



NEWS *from* **Clatsop County**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ODART To Practice Disaster Relief Supply Flights to Clatsop County

(Astoria, OR) — When disaster strikes, any community can become an "island," cut off from the outside world due to impassable travel and supply routes. As a result, the shelves in stores and food banks quickly become empty, medical supplies run low, and some community members may need temporary shelter.

On September 21, Clatsop County Emergency Management will partner with volunteers from the Oregon Disaster Airlift Response Team (ODART), Clatsop County AuxComm, Clatsop County Search and Rescue, and the Knappa Food Pantry to practice delivery of relief supplies to the Knappa-Svensen community. Up to five small private aircraft will be loaded with nonperishable food and N95 masks at Aurora State Airport which they will then transport to the grass airstrip at Svensen. Depending on the type of aircraft, these flights will take between 35 and 65 minutes.

Karpen's Airfield, 5.64 nautical miles East of Tongue Point at an elevation of 125 feet, was chosen due to its location just outside of the area assumed to be immediately impacted by ground subsidence and a tsunami following a major earthquake. Historically, weather-related events have also affected Clatsop County transportation routes, so this exercise is about practicing for those as well.

Ham radio emergency communications are vital to the success of ODART operations, especially during times when the commercial infrastructure may be damaged or overloaded. Before the planes depart from Aurora, Clatsop County AuxComm will send a report on weather and field conditions at Svensen via the Winlink global email system to their counterparts at Aurora so the pilots will know what to expect upon arrival. Then,

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hams at both airports will track cargo manifests as well as confirm takeoff and landing times for aircraft safety. Upon arrival, Clatsop County SAR will help unload the planes and the supplies will be donated to the Knappa Food Pantry.

ODART, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, is run entirely by volunteers who respond to requests from local emergency managers to provide logistical support when communities face disruptions due to disasters.

“This exercise will show how small planes, piloted by volunteers, can land on a variety of surfaces – from paved runways and grass strips to sandbars and water – delivering food, medical supplies, and other essential items when traditional routes are obstructed” said Mike Neelon, Clatsop County Emergency Management Coordinator.

“Exercises like this allow volunteers to practice how they might provide meaningful assistance to their neighbors in the hours and days following a major disaster event” said Jim Origliosso, ODART President.

Event Details and Timeline – Saturday, September 21, 2024

08:00: Reconnaissance flights launch on pre-established routes and report ground observations

09:00-09:45: Aircraft are loaded at the Aurora State Airport and depart for Svensen

10:00-10:30: Aircraft arrive at Karpen’s Airfield and unload cargo

10:30-11:00: Aircraft depart Karpen’s Airfield and return to their home bases

Aviation safety is a top priority, so in the event of inclement weather this exercise will be postponed to Saturday, October 5, 2024.

For more information:

Clatsop County Emergency Management Department: www.clatsopcounty.gov/em

Oregon Disaster Airlift Response Team: www.odart.org

Clatsop County AuxComm: www.clatsopauxcomm.org

Knappa Food Pantry: www.facebook.com/groups/349192159525143

Winlink Global Radio Email system: winlink.org

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