

# **City Club** of Portland

## **BULLETIN**

Portland, Oregon

Vol. 60, No. 13

**Benson Hotel, Mayfair Room**

**12:00 Noon**

**Friday, August 24, 1979**

### **THE SPEAKER:**

## **CHARLES JORDAN**

Commissioner of Public Safety  
City of Portland

### **THE TOPIC:**

## **REDISCOVERING THE CITY**

For the City of Portland, at least, the flight of residents from city to suburb is reversing. People are discovering city neighborhoods as attractive and exciting places to live.

Commissioner Jordan is responsible for a number of City bureaus which have a significant impact on the quality of life in Portland, including the Police Bureau, Bureau of Neighborhood Environment, and Metropolitan Human Relations Commission. Factors affecting the livability of Portland include the safety of its citizens, the strength of its neighborhoods, the relationships among divergent groups and lifestyles, and the confidence of Portland residents in City government.

The Commissioner will talk about the activities of his bureaus, and the ways in which those services can operate to attract people to the City and encourage residents to remain here.

**PRINTED HEREIN FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION NEXT FRIDAY, AUGUST 31:**

**Report on Coordination Among Agencies Involved in Disaster Planning  
in the Portland Metropolitan Area**

*(see back page for details)*

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*"To inform its members and the community in public matters and to  
arouse in them a realization of the obligation of citizenship."*

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**CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND BULLETIN**

(USPS 439-180)

Published each Friday by the

**CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND**

730 Southwest First Portland, Oregon 97204

Phone 228-7231

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and *Executive Secretary*Second Class Postage paid at Portland, Ore.  
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**REPORT ON**

**COORDINATION AMONG AGENCIES INVOLVED IN DISASTER  
PLANNING IN THE PORTLAND METROPOLITAN AREA**

To the Board of Governors,  
The City Club of Portland:

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Your Committee was charged to study the Portland metropolitan area's preparedness to take prompt and effective action on a community-wide basis in the event of a disaster.

Your Committee was directed to define "disaster" and to review organizations, facilities and other resources available to respond to a disaster in a coordinated fashion. Your Committee was further directed to identify inadequacies in the current disaster plans and make recommendations to remedy any defects so identified.

**A. Disaster Defined**

Your Committee has defined a disaster as *any emergency (either actual or imminent) which cannot be controlled by a single municipal department (such as fire or police) working in routine coordination with other emergency related agencies.* Such a possible disaster may include, but not be limited to, unusually severe weather, an uncontrollable fire, flood, earthquake, pollution of the city's water supply, or radiation release at a nuclear power facility.

By way of example, the December 1978 crash of a passenger airliner in East Portland, although tragic, was not a disaster by your Committee's definition. On the other hand, the January 1979 ice storm approximated a disaster, both in terms of the number of people affected and the strain on the operations of local private and public agencies involved.

**B. Geographic Limitations**

This report deals with disasters occurring in metropolitan Portland and thus is related only to portions of Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas Counties.

**C. Depth of Study**

Your Committee has reviewed the plans of public and private agencies which would be called upon to respond in the event of a disaster. This report deals mainly with the City of Portland, not only because the population is concentrated in Portland, but also because Portland's disaster plan was more developed than other plans at the time of this writing. Further, the City owns the metropolitan area's largest and most complex communications facility.

Your Committee's concern has been confined to the *overall* coordination of these plans and the Committee has not passed judgment as to the adequacy of every detail in every plan.

The reader should be advised that many of the disaster plans reviewed by the Committee, especially those of the City of Portland, are undergoing continual adjustment. However, for the purpose of concluding this report, not every recent change in those plans has been noted here.

**III. BACKGROUND**

**A. History of Disaster Preparedness**

Present disaster planning by government agencies and citizen groups traces its origins to World War II when strong fears of enemy air raids sparked the formation of a civil defense system. Activities included patrolling the streets by air raid wardens during prac-

tice blackouts. With the passage of time, practice exercises became less frequent and the system was dismantled after the war. The growing atomic capabilities of Russia gave rise to renewed interest in civil preparedness. This interest led to the Civil Defense Act of 1949 and the subsequent emphasis on fallout shelters to protect the populace against a Russian attack.

As the years passed, the once frosty East-West relationship began to thaw and the sense of military urgency gave way to a feeling of guarded trust. The civil defense authorities then assumed secondary responsibilities for dealing with natural as well as military disasters. In 1962 the Columbus Day storm put Portland's civil defense organization to its first major test and for various reasons, including the lack of adequate authority, the organization was found wanting and was abolished shortly afterward. It was not replaced for nearly a decade. The successor agency in Portland was established in June of 1973 and is called the Office of Emergency Services, a title that reflects concern with peace time disasters, whether natural or man-made.

At the state level, the State Office of Emergency Services traces its origins back to the legislative session of 1949. The agency began operations in 1951 as a civil defense organization and was given its present name in 1967.

#### **B. The City's Organization**

Portland's Office of Emergency Services was created by Ordinance No. 136719, Title 15 of the City Code which provides for a coordinator of emergency services. This coordinator reports to the mayor, who can declare an emergency. In establishing the Office of Emergency Services the City Council directed the new agency to prepare a basic emergency services plan for the City in conformity with State and Federal intent as provided by ORS Chapter 401 and Public Law 81-920. The resulting plan is one of 37 (34 county plans and those of Portland, Eugene, and Springfield) of which those of Portland, Washington County, Clackamas County and Multnomah County, have been approved by the State of Oregon. Approval by the State qualifies local jurisdictions to receive some federal monies and federal surplus emergency equipment.

#### **C. County Organizations**

The Multnomah County unit was formed in April 1974 by Executive Order No. 49. Like its Portland counterpart, the county agency was set up to fit the pattern established by state and federal precedent. Originally called the Office of Emergency Services, the county agency was re-named the Office of Emergency Preparedness in the fall of 1977 to avoid confusion with the soon-to-be-formed Office of Emergency Medical Services. The Office receives its direct authority from the Multnomah County Sheriff, Department of Public Safety. The Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners has the sole authority to declare a formal disaster and direct the response.

In Washington County the Director of Emergency Planning reports to the Sheriff, who may declare a state of emergency, and, if the situation warrants, may recommend to the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners that a disaster be declared.

Similarly, the Chairman of the Clackamas County Commission has such authority to declare an emergency and coordinate control in a disaster situation.

Additionally, within each of these political subdivisions there necessarily exist lines of authority within the major departments which would be most affected by a disaster. Thus, for example, the fire and police bureau chiefs would still exercise considerable administrative and practical authority over their respective departments. As might be expected, the mayor or county commissioners must, to a large degree, rely on the expertise and experience of their department heads to coordinate an effective response.

The extent of authority within each political jurisdiction appears to be blurred. Similarly, there appears to be no express delineation of authoritative lines between political jurisdictions, for example, between the Mayor of Portland and the Chairman of the Multnomah County Commission.

In spite of the lack of such definitive lines of authority, some public officials interviewed by this Committee appear to be confident that effective coordination among overlapping personnel would not be a significant problem in a disaster situation. This point will be discussed later in this report.

The offices of disaster planning within the Portland metropolitan area are funded on a 50-50 basis between the city or county and the federal government. The federal government has committed funding for 50 percent of the cost to *develop* a plan, but your Committee is not certain that the federal government will continue this commitment once a plan has been developed. The various disaster planning activities of political subdivisions were staffed and funded for 1977 as follows:

Political Sub-division	Staff Positions	Annual Budget
City of Portland	Coordinator	
	Secretary (½ time)	\$ 40,322.00
Multnomah County	Coordinator	
	Resources Manager	
	Public Education Coordinator	
	Secretary	93,000.00
Washington County	Coordinator	
	Secretary	36,000.00
Clackamas County	Coordinator (part-time)	
	Secretary (part-time)	
	Radio Tech (part-time)	30,000.00
Total Tri-County Budget		<u>\$199,322.00</u>

#### IV. OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES

##### A. City of Portland

###### 1. Office of Emergency Services

Disaster planning in the City of Portland is directed from the office of the Mayor and headed by an Emergency Services Coordinator (Coordinator) appointed by the Mayor.

###### 2. The Plan

The Coordinator is responsible for developing an overall disaster plan for the City of Portland. The Coordinator has no direct authority over any agencies (such as the Fire Bureau) that might play a role in responding to a disaster (see emergency organization chart, Appendix A). The Coordinator encourages and assists separate agencies in developing their own departmental plans.

The primary purpose of the plan is to provide a basis for the development of the City's emergency organization and to outline the basic operational concepts to be used when coping with major emergencies.

The Plan states that agencies and organizations having emergency responsibility are to prepare and continuously update service support plans, operating procedures, and checklists detailing the utilization and disposition of their resources in a major emergency. The Plan calls for four stages of a disaster reaction which are listed below.

###### a. Possible Emergency<sup>1</sup>

When an organization or agency becomes aware that an emergency is imminent, the involved agency will place its own emergency plan into operation as the situation warrants and will notify the Office of Emergency Services. The Coordinator will determine what resources might be needed and advise the citizenry of developments. A possible

<sup>1</sup>Headings taken from the Basic Emergency Services Plan, City of Portland, April 1976, which was the latest adopted plan at the writing of this report.

emergency would exist when conditions such as a continuing and excessive rainfall or an unusual rapid snow melt would post a threat to the community.

*b. Expected Emergency*

An expected emergency begins when the situation indicates "when" rather than "if" emergency conditions exist. At this point, the Mayor would declare an emergency and assume command of all city agencies. The populace would be alerted, appropriate emergency plans and resources would be activated. The Mayor also may activate the City's command center at Kelly Butte (see page 60) and designated agency leaders would assemble at the center.

*c. Onset of Emergency*

When the disaster strikes, all resources of manpower and material will be directed as needed by the Mayor. When the City expends its resources or when that possibility becomes evident, the Mayor may call upon the county and/or the Governor for assistance such as requesting the National Guard, or possibly the help of a federal agency.

*d. Post Emergency*

Each agency will be directed to take action to assist in the restoration of services and aid citizens who have been affected by the disaster.

*3. Role of City Agencies Involved in Disaster Response*

The agencies which would assume the major responsibility during a disaster would be the Police, Fire, Water and Public Works Departments, each of which has its own disaster plan. These departmental plans outline a course of action in an emergency which is largely contained by their own organization, with only informal coordination with other agencies which also may be affected or whose assistance may be required. Since there is no way to predict what specific disaster or combination of disasters may strike this area at a given time, specific plans to cover every contingency obviously cannot be developed.

*a. Police Bureau*

The primary responsibility of the Police Bureau is to safeguard lives and property. The Police have primary responsibility in cases of evacuation, law enforcement, and public warning. The Portland Police Bureau also has tacit arrangements with Multnomah County Sheriff and the Oregon State Police for mutual assistance if and when it is required. In addition, the Police have understandings with the Fire Bureau so that they can work in harmony on normal day-to-day emergency situations.<sup>2</sup>

*b. Fire Bureau*

The primary responsibility of the Fire Bureau is fire fighting, radiological emergency, and rescue. It has secondary responsibility for evacuation and warning. The department has written, well-developed and frequently used backup agreements with neighboring fire districts.

*c. Bureau of Water Works*

The primary responsibility of the Water Bureau is to provide an adequate supply of potable water and "to restore utilities." The Water Bureau does not participate in urban disaster training, and does not participate in "disaster exercises" that are conducted by other bureaus; however, they do participate in annual drills concerned with the control of wild fire in the Bull Run watershed. The Water Bureau's plans note that, "these exercises are conducted annually and consist almost entirely of classroom and demonstration work with little or no field exercise involved."

*d. Public Works*

The primary responsibility of the Public Works Department as outlined in its emergency plan is to "protect private and public property." As this plan reads, it also is responsible for such functions as waste water treatment, and refuse disposal. Although

<sup>2</sup>A "normal day-to-day emergency" differs from this Committee's definition of a "disaster." See page 53 of this report.

a part of the Department's major day-to-day responsibility, no mention is made of street or access route restoration in the event of an emergency.

In the case of limited emergencies, the Public Works plan provides for its own emergency command center. Should the emergency develop into a "declared" disaster, the command center would move to Kelly Butte.

The plan developed for Public Works also calls for participation in rescue operations with the Fire Bureau. The plan does not mention just how this cooperative effort is to take place and does not provide for drills or training programs relating to rescue operations.

Public Works, along with other City support services, has primary responsibility for the "restoration of utilities;" however, none of the plans cover any responsibilities of this type and it does not appear that any planning or coordination exists among these departments and the private utilities.

#### *e. Support Services*

The City of Portland Plan has assigned duties to other City agencies such as the Bureau of Electronic Services, Bureau of Financial Affairs, Damage Analysis Team, Public Information Officer, Bureau of Fleet Management, City Attorney, Bureau of Parks, Bureau of Personnel Services, and Bureau of Buildings. (See Appendix B of this report.)

These support service agencies have some general guidelines as to how and to whom they are to report in the event of a disaster. In some cases these plans are quite specific. For example, the Bureau of Electronic Services "shall provide the City with communications by engineering, establishing and maintaining radio and telephone communications," and the Damage Analysis Team is to "collect, record and plot field damage information in order to make a damage estimate." In checking with private utility companies, the Committee finds very little if any prearranged or detailed coordination among the utilities and these support agencies.

### **B. Utilities**

The life of our City is heavily dependent on services provided by our local utility companies. The ability of these organizations to continue uninterrupted service during a disaster is critical. In checking with Oregon's Public Utility Commissioner, the Committee learned that there were no specific PUC requirements that a utility have a prepared disaster plan. However, the utility would be subject to criticism if it were unable to respond properly in a disaster situation.

#### *1. Local Power Companies*

After the October 1962 wind storm, Portland General Electric Company (PGE) developed and has maintained on its own initiative a formal disaster plan for its own organization. Its plan creates a separate disaster command with formalized lines of authority. In the event of an emergency, its resources can be mobilized and its plan activated by the Chairman of the Board or his authorized delegate. The plan outlines minor emergencies which can be handled solely by PGE and those of a more serious nature which would require the assistance of other utilities in accordance with formal mutual assistance agreements.

PGE has substantial resources available to it in the event of a disaster, including a radio communications system with an auxiliary power supply which can reach approximately 500 of its mobile units. PGE has a helicopter and a heliport which could be used to survey damaged areas and transport emergency officials to command centers, although no formal arrangements have been made with the City or the Counties to utilize these resources. There is no direct radio communication between PGE's command center and Kelly Butte.

As soon as a disaster strikes, the course of action taken is determined by projecting an estimate of total damage based on a two-hour survey that would cover ten percent of its system. This information would of course be of vital concern to the Mayor and his

staff at Kelly Butte, yet no formal arrangement has been made between the City and the utilities to transmit this information.

In checking with executives of Pacific Power & Light Company (PP&L), the Committee finds that a similar well-developed emergency plan exists, that there are tremendous private resources available that would be very useful to the metropolitan area, and that PP&L too, has not been requested by any local authority to integrate its plans with a master disaster plan.

## 2. *Pacific Northwest Bell*

Pacific Northwest Bell (PNB) has developed an extensive emergency manual detailing procedures to be followed in the event of major disruptions to the phone system. These procedures are tested at least once annually through practice drills to insure a high level of readiness to react to a disaster. The first major step in PNB's emergency plan is to set up emergency control centers. This action may be taken on a local or statewide basis and is the method of insuring the distribution of key personnel and supplies. PNB has stockpiles of equipment, for emergency only, stored at strategic locations. PNB has a cooperative agreement with other telephone companies throughout the country to supply needed staff and supplies should an emergency strike. In past emergencies throughout the country such arrangements have provided the required backup resources.

In the event of a major emergency or disruption, PNB will institute line load control and/or selective service restoration. In an emergency there is a tendency for everyone to use the phone. Left unchecked, the over use of a phone system could render it totally useless. Line load control is a system of selectively eliminating the ability of phones to call out in order to insure that phones directly relating to health and welfare will remain usable. Selective restoration is a procedure whereby key phones related to police, fire, health, and government authorities are restored first. Both line load control and selective restoration will insure that priority is placed on the phones most needed during and immediately following a disaster. It should be noted here that while selective restoration will allow certain phones to call out, an overload on the phone system could seriously retard the general public's ability to report to Kelly Butte Command Center situations related directly to the disaster at hand.

In the event phone operations could not be restored immediately at an important geographical point, PNB could dispatch mobile telephone cars to that location to restore service.

It is planned that eventually all phone lines will be placed underground and this arrangement should provide more reliability in the event of surface disruptions. Underground cables could, however, make the system more vulnerable to floods and earthquakes.

## C. **Other Emergency Services**

There exist other resources which, depending upon the nature of the situation, would be available in the event of a disaster. For example, the manpower and resources of the National Guard could be made available by the Governor should a disaster reach major proportions.

The Port of Portland has a formal disaster plan, developed primarily for emergency situations at the Portland International Airport. In addition, the Port has mutual aid agreements with surrounding fire and police services and has, at least indirectly, a communication tie-in with Kelly Butte. Frequent drills are held at the Airport to test the effectiveness of the Port's disaster plan.

The Committee has not made in-depth studies to determine, as an example, if the National Guard has had adequate disaster training or if there is an adequate food supply available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Committee concerned itself with the organization of these resources and how they would be pressed into service should the occasion arise.

