



Earlier this summer, Linn County Commissioner Will Tucker toured the clean up work underway in the Santiam Canyon with BLM officials.

Linn County has waived \$71,000 in building fees as Santiam Canyon fire victims start rebuilding

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

ALBANY — On Labor Day 2020, wildfires fueled by 60 mile-per-hour winds devastated much of the Santiam Canyon, burning hundreds of thousands of acres, homes and outbuildings.

The Linn County Board of Commissioners quickly determined that to aid families, they would waive fees associated with building permits for dwellings and a year later, that has amounted to more than \$71,000 according to Planning Manager Alyssa Boles.

“It’s going very well,” Boles said of the effort.

Boles said there have been 13 permits for stick-built homes, 10 for manufactured homes and 18 for accessory buildings.

“This started shortly after the fires,” Boles said. “We put a program together quickly and that included providing temporary RV permits so people can live in an RV while they are cleaning their properties and getting new homes started.”

Boles said families often tell Planning and Building Department staff about their experiences during the fire and show them photos.

“They thank us for the Linn County Sheriff’s



Alyssa Boles

Office response and how they appreciate how the county has reached out to them,” Boles said. “So many people lost everything they had.”

Boles said the permits will be good for five years.

“The permits are for dwellings only,” Boles

said. “They still need permits for shops and other outbuildings.”

Boles encourages people to call the Planning and Building office at 541-967-3816 and staff can answer questions pertaining to the permit process.

“They do not have to build on the same footprint to qualify,” Boles said. “We’re here to help them.”

Commissioner Roger Nyquist called the project, “the right thing to do.”

“Waiving the permit fees was the right thing to do and we are happy that people are on their way back to recovery from the catastrophic events of the fires,” Board Chair Roger Nyquist said.

The Beachie Creek, Lionshead and P-515 fires, collectively called the Santiam Fire, burned more than 402,000 acres in Linn, Marion, Jefferson and Clackamas counties starting on Labor Day 2020.

More than 1,500 structures were destroyed in Marion and Linn counties.

Five people were killed.

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