

VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Station Report



Every second Tuesday of the month, the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors holds a meeting, which is open to the public. These meetings allow the Fire Chief to give updates on what's new within the district, as well as department, volunteer, and station information.

The "Station Report," includes any improvements or needs to the station and grounds, issues or status of the fleet, call volume with a brief overview of any major calls, volunteer status, events old and new, and where the chief is at with administrative duties.

These meetings are open to the public, but are rarely attended by community members. In an attempt to get more information out to the people we serve, this monthly column has become one of our main sources of communication.

Station and Grounds

Over the course of the last few years we have trained in and removed the rental house next door to the station. Bridge Street, Lakeview Drive and the intersection have been restructured. The station and storage building have been improved with cleaning, repairs and painting.

We currently have a few projects scheduled. One is the replacement of the tattered carpet in the station. Another is electrical upgrades in order to properly illuminate the conference rooms and add safety to the outside of our buildings. We continue to slowly and cost effectively adapt the building to meet the changing needs and increasing safety requirements.

Fleet

From our oldest in service engine, manufactured in 1974, to our newest, yet unfinished command vehicle, our fleet sets the stage for our work. The District's apparatus help us acquire the proper ratings for the community's insurance. This gives this portion of our inventory a lot more worth.

Fire Engine

We have two fire engines. Our first out engine, **E454**, is a 1999 Freightliner that holds five personnel and 1000 gallons of water. National standards state that a first out engine should not be in service more than 10 years. After you have finished that math, we can move on to our second out engine, **E451**.

This 1974 Ford F900 only has a little over 9000 miles on the odometer, but exceeds the second out engine standard of 20 years. Add to that this year's partial fail in the pump testing series. It does push water at proper pressures, but does not hold a vacuum, which in our rural area means we will not be able to pull water as easily from any source outside of a fire hydrant. This vehicle being 40 years behind today's current operation's standards and safety requirements proves the urgency to seek replacement.

Water Tender

We currently house a 2000 gallon, 1982 Ford F9000 pumper/tender. Although this apparatus passed all but one of its pump tests, (the test fail was due to a faulty pressure regulator) a repair to the engine last year was only a temporary fix. This year's test and

maintenance sequence have given proof that it is on borrowed time. Add to that a leak in the main water tank and it gets harder to continue to bandage together this 32 year old vehicle. The parts are often hard to find and most often unavailable.

Rescue

This 1999 Ford F550 carries up to five personnel and houses all of our rescue equipment, as well as our portable breathing air bottle fill station. The utility box that is currently on this truck was repurposed from another truck earlier in its life. Because of its size, time has seen all of the equipment that is needed and required, but seldom used, packed into its nooks and crannies. This truck operates at its maximum weight limit at all times. As with anything aging it has had its own share of issues. From transmission slips, to electrical and battery failures, **R457** is showing its age. **Brush Rigs**

Two type 6 engines help us when it comes to wildland/brush fires. **E4540** is a 2006 F550, with a 400 gallon tank and pump in the back. This truck will carry up to five personnel and often serves as our duty officer rig. It has had a couple mechanical issues in the past few years, costing the district just under \$5,000 in all. These have been issues that are inherent to the make and model of engine and were unforeseeable.

E4530 is a 1990 F350, which carries a utility box from a previous department chassis, (believed to be an early 80s pickup) and has 300 gallons as its payload. This truck is the third oldest we have in service at 24 years old. It still starts, runs, and sprays water, albeit not as quick, easily or efficiently as its newer counterpart.

Command and Logistic Rigs

The red, 2000 Suburban that we received from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue, has been our command rig for several years. Over that time, we have replaced many parts, with the engine being the most costly. With more restrictions put in place and safety concerns, what we were allowed to carry in the vehicle became so constricting, that it was not feasible to continue its use as a primary response vehicle. Although we still use it for duty officer response, the Board of Directors agreed with a plan to replace it with a 2012 Dodge 3500 pickup, equipped with a lightweight polymer box. This configuration will allow the personnel to be more efficient and carry tools that are regularly used on a wide variety of calls. The build process has proven to take a little longer than originally anticipated, but the diligence of all involved, along with some donations and hard bargaining, has kept us well under budget.

Long story short, we simply want to inform you of what we are working with to serve you. We



E451 and E454



Water tender 452



R457



E4540 and E4530



New Command Rig and U458

have been incredibly frugal and budget minded over the years. The time to talk about replacing some of these apparatus is upon us. The need is more important now than ever, before an incident happens and we are unable to respond because of catastrophic failure.

Where We Are Today

The fire service as a whole has evolved over the course of the last ten years and has become more of an all-encompassing emergency response service. The Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District has done its best to keep current with continual modernized training, upgrades in personal equipment and apparatus. At present, the district has 15 active fire volunteers and one emergency logistics volunteer. The Fire District has maintained a great partnership with Metro West Ambulance services and shares several of the same volunteers.

Call volumes continue to increase per year with no sign

of leveling or decreasing in sight. As the need for assistance rises, we find ourselves at times with one ambulance in the middle of transporting a patient as another call comes in for help. Several of our fire volunteers have stepped up and completed well over one hundred hours in medical training to lend a hand in these situations. With this additional EMS training, fire personnel can take the call and stabilize the patient until another ambulance or LifeFlight can arrive.

With low volunteer numbers, those that are showing up don't have much additional time to

sacrifice for the benefit of the community. With work, school, sports and family interaction, along with additional fire and rescue training, time seems to be stretched to its limits for these few.

How can you help? We are always looking for new volunteers in many different areas of our department. The more volunteers, the less the work load is on any one person. The needs of the community are competently and happily met when more people are involved. For information on how you can help your neighbors, contact Fire Chief Dean Smith, 503-429-8252.

Burn Ban in effect. 503-429-8252

Calls responded to June 1-30

Service Call	10
Fire	2
Emergency Medical Service	28
Hazardous Condition	3
Good Intent	1
No Emergency Found	0
False Alarm	1
Total	45