

# The Oregonian

## **Review looks at coordinating river patrols, saving money**

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Page: B02

The agencies that patrol the Columbia and Willamette rivers within Multnomah County should develop uniform standards, improve their radio and emergency dispatch communication and create an interagency river-safety policy committee. The recommendations come out of a joint city of Portland-Multnomah County public-safety planning and budgeting process. The goal is to find savings by eliminating agencies' overlapping services.

But before identifying potential savings, the various agencies that patrol the rivers must standardize how they report and respond to calls, City Commissioner Sam Adams said.

"What we learned through this process is there's plenty of confusion about who exactly is responsible for what," Adams said. Adams and Multnomah County Sheriff Bernie Giusto oversaw the river review.

Currently, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office River Patrol, the Portland Bureau of Fire and Rescue, the Clark County Sheriff's Office River Patrol, the Port of Portland and the United States Coast Guard all provide some of the following services along the rivers: law enforcement, search and rescue, firefighting, diving, hazardous materials response, code enforcement or water safety education.

Emergency response times to river incidents now range from 13 minutes to 15 minutes, the review found. The report suggests the agencies train together, train emergency dispatch on river geography and coordinate messages to the public about boating safety.

Other areas still under review as part of an ongoing joint city-county public-safety planning process are how to merge county and city emergency management and design a countywide public-safety data system.

The River Public Safety Services Report will be presented to the City Council at 2 p.m. Wednesday and to the county commissioners Thursday.

-- Maxine Bernstein

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