

Wildfires

Continued from Page 1A

critical need across the state for what I would call a combat firefighter, someone who can go in a burning house and put it out.”

Role of volunteer fire departments today

Decades ago when a fire bell rang in any small town, the town's barber, grocery store owner and dozens of other citizens would drop what they were doing and run to the fire station.

Volunteer firefighters were vital to the survival of the community, and nearly every able-bodied man took part.

The percentage of paid full-time firefighters has increased in major metropolitan areas, but in rural areas the role of a volunteer firefighter is not as well known as was a century ago.

“My next-door neighbors assume all you guys are paid,” said Nic Schrock, who has volunteered at the Aumsville Rural Fire District for six years. “This whole area, Salem is about your only all-paid spot.”

According to the National Volunteer Fire Council, volunteers make up about 70 percent of firefighters in the United States.

Cities such as Stayton and Silverton have a mix of volunteers and paid staff to fight fires.

The volunteers can go from eating dinner at home to knocking down a front door to put out a fire in five minutes.

“The common thing we heard was we don't know you guys needed us,” said Roy Hari, fire chief for the Aumsville Rural Fire District. “The volunteer fire service across the nation is struggling right now.”

When Odus Coleman started as a volunteer firefighter in Aumsville in 2003, the staff of volunteers was so large – 35 – it was almost a competition among the volunteers to make it to the first engine out of the fire department.

He lives five blocks from the station and couldn't make it on the first engine out to most fires.

“We had volunteers who lived in that house, that house, we had Mark and we had two who lived in the apartments right there,” Coleman said, pointing to locations immediately around the Aumsville Rural Fire Department building.

“They would just be gone. Now it's a little different.”

Role in wildfires

As wildfires blaze across the state, volunteer firefighters play significant roles.

As most large fires are in remote areas, rural fire departments are often the first on the scene in the critical early moments of a fire when it can grow ex-



Aumsville Rural Fire Department volunteers Odus Coleman, Nic Schrock and Ryan Stevens are among the 10 volunteers who staff the department. The department has one paid firefighter.

BILL POEHLER/STATESMAN JOURNAL

ponentially in minutes.

Aumsville and many other rural fire departments sent engines and crews to help fight the Substation Fire outside of The Dalles last week.

They fought the fire alongside full-time firefighters from other agencies and private firefighters.

“Really, you look at this and when those firefighters responded to Sherman and Wasco county last week, nobody looked at them and said, ‘You're getting 10 bucks an hour and you're getting 25 bucks an hour,’” Dunkel said.

“They look at what you can do to help us mitigate this. The volunteers play a huge role. They are what we call boots on the ground.”

Dunkel said while many larger municipalities will send fire engines to help with fires such as the Silver Creek Fire or the Substation Fire, their engines are not capable of going on the remote, hard-to-access land.

Many of the rural fire districts have fire engines that can.

What it takes to be a volunteer firefighter

Most fire stations, such as Aumsville, offer introductory classes for people interested in volunteering.

But the training is rigorous and requires long hours and sacrifice.

“We got to do the same thing that Salem Fire does, we got to have the same standards, same training,” Coleman said. “We pick our training up as volunteers.”

The fire departments pay for the training of their volunteers, and once they get in the fire engine headed to a call, they are fully insured as any employee of the department would be.

Some volunteers leave shortly after the training is over, and many have other pursuits that require their time.

Controlled field burn is complete south of Silverton

Olivia Heersink
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Around 389 acres were torched Friday afternoon during a field burn south of Silverton permitted by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

John Byers, head of the department's Smoke Management Program, said seven or eight fields were set on fire at 2 p.m.

Despite Marion County's burn ban, Byers said, these types of controlled fires are permitted because of the “inordinate” amount of safety precautions set in place by those involved, who only have an hour to light the targeted area.

Several meteorological factors come into play when issuing a permit, Byers said. Officials look at wind speed and direction, as well as the potential height of the smoke.

Byers said field burning is not allowed if two of the following three conditions are present: temperatures 95



Field burning takes place at a grass seed field in the Lyons area in 2011. Field burning started Aug. 1 that year.

STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

degrees or higher, humidity 30 percent or less and wind speeds 15 mph or greater.

Contact reporter Olivia Heersink at ohheersink@statesmanjournal.com, 503-399-6657 or follow her on Twitter @heersinkolivia.

“We have people that are here every single call and man, I'd put those guys up against anybody out there,” Hari said. “It's all about how often you get down to the calls.”

“The best thing that can happen to a new recruit firefighter is to have a few fires, because that always hooks them.”

Being a firefighter isn't only about fighting fires, either.

There's also a sense of commitment to the community.

“There's so much more than what I ever thought than just doing fires,” Schrock said. “If you're helping someone and you're doing CPR or someone's kid got hurt, there's a lot more to appreciate as life goes on.”

Pilot program in Aumsville

A year ago, there was a fire not far from Coleman's business, Transformer Technologies, on Turner Road on the edge of Salem.

Four of the employees, including Coleman, are volunteers with the Aumsville Rural Fire District.

As soon as they got the call, Schrock and Brad Buchholz drove their cars the eight minutes to Aumsville to get a fire engine then drove back to fight the fire.

It sparked something. Buchholz and Schrock came up with the idea of stopping in Shaw at Aums-

ville's substation every day they're working and driving one of the fire trucks to the Transformer Technologies shop.

“We would have been like the first engine on scene,” Coleman said.

The Aumsville Rural Fire District encompasses 32 square miles and in 2017, the fire district responded to 813 calls.

They will be three minutes from the boundary of Aumsville's district — and closer to the Turner Fire District — but their response time will be significantly quicker for any call in Aumsville

Some volunteer firefighters don't have employers who would let them go to fight a fire in the middle of a work shift.

Coleman certainly does: His employees are still paid their regular hourly wage when they go fight a fire.

“I think that's probably the most important part about this is that the employer supports it,” said Hari, formerly with Marion County Fire District 1. “In any other community, the taxpayer is paying that firefighter.”

“Here it's a private employer paying that firefighter. That's something that you can't replace. That's an absolutely incredible offer for a company to do that. I truly believe that the return comes back.”

bpoebler@StatesmanJournal.com or [Twitter.com/bpoebler](https://twitter.com/bpoebler)

Appeal Tribune

Address: P.O. Box 13009, Salem, OR 97309
Phone: 503-399-6773
Fax: 503-399-6706
Email: sanews@salem.gannett.com
Web site: www.SilvertonAppeal.com

Staff

News Director
Don Currie
503-399-6655
dcurrie@statesmanjournal.com
Advertising
Terri McArthur
503-399-6630
tmcarthur@salem.gannett.com

Deadlines

News: 4 p.m. Thursday
Letters: 4 p.m. Thursday
Obituaries: 11 a.m. Friday
Display Advertising: 4 p.m. Wednesday
Legals: 3 p.m. Wednesday
Classifieds: 4 p.m. Friday

News Tips

The Appeal Tribune encourages suggestions for local stories. Email the newsroom, submit letters to the editor and send announcements to sanews@salem.gannett.com or call 503-399-6773.

To Place an Ad

Classifieds: call 503-399-6789
Retail: call 503-399-6602
Legal: call 503-399-6789

Missed Delivery?

Call: 800-452-2511
Hours: until 7 p.m. Wednesdays; until 3 p.m. other weekdays

To Subscribe

Call: 800-452-2511
\$21 per year for home delivery
\$22 per year for motor delivery
\$30.10 per year mail delivery in Oregon
\$38.13 per year mail delivery outside Oregon

Main Statesman Journal publication

Suggested monthly rates:
Monday-Sunday: \$22, \$20 with EZ Pay
Monday-Saturday: \$17.50, \$16 with EZ Pay
Wednesday-Sunday: \$18, \$16 with EZ Pay
Monday-Friday: \$17.50, \$16 with EZ Pay
Sunday and Wednesday: \$14, \$12 with EZ Pay
Sunday only: \$14, \$12 with EZ Pay

To report delivery problems or subscribe, call 800-452-2511

Lake

Continued from Page 1A

ologist with the OHA's harmful algae bloom surveillance program.

“When kids swim in water, they tend to swallow more water than adults swallow.”

Those who eat fish from waters where the blooms are present are recommended to remove fat, skin and organs and rinse the fillets with clean water before cooking.

The current health advisory for Detroit Lake issued by the Oregon Health Authority has been in place since June 28, its fourth advisory since May 23.

bpoebler@StatesmanJournal.com or [Twitter.com/bpoebler](https://twitter.com/bpoebler)

History of 2018 health advisories at Detroit Lake

May 23: Tests show high levels of toxins, alert issued

June 8: Tests show safe levels of toxins, alert lifted

June 13: Tests show high levels of toxins, alert issued

June 14: Tests show safe levels of toxins, alert lifted

June 15: Tests show high levels of toxins, alert issued

June 25: Three days of tests show safe levels of toxins, alert lifted

June 28: Tests show high levels of toxins, alert issued

Turned Around?

We have Answers!

RECYCLE RIGHT
MIXED RECYCLING

mcRecycles.net

Published every Wednesday by the Statesman Journal, P.O. Box 13009, Salem, OR 97309.

USPS 469-860, Postmaster: Send address changes to Appeal Tribune, P.O. Box 13009, Salem, OR 97309. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID: Salem, OR and additional offices.

Send letters to the editor and news releases to sanews@salem.gannett.com.

Silverton High School Scholarship Fundraiser

Join us for a Fundraising Party!

20th Annual
Friday, August 3rd, 2018

Place: Festhalle,
500 S. Wilco Hwy. Mt. Angel, OR 97362

The no host bar and social starts at 5:00 pm along with the Silent Auction and 50/50 Raffle. The Wooden Nickel will start serving buffet dinner at 6:30 pm.

Tickets cost \$30 when purchased in advance at Silverton Realty or \$35 if purchased on the day of the event.

Dress casual and comfortable and enjoy the friendships – new and old – while supporting SHS scholarships.

All ages are welcome

More info: mason@silvertonrealty.com or 503-873-3545