did the County EOC make?

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6. What methods were used to communicate from your jurisdiction/agency to the County EOC? What methods were used to communicate from the County to all agencies responding to the fires? When were communications between your jurisdiction/agency and the County EOC established?
7. During the first 48 hours, what information did your jurisdiction/agency provide to Jackson County EOC?
8. During the first 48 hours, what information did Jackson County EOC provide to your jurisdiction/agency?
9. During the first 48 hours, what information, including evacuation notices and event updates, did your jurisdiction/agency provide to the public? If you did press releases, do you have copies that you can share?
10. During the first 48 hours, what information, including evacuation notices and event updates, did Jackson County provide to the public? If you received press releases from the County, do you have copies you can share?
11. During the 10 days following the Fire Events was your jurisdiction/agency involved in the continuing
 - a. evacuation notices? If so, what was your involvement? What was the County EOC's involvement?
 - b. media outreach? If so, what was your involvement? What was the County EOC's involvement?
 - c. housing/care of citizens and animals evacuated by the fire? If so, what was your involvement? What was the County EOC's involvement?
12. How did your jurisdiction/agency and the EOC communicate during the 10 days following the fire events?
13. What information did your jurisdiction/county provide to the County EOC during the 10 days following the fire events? How was this information shared?
14. What information did the County EOC provide to your jurisdiction/agency during the 10 days following the fire events? How was this information shared?
15. Based on your jurisdiction/agency's involvement in the fire events, what are three strengths you can identify from the fire incidents?
16. Based on your jurisdiction/agency's involvement in the fire events, what are three areas for improvement you can identify from the fire incidents?
17. Based on the questions we've asked during this interview, are there any other personnel from your jurisdiction/agency that would be helpful to interview?
18. Is there additional information you'd like to provide that will help us in establishing a more accurate timeline of critical actions/milestones or understanding of response actions taken?

Step 3: Data Analysis

Findings from the data-collection process were analyzed to identify primary strengths and areas for improvement, which were used to group key observations and document corresponding core capabilities under each priority focus area.

Interview notes were analyzed and sorted by core capability, including situational awareness, operational coordination, public information and warning, operational communications, mass care services, planning, critical transportation/evacuation support, and community resilience.

Step 4: Establishing the Improvement Plan

Key observations and associated recommended actions were presented in the AAR and the appended Improvement Plan. In addition, the Improvement Plan prioritizes areas for improvement, indicates the agency or organization assigned to lead response to each identified area for improvement, and establishes a timeline for completing associated actions (i.e., start and completion dates).

Step 5: Implementing the Improvement Plan

The Improvement Plan is intended to be a living tool to help guide Jackson County through the process of addressing areas for improvement and should be used at track and document the status of outstanding areas for improvement and corresponding activities. Jackson County leadership will continue to guide the improvement process, but responsible agencies and organizations will lead response to their assigned areas for improvement.

Appendix D: Acronyms

AAR	After-Action Report
ARC	American Red Cross
COAD	Community Organizations Active in Disaster
EAS	Emergency Alert System
ECSO	Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon
EEI	Essential Elements of Information
EM	Emergency Management
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
FOUO	For Official Use Only
GIS	Geographic Information System
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IC	Incident Command
ICP	Incident Command Post
ICS	Incident Command System
IMT	Incident Management Team
IT	Information Technology
ODF	Oregon Department of Forestry
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
OEM	Oregon Office of Emergency Management
OSP	Oregon State Police
PIO	Public Information Officer
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TEP	Temporary Evacuation Point

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Appendix D: Acronyms

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