

VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Putting it All Together

By Chief Dean Smith

There is no question about the importance of our volunteer based department. In 2014, Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District responded to 521 calls in a 36 square mile area. Your fire district is covered by a Fire Chief as the paid administrator and the main responder to incidents during weekdays, while our district volunteers are at their regular paid jobs, which are mostly out of town. Weekend and night incidents are covered by our volunteers.

Fire District volunteer staffing varies greatly on a day by day basis. Their ability to respond to incidents is driven by their individual paid career/personal schedules. We also have one volunteer who has gained special permission to leave work for major incidents.

I cannot speak highly enough about our volunteers, and what they do for our community. These highly trained, energetic men and women often work multiple jobs, have families, and still make the time and effort required to volunteer for your fire district.

Here's the problem - Fire Department volunteerism is at an all-time historical low with no relief in sight. As Fire Chiefs all across the county and state communicate with each other, it is evident that Vernonia is not alone in this struggle. Times have changed. The volunteer of yesteryear is no more.

Recent incidents have taken place here in Vernonia when volunteers were not available for response, with the last major fire yielding only three personnel from Vernonia, including the Fire Chief. Our volunteers are tiring out with all that is expected of them in training and responsibilities at the district, work and home.

Your fire district has managed to keep volunteers trained, and apparatus ready to respond, by frugally spending its meager budget. However, a look at the essentials of the Fire District has revealed a training program that barely meets the minimum requirements of the State of Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST), and our out of date, underpowered trucks do not meet the safety or standard requirements of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

VRFPD's goal is to provide solid, reliable service to you, our community, and the time has come to add paid personnel to our fire district roster, along with new replacement fire apparatus. Both have now become a necessity. A Training Officer would be dedicated to bringing the district up to date with appropriate training, as well as to alleviate some of the burdens and stress on our volunteer officers. Additional benefits of having a full time training officer will be the ability to create a resident or "sleeper" program that would uti-

lize students from inside and outside our community, while increasing the amount of personnel available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

To put this program in place, your fire district needs a 5 year operating levy approved, to pay the \$42,000 annual wages and benefits of this new training officer position. The operating levy will cost a home owner \$0.32 per \$1000 of assessed value, (\$64.00 a year, or \$5.34 a month for a \$200,000 assessed property value, or \$32.00 a year, \$2.67 a month for a \$100,000 assessed property value.)

In addition to the Training Officer position, your Fire District needs to regain a cycle of replacement for large fire apparatus. Engine 451, a 40 year old fire engine purchased in 1972, has been recently replaced by a 20 year old fire engine purchased with help from your Volunteer Association. Water Tender 452, a 32 year old water tender, leaks, and is in need of a new motor. Engine 454, our first responding fire engine, was purchased with a bond in 1998. The national standard for large apparatus is 10 years as a "first out" responding engine, and 10-20 years as a backup or "second out" fire unit.

While your fire district understands we cannot financially follow the national standard, it has recognized the urgency at which we need to close the gap. By purchasing a new pumper tender to replace water tender 452, the age difference will be lowered to 16 years instead of 33.

A ten year bond levy is needed to purchase and outfit the new tender. The bond will cost a home owner \$0.21 per \$1000 of assessed value, (\$42.00 a year, or \$3.50 a month for a \$200,000 assessed property value, or \$21.00 a year, \$1.75 a month for a \$100,000 assessed property value.)

The Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors and staff welcomes the community to contact staff, attend our monthly



meetings to ask questions, learn more about your fire district, and be more involved in your local Fire District.

With the proper knowledge and support, the VRFPD Directors, staff and volunteers, will be able to continue to serve the community and maintain current fire insurance requirements. The first meeting for the 2015-2016 budget will be March 10th in the VRFPD Conference room at 6:00 PM.

Toy and Joy Report

Wendy Jansen-Moe took the lead this year and her team served 268 children, up from 203 last year.

With discounts from retailers and toys donated from the public the Vernonia Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association spent a total of \$2661.95

Toy donations from private

citizens, KGW, Peterson Caterpillars, and The Freewheelers group helped immensely and were greatly appreciated. This was in addition to private cash donations of \$106.

Thanks go out to everyone who donated Toy and Joy barrel space, toys, cash, time and heart to make this event happen.

Calls responded to January 1-31

Fire	1
Emergency Medical Service	29
Hazardous Condition	5
Service Call	2
Good Intent	3
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	0
Special Incident	0
No Emergency Found	0
False Alarm	1
Total	41

CONFRONTING THE CARDIAC CRISIS

Uncontrollable Risk Factors

- Gender**—Men tend to develop heart disease about 10 years earlier than women
- Genetics**—Heart disease runs in families
- Ethnicity**—African-Americans and Hispanics have a higher risk of heart disease than Caucasians
- Age**—83% of those who die of heart disease are over 65

Controllable Risk Factors

- Smoking**—Can triple the risk of heart attack
- Cholesterol**—High levels of LDL increase risk
- Diet**—Avoid salt, saturated fats, and refined sugars
- Exercise**—30 min of exercise/day reduces risks
- Weight**—Overweight/obesity can double the risk
- Stress**—Unmanaged stress is linked to heart disease
- Alcohol**—Excessive use of alcohol increases risk

You **CAN'T** control your **genetics, ethnicity, gender, or age**

You **CAN** control your **diet and exercise**, and avoid **tobacco and alcohol**

The heart **beats** about **100,000 times/day**

The heart **pumps** about **5 quarts of blood/min**; 1,800 gallons/day

1 gallon x 46,000,000

After **70 years**, the heart will have **pumped** about **46 million** gallons of blood

It takes about **1 minute** for **blood** leaving the heart to **circulate** and return

60,000+ miles: the total length of **blood vessels, arteries, veins, and capillaries** in your body

Blood vessels can be as **wide** as a **garden hose** or as **thin** as a **single blood cell**

Sources:

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