

Governor Atiyeh

May 17, 1982

Bob Oliver

Bhagwan Festival Preparations

On Monday, May 17, I met with various agencies who would be involved in any large-scale mishaps arising out of the Bhagwan's festival, scheduled to be held July 3 through 7. The purpose of the meeting was to ensure that all the agencies are fully advised as to what may be in store for the Big Muddy Ranch, and how they would respond to situations that might threaten the public peace, health or safety.

Agencies in attendance were the State Police, Military Department, Health Division, DEQ, Fire Marshal, SHPDA, Transportation and Intergovernmental Relations.

Major Watson of the State Police visited the ranch last week to advise its residents on various public safety issues. He says there are 600 paid reservations for the July event, with more coming in every day. The group intends to contract with Centurian Security of Bend, which will provide 24-hour protection. The group has its own internal communication system. They have agreed to loan one to the State Police during the course of the festival. Wasco County has agreed to loan one of their radios to the Bhagwan's followers. The sheriffs of Jefferson and Wasco counties both have agreed that if a situation requires them to call for state assistance, they will subordinate themselves operationally to Superintendent Williams. The State Police will station their Cessna aircraft at Bend during the festival, and they have received permission from the Bhagwan to use his airstrip in case of emergency. One concern is that several hundred bikers will be holding a meeting at "Stonehenge" across the river in Washington State at that same time, and there is reason to believe some bikers have been scouting out the Big Muddy area recently. It is not known whether these bikers are associated with the groups which plan to assemble at Stonehenge.

General Miller says about 300 National Guardsmen could be assembled in two hours if the worst case came about. They are members of groups based in Bend, Redmond, Hood River and The Dalles, and will be "on call" during the time of the festival. Training schedules have been adjusted so several helicopters would be immediately available for use during the time of the festival.

DEQ has granted temporary approval of a system for disposal of waste and water. Their representative, Stan Biles, says it is an excellent system -- it was subjected to intensive scrutiny, but

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Assessment

Security

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there was no ground upon which it could be disapproved. He believes if a problem arises, it would most likely be from a power failure. The group has been advised to lease an emergency generator. (The National Guard could make a generator available, but the group has not been told of this.)

Fire
Since the Bhagwan and his followers do not believe in killing animals for food, the Big Muddy Ranch no longer is grazed. Consequently, the grass has grown almost knee-high, and if dry weather persists into July it could pose a serious fire hazard. Pat Franzen, Acting State Fire Marshal, has inspected the site and advised the residents of appropriate measures to prevent fires. The residents possess three vehicles with fire-fighting capabilities, including a water tanker.

*Interest
Medical*
The Health Division has approved a temporary water supply for the site. Like DEQ, the agency praised the engineering work that went into it, and says there was no ground upon which it could be disapproved. Dick Grant noted there are nearby hospitals in Madras, The Dalles and Bend which could accommodate victims of violence, food poisoning or epidemic. He will be coordinator, in the event of an emergency, among these hospitals and the group itself. Several members of the group are physicians, and although they are not yet licensed in Oregon could provide emergency care. There is an excellent medical facility at the Big Muddy Ranch which could provide all but the most sophisticated medical care -- but for a very limited number of patients at one time.

Traffic
The Transportation Division sees traffic congestion as the main problem -- not so much from those who will be in attendance, but from sightseers. Arrangements have been made with the organizers of the event to have an information booth just off Highway 97, staffed on a round-the-clock basis to give directions.

The Emergency Operation Center will not be activated unless there is a serious emergency. If that happens, Room 50 will be opened and agency heads summoned as the need for their services arises. John Williams plans to assign Colonel Pankratz to the Bend office throughout the time of the festival. If there is an emergency, he himself will fly over immediately, and he requests that I accompany him as your representative.

cc: Gerry Thompson
Denny Miles

Steve Boedighelmer
Dick GRANT
Pat Franzen
ARCHIE MUSTARD
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