

SPRING 2022 | VOL. 32

HOT SPOTS



NEWS FROM DESCHUTES COUNTY
RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #2

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS: WHERE BEND FIRE & FIRE DISTRICT #2 IS HEADED

WORKLOAD

Over the past two years, the fire department call volume has increased 9%, from 11,491 to 12,527, with a drop in 2020 due to covid and people's concern about exposure. EMS calls make up over 82% of the calls, and every month since September 2021 has been a recordbreaker. In fact, looking back 5 years, there has been a whopping 47% increase in EMS calls, and as you may guess, many of them are late night/early morning responses.

The crews not only have to answer every call, but they also have assigned training every day and maintain the equipment and stations. With increasing calls and static staffing, the workload is greater than ever.

RESPONDING TO THE CALL *(continued from page 1)*

In emergency response, time is everything. Fire departments use response time as one measure of overall effectiveness, because it is a measure of several components, such as readiness, resource (equipment and staffing) location, depth and availability, transportation routes and dispatch efficiency.

Clearly, the faster resources can arrive on scene, the quicker the fire can be extinguished and the more likely survival of life threatening events can be. In the past two decades, because of the addition of stations and resources, especially the passage of two important tax levies, response times have improved to within national standards, resulting in better survival rates and less property damage in fires.

However, one fire station (Pilot Butte Station) currently only houses Basic Life Support Medic Units. The station does not have an ALS Engine (Advanced Life Support, staffed with Paramedics), but if added would definitely improve response times. The Shift Commander is also stationed there and routinely is the first unit on scene, so its central location lends itself to an effective response pattern.

IT'S A MATTER OF SURVIVAL

One measure of Fire/EMS agency effectiveness is the rate of survival for cardiac events (heart attacks). A survival rate over 50% is considered exceptional: nationwide, the rate is a fairly constant 33%, and in Oregon it is a bit over 35%. Bend Fire has been above 50% for the past 7 years, from voters approving a local option levy, and in 2020 the cardiac survival rate was 64.3%! The District and the City is fortunate to have

highly trained and dedicated Paramedics and EMTs who bring their best every day.

However, the issue here is that the survival rates are slowly drifting down, and the increase in workload and response times puts additional stress on the system.

FINANCIALS

Higher personnel costs, coupled with lower employee retention rates (high cost of living in Bend), higher overall costs and a skyrocketing call volume have all conspired to make the financial situation challenging. Although financial resources are adequate for things as they are now, the trends all show that call volume, higher costs and expenditures to account for future growth will take a toll on the financial health of the Bend Fire & Rescue organization.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Fire District and the City Fire Department, through an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA), are working on some long term solutions to the response issues. George Roshak, District Board President, stated that "Adding an ALS Engine and crew at Station 306 is the first priority of our Board."

The bottom line is that both the City and the District will need to address the financial situation in the coming months and years. There is a solid and effective agreement in place tying the two entities together, and between them, there is a high level of confidence that leadership and collaboration with the citizens will lead to a solution that will keep our community safe for many years.



An advancing fire with embers can easily ignite the grass, spread to the fence and then the structure. Removing the dead grass prevents this chain of events.

WILDLAND FIRE

Central Oregon has always had warm, dry summers, and we live in what is known as a "fire regime," where naturally occurring fires are an essential part of the ecosystem. However, with an extended drought and an historic period where all fires were extinguished, so fuels built up, and with more people moving into the wildland urban interface, the risk of hostile fires to people and property has increased in recent times, as evidenced by the destructive blazes across the West in the past few years.

Fuels are any material that can burn, typically brush, grass and trees. But wooden houses are also fuel and respond to weather conditions just as dry and dead wood outside does. A fire "sees" a house as just another form of fuel. If we can influence the path to the fuel (house), we have a fighting chance to prevent the destruction of our property. Weather and topography also play a crucial role in fire behavior: low humidity for an extended period and dry conditions coupled with wind can dry out fuels to critical levels, making them receptive to ignition. Because heat rises, fires will "seek out"

slopes to “climb,” so fuels at mid-slope and above are more vulnerable to a moving fire.

In the broader view, it is clear the fire season is longer in Central Oregon than it was 10 years ago: this factor is increasing our vulnerability to fire and the odds that a large fire will occur. It is not an option to “not live with fire,” rather, we all must learn, accept, understand, and adapt.

THE HOME IGNITION ZONE

An advancing wildland fire most often does not present as a solid wall of flame. Rather, it tends to move forward by small ignitions, finding pockets of fuel and spreading by burning embers out ahead of the fire front. Certainly, in extreme weather conditions, fire spreads violently and rapidly, but generally, by reducing the fuels that embers can ignite, we can reduce fire hazard.

However, because houses are another form of fuel, a burning structure can generate massive amounts of large hot embers that, under the right conditions, can spread a fire hundreds of feet or much more out ahead of the fire front and easily spread to the next house.

WHAT WE CAN DO

At the state and national level there is a push for more firefighting capacity, but this does not prevent fires from happening now. Prescribed burning to reduce fuels is an effective long-term strategy, but it takes 10 years of planning before there is “fire on the ground.”

The greatest impact we can have is at the individual and local level, by doing the following:

- Understanding the issues arising from fire, fuels and our lives
- Taking individual responsibility for hardening our homes, creating defensible spaces and being prepared for evacuations, for yourself, your family and your pets.
- Engaging with neighbors to reduce fuel loads in your community (this does not mean cutting down all the trees and brush).
- Understanding and accepting the prescribed fire smoke that will occasionally occur in the off-season.

By removing dead brush and grass, clearing all burnable materials within 5 feet of structures, ensuring access and exit routes, blocking routes into your home by embers (vents, crawl holes, under decks, etc), clearing gutters of dead materials, and clearing 3 feet around any nearby fire hydrants, you will know that you have done what you can to protect your property and your neighborhood.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

You can find several additional resources on the District website, www.dcrfpd2.org.



Bark mulch against combustible wooden siding is a flammable situation.



Light fuels like grasses can carry a fire to a fence or a house, and can endanger utilities, as well.



Non-combustible ground cover 5 feet out from combustible structure, the proper treatment of the Home Ignition Zone.



Clear brush 3 feet around all fire hydrants so firefighters can see and access them quickly.

THE SPOTLIGHT – TOBIN SLAUGHTER

The District owns six fire stations and the Training Center. Each station houses several pieces of fire apparatus, owned by the City of Bend and loaded with tons of specialized equipment for all kinds of emergency operations. Keeping everything running smoothly and ensuring the stations are 100% functional is the job of one amazing person, Tobin Slaughter, who has worked full time as Logistics Coordinator since 2007. He makes sure that both fire equipment and stations are fully operational: he fixes, disassembles, repairs, procures, installs, and replaces pieces and parts as needed. As Tobin states, he fixes everything that firefighters break!

The most challenging part of his job is getting enough information to repair or replace “IT” (whatever that might be): doing the detective work to ensure that what he returns to service is exactly what is needed. What is most gratifying to him is the thumbs up from the crews when “IT” is returned to service in working order.

In Tobin’s words, “there is never a dull moment, and it never stops!” Although he does not do major mechanical repairs or construction projects, the scope of his work might overwhelm mere mortals, involving everything from replacing cabinet trim to outfitting and wiring in a fire engine, and everything in between. The crews can count on sharp chainsaws, leak-free plumbing, working snowblowers and every part they may ever need. Tobin accomplishes all of this with a wry and quick sense of humor and is never grumpy, always easy to talk to.

Tobin’s dad, Doug, was a Bend firefighter, 1980 - 2000, and Tobin lives here in Bend with his wife, Anne and their two sons, Sam and Lane. He is a highly valued member of the community and the organization. Many thanks, Tobin, for all you do!



Tobin Slaughter, Bend Fire Logistics Coordinator

VIEW FROM THE LOOKOUT



Echoing a few ideas from the Living with Fire piece in this edition, if people have a definite plan of action shared with family and neighbors, in the event of a fire, and if folks can work together to adapt to a warmer, drier climate by removing dead fuels and hardening their houses, they will find that the little things they do will pay off to increase their odds of success in the face of impending disaster.

What does success look like and what do we want to see? First, preventing a fire from starting in the first place. Next, if a fire does occur, it can be stopped before reaching structures or threatening lives. If the flames manage to reach a building, it only causes minimal damage, and in the worst case, with a major fire, success can be measured by no injuries or loss of life.

The measures taken will not necessarily be a guarantee of 100% success, but everything done will increase both odds of success AND chances that responding firefighters can safely access and protect involved property and that of neighbors.

So in a big sense, positive actions to reduce fuels and make your property more fire-resistant is not only a protection measure for yourselves and your neighborhood, but also a gift to the firefighters who come in to handle the fire.

Effective fire protection and the ability to live with fire all comes down to collaboration: between the District, the firefighters and YOU!

FIRE DISTRICT HISTORY

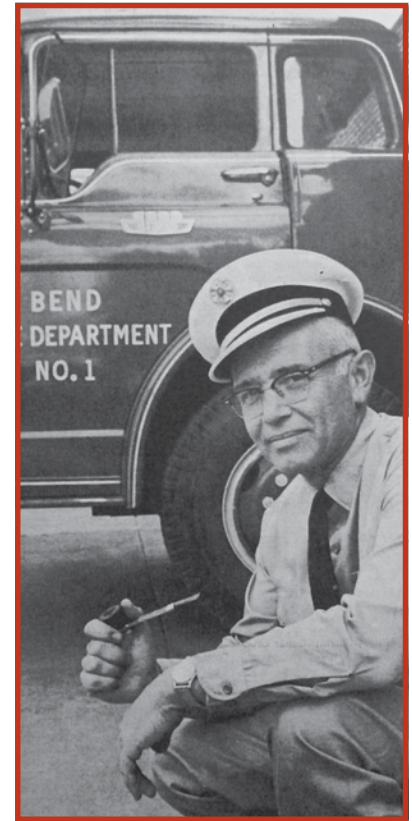
HAPPY 70TH BIRTHDAY, FIRE DISTRICT!

In 1952, the City of Bend was quite small, and there were scattered homes outside of the city limits. Every now and then a fire would break out, and since the District did not exist, Bend Fire simply did not respond. Rural folk were left to fend for themselves. One night there was a house fire just over the boundary, and BFD responded just in case. They stood and watched the house burn, because to take action would deprive City taxpayers of potential protection.

The Fire Chief, Vern Carlon, decided that this situation was not acceptable, and later that year he was able to establish the Deschutes County Rural Fire Protection District #2. Finally, the people who lived outside Bend had some measure of fire protection. At first, the response was limited, due to minimal funding, but over the years, the District and the City have developed a collaborative approach which is the envy of many communities.

When the author was hired in 1978, we had to determine if an incident was in “the city” or “the country” (as the firefighters called the District), and respond accordingly, with different equipment and staffing, because tax rates were separate and different. All that has changed, and both District and City residents contribute an agreed-upon amount to a common fund (the Fire Fund) that operates the fire and EMS response for both areas, delivering exactly the same service, both EMS and Fire. A binding contract makes this arrangement permanently mutually beneficial.

In addition, while the City owns the equipment, hires the personnel and staffs the facilities, the fire stations and the Training Center are owned by the District, in a remarkable and unique arrangement that ties the two entities together for the benefit of all residents. Everyone should be proud of the collaboration which both City and District leaders have used to protect us all. I know Vern Carlon would be very proud of this organization!



Vern Carlon

A SAD NOTE AND A TIP OF THE HAT

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Chief Vern Carlon's daughter, Colleen, in October, 2021. Colleen was a longtime Bend resident who had recently moved to Tacoma, but she loved Bend and the Fire Department and knew a great deal about the area and the BFD. Colleen Carlon, you are missed. Rest in Peace.



PANDEMIC UPDATE FROM RESPONSE CREWS

Covid-19 has been a major challenge for the Bend Fire response crews, especially since well over 82% of all calls are medical in nature and require a Medic Unit to respond. According to Deputy Chief of EMS Drew Norris, we are beginning to see a significant drop in cases. Starting in April 2020, EMS call volume dropped steeply as people were quite concerned about a disease no one yet understood. As the next two years passed, call volumes fluctuated, rising when state mask mandates were dropped, falling when the variants subsided. However, in 2021 call volume was 9% higher than 2019, going from 11,491 to 12,527 in just two years.

The Fire Department personnel are over 80% vaccinated and they wear full protective gear (N-95 masks, gloves, gowns and goggles) to every call where covid is either suspected or potential. In fact, 9-1-1 Dispatch has a full question algorithm to determine if a caller is more likely to be infected, and this

information is transmitted to the responding crews. Also, Bend Fire mandates covid testing at the beginning of every shift and has established its own testing lab.

Chief Norris has been impressed with the results. As with most workplaces in the US, there have been a few infections, resulting in mandatory quarantine and time away from the station. As Norris said, however, “Our crews have been the most professional people I have ever seen work, and they consistently provide the highest level of care.”

The City and the Fire District are fortunate indeed: Bend Fire is proud to bring its best to every call for service, even in stressful times. With the probability of future variants, residents can be confident that the crews are prepared for whatever may come and will continue to provide top shelf patient care.

SPRING 2022 FIREFREE PROGRAM

The most important thing a person can do to reduce the spread of fire on their property is to remove the dead brush and grass that can carry fire across the ground. The Fire District has been urging people to do this for many years, but...where to take the debris?

Every year, the Deschutes County Solid Waste Department, in collaboration with Project Wildfire, accepts yard debris at area collection sites and the landfill for free for two weeks in the Spring. This year the dates for the Knott Landfill are April 30 - May 15. All needles, leaves, branches, and brush will be accepted free of charge, as a way of supporting community fire protection and fuels reduction efforts.

So get your neighbors together this spring, break out the rakes, clippers, saws and Thermoses and clear away dead brush, snip off up dead limbs on trees, cut branches overhanging the deck, clean the needle cast from gutters and roofs, and remove dead material from around the house, garage, and fences! Don't forget to clear a 3-foot area around all fire hydrants.

As an added bonus, working together on fuels reduction will train your neighborhood for other critical events!

See below for further details, and don't forget to cover your load!



FIREFREE

FREE YARD DEBRIS COLLECTION

During a wildfire, most homes are lost when falling embers smolder and ignite vulnerable areas around homes. Reduce the risk of losing your home to wildfire and take advantage of free yard debris disposal at local collection sites. Recycle your needles, leaves, branches and brush for FREE!

- Grass clippings, brush, plant prunings, pine needles, pine cones, weeds, trimmings and branches, stumps or trees (no larger than 12" diameter).
- NOT Accepted: Sod, dirt, rocks, lumber, metal, trash or plastics of any kind, including plastic bags, and any stumps or trees larger than 12" diameter.

The following Deschutes County sites will be accepting yard debris this Spring 2022 for free during regular scheduled business hours and days — See Below For Specific Dates And Times

Bend
Knott Landfill
April 30–May 15
7 days/week
7 AM–5 PM
61050 SE 27th Street, Bend

Redmond
Negus Transfer Station
May 21–June 4
Monday–Saturday
8 AM–4 PM
2400 NE Maple Way, Redmond

La Pine
Southwest Transfer Station
May 21–June 4
Wednesday–Saturday
8 AM–4 PM
54580 Highway 97, La Pine

Sisters
Northwest Transfer Station
May 21–June 4
Wednesday–Saturday
8 AM–4 PM
68200 Fryrear Road, Sisters

Sunriver
Sunriver Compost Site
May 6–7
8 AM–4 PM
18305 Cottonwood Road, Sunriver

COVER YOUR LOADS!

For more info: Call **541-322-7129**
or visit **www.FireFree.org**

COMMUNITY CPR CLASSES TO RE-START IN PERSON

Bend Fire's enviable cardiac survival rate (64.3% in 2020) is significantly attributable to community aid, by people who step up to provide lifesaving measures and buy the patient precious time until medics arrive.

Bend Fire will restart in-person community Hands Only CPR and Stop The Bleed classes in May 2022, for anyone interested in helping the crews save a life and make the community a little safer. You can sign up online at www.oregon.gov/government/departments/fire-rescue/community-resources-programs/community-training or call Bend Fire and Rescue at 541-322-6300.

In addition, this high survival rate simply could not be achieved without the support of both other agencies and the larger community. Dispatch provides clear, calm and accurate directions when a caller reports a person not breathing, and law enforcement is dispatched to every cardiac event, because they not only are generally on the road and can arrive sooner, but they are also trained in High Performance CPR and work closely with our Paramedics. Additionally, each vehicle carries Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs), which provide needed electric shock to the heart when it stops. All these factors make it more likely that a patient whose heart has literally stopped will walk out of the hospital.

FUELS REDUCTION GRANT PROGRAM



It has often been said that "You can't do the things you want to do without the money."

The Fire District actually has a way to help you get the money to help neighbors complete a fuels reduction project in the community: a grant program which can provide money to individuals or groups to fund things like disposal fees, hauling costs, refreshments for volunteers and mailing costs for promotions for events.

Grant programs are competitive: preference will be given to

projects which provide the greatest good for the highest number of people, and matching commitments are required, which may include volunteer hours or financial contributions. The application process, however, is quite simple. The form can be found on the District website (www.dcrfpd2.com).

If your neighborhood has some fuels buildup and you need to remove a large amount of dead vegetation, consider getting some neighbors together, make a plan, apply for a grant and on the given day, you and your community can make a big difference in the safety of your neighborhood. Collaboration with your neighbors and the District can go a long way toward making your community fire-free!

See the District website (www.dcrfpd2.com) for all the information and the grant application.

QUICK FACTS

Outdoor Burning

requires you have a copy of the burning regulations (available at any firestation or online at our website, www.dcrfpd2.com). You need to call the burning information number on the day you intend to burn.

Burning Information

(541) 322-6335

Deschutes County Rural Fire Protection District #2 Office

(541) 322-6377

Bend Fire Department Business

(541) 322-6300

Information

Fire inspections, plan review, hazardous materials and fire prevention.
(541) 322-6300

Address Sign Applications

Applications available online at www.dcrfpd2.com

To report fires, including illegal outside burns, call 9-1-1.

Board Meeting Dates

Third Tuesday of the month, 11:30 am
1212 SW Simpson Ave
Bend Fire Admin
see website for agenda

Address Sign Info

Our goal is to have VISIBLE and LEGIBLE addresses. The District produces 6" x13" reflective address signs for all interested property owners. Details are on the District website.

INFORMATION ONLINE

website: www.dcrfpd2.com

This site contains information on address signs, annexation to the District, open burning, neighborhood grant opportunities, and wildfire and fuels mitigation.

Email: gmarshall@bendoregon.com

Facebook: Deschutes Rural Fire District #2

BOARD & ADMINISTRATION

George Roshak: President

Ray Miao: Vice President

Kent Haarberg: Secretary/Treasurer

Gary Cadez: Director

Oliver Tatom: Director

Gary Marshall: Executive Director



**DESCHUTES COUNTY RURAL
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #2**
1212 SW SIMPSON AVE.
BEND, OREGON 97702
(541) 318-0459

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
BEND OR
PERMIT NO 473



Left to right: Oliver Tatom, Director (recently elected); Ray Miao, Vice President; Gary Cadez, Director; Smokey Bear, Kent Haarberg, Secretary-Treasurer; George Roshak, President; Gary Marshall, Executive Director

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

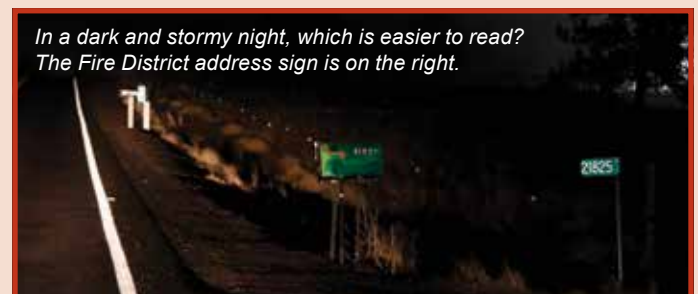
Monthly District Board meetings are always open to the public: meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month, 11:30 am, at 1212 SW Simpson Ave, in Bend, at the Fire Admin Building. Typical meetings include a review of old business, a look at items coming up, financials, and the Fire Chief's report.

MAKING YOUR HOUSE EASY TO FIND

If you have ever tried to find someone's house, perhaps with a long driveway, or a home business, you may have noticed that some addresses are very hard to find, even during the day! Now imagine that it's 3am and firefighters are looking for the house where a medical emergency is taking place, with either no address sign or one that is hidden or hard to read.

The Fire District has the solution for this dilemma: Any District resident can order a green reflective address sign and the District will install it where it will be most effective. To order a sign, simply go to www.dcrfpd.com and follow the directions in the Address Signs tab.

The cost for the sign is \$25, including installation by Fire Dept. personnel, including utility locates so no damage is done. Any questions, call the District, 541-322-6377.



*In a dark and stormy night, which is easier to read?
The Fire District address sign is on the right.*