



BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES



Emergency Management
Fax: (509) 628-2621

651 Truman Avenue
Richland, Washington 99352
(509) 628-2600

Southeast Communications Center
Fax: (509) 628-2622

August 21, 2009

For Immediate Release

Release #1

Contact: Elizabeth Smith
(509) 628-3203
(509) 539-0312 (Cell)
Benton County Emergency Services

BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONER LEO BOWMAN DECLARES COUNTY EMERGENCY FOR DRY CREEK COMPLEX FIRES

Richland, WA— Benton County Emergency Services activated the Emergency Operations Center at 8:00 am PST on August 21, 2009.

There are no injuries reported at this time. Smoke is spreading across the areas and any residents with respiratory illnesses, the elderly and young children need to stay indoors until the smoke clears.

There are at least five fires burning at this time. The wind is coming from North North West at approximately 16 miles per hour.

Lightning is the likely cause of the fires. A complex is multiple fires in a regional area. There are three branches of the fires. The Midway and the Black Rock Fire, (now combined) have burned approximately 15-20,000 acres and is located at the northwest tip of the Hanford Site. The closest point of reference is the Vernita Bridge rest stop.

There is a fire burning on the Hanford Site between the 200 and 300 areas near the WYE Barricade and has grown to over 2,000 acres.

There is a natural cover fire off I-82 near Southridge High School in Kennewick. It is a second alarm. It is near the five corners area on I-82 and 395 N. It has burned approximately 1,000 acres. One family is self evacuating their home in response to this specific fire.

A new fire has been reported at Gable Mountain

Dry Creek Complex Fire news release page 2

All available resources from Benton County, Hanford Fire Department, Franklin County, Walla Walla, City of College Place, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Fish and Wildlife have been mobilized. Yakima County is sending a strike team. There is coordination with the Washington State Patrol.

SR 241 is closed from I-182 to SR 24 due to a bridge burning completely down. It is approximately eight miles. The road is closed indefinitely at this time.

Benton County Emergency Services is asking the public to call 9-1-1 only in case of a fire with flames, medical emergencies or a threat to person or property. Please do not call and report smoke only. The phone lines have become inundated with non-emergency calls and Benton County Emergency Services asks the public keep their phone lines open.

Please log onto www.bces.wa.gov for the most current information.

###