

# VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## District Updates

### Building and Grounds:

The district is looking at the sale of property next to the station and purchase of property to the rear of the station. These transactions will allow future flow and expansion of the district with fewer obstacles, while making fiscal sense for the present. We are currently seeking someone willing to donate their time to use district equipment for upkeep of the grounds. This would include mowing, weed eating and basic outdoor clean up.

### Apparatus and Equipment:

The new water tender is in service and has officially responded to its first fire. This was a mutual aid call to

assist with the wildland fire near Chapman. There are still a few small items to be installed which will help keep the water tender organized and run efficiently. The camouflage rig that has been parked at the station is slated to be a type three/Heavy Brush rig. We are currently working on bids and plans for its outfitting.

### Call volume and response:

As of June 14, VRFPD has responded to 284 calls for service. The average response per call is two personnel.

### Personnel:

The current roster is seven responding volunteers, three logistics volunteers, two recruit volunteers and two

administrative responding personnel.

The Training Captain position, held by Will Steinweg, has helped the district immensely with being more active in county operations, assisting with outside training opportunities, has solidified our training program, as well as integrating drills with Mist-Birkenfeld Fire personnel. Captain Steinweg has not been able to secure a home within the community yet, but is continuing his search. This means he stays at the station overnight on the weekend shifts that he covers, and when other needs arise. Trish Smith holds our Volunteer Coordinator position and just recently



was able to secure a matching grant in the amount of \$5,200 for wildland personal protective equipment.

## Recreational Vehicle Fire Safety: Preventing RV Fires

By: Robert Schattschneider

With the beginning of summer finally here, many of you are packing up your campers and RVs for some relaxation, fresh air and sunshine. Are you ready for all of the things that can go wrong?

With some help from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal, here are some safety tips and advice to help ensure that your camping vacation will turn out just as fun and problem free as you anticipated.

Make sure that you have proper ventilation before using that gas stove or oven. Open overhead vents and turn on exhaust fans.

One of the leading causes of kitchen fires, in your home or RV, is leaving things unattended. Just as you would at home, make sure that combustibles are well away from burners and skillets. Never use cooking appliances for heating your camper.

Before and after using your gas appliances, check to make sure the knobs are in the off position. Accidentally leaving the knobs in the on position can cause a buildup of gas which can be dangerous in more than one way. Extinguish all open flames, pilot lights, and shut off the gas supply. In the event that you smell gas, do not operate any electrical switches or any other device that can produce a spark or open flame.

If you smell gas or even think that there might be a gas leak, open the windows, ceiling vents and doors to ventilate the camper or RV, then get every-

one outside while the camper ventilates itself. Again, shut off the main gas supply. Do not open the gas supply again until you have found and corrected the source of the gas leak.

Electrical heaters can be just as dangerous in your camper as they are at home. All heaters need plenty of space away from anything that can burn. Keep all paper, furniture, bedding, and curtains at least three feet from your heating equipment.

Make sure that your power cord connecting the RV to the campground electricity supply is in good condition. Inspect it for cracks or any kind of damage, including broken plugs or missing grounding blades. Check all electrical appliances for loose connections or controls that seem to be loose or missing. Avoid electrical overload by limiting the number of appliances operating at one time.

If you have your camper plugged into a power source at a campground you should disconnect the power cord before using any generators to supply power to your camper. Supplying your camper or RV with both power sources at the same time can cause your electrical circuitry to malfunction, causing an electrical fire.

Make sure you check your generator's exhaust system. Check all of the connections regularly for leaks and tighten as necessary. Also check to make sure the generator's tailpipe extends past the edge of the RV. Whether your generator is built in or external, make sure that you always operate it in an area where the wind will carry the exhaust fumes away

from the RV. Always allow the generator to cool down properly before refueling.

Make sure that your camper or RV has a smoke detector and a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm. Check the batteries prior to each trip to make sure your alarms are working properly. If either type of alarm makes a chirping sound replace the batteries right away. Check the age of your alarms and replace them if they are 10 years old or older, or if the age of the alarm cannot be determined.

You are going to want to make sure your camper is equipped with the correct type of fire extinguisher. Confirm that it is the proper size and securely mounted in a convenient location. Everyone should know where the fire extinguisher is located and how to properly use it in the event of a fire.

After you finish setting up your campsite, go over your escape plan with

everyone, including where to meet in the event of an emergency. Once everyone has been accounted for, make sure you alert anyone else in the immediate area that might be affected.

Lastly, lets talk about campfire safety. Select a spot that is away from grasses and shrubs, overhanging branches, and stacked firewood. Scrape away leaves and litter to bare soil, at least 10 feet on all sides, and circle it with rocks. Keep your fire pit small and easy to manage.

Before you light any campfires, make sure that campfires are allowed in your campground. Always have a shovel and a bucket of water readily available. When you turn in for night, or before leaving your campsite, make sure your campfire is completely extinguished.

## Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District Could Use Your Help

Recently we have received some inquiries from the public concerning volunteer opportunities with the department. We do have several areas where we could use an extra hand from any interested citizens from our community.

We realize that not everyone is cut out for becoming a firefighter, with all of the training requirements and personal time commitments, so we have come up with some areas where you can volunteer to help us out, without having to go through a lot of training and time away from your

family.

If you are interested in learning more about the areas where we could use your help, contact the Fire Chief.

### We could use some volunteers to help with:

- Vetting Map Books
- Answering Phones
- Filing Paperwork
- Public Education Programs
- Grant Writing
- Computer Data Entry
- Station/Grounds Maintenance
- Fire Prevention Programs
- Address Program



**VERNONIA  
RURAL  
FIRE DIST.**

**CAN YOU FILL  
THESE BOOTS?  
VOLUNTEERS  
WANTED**

**Call Dean Smith  
for more information  
on free training  
(503)429-8252**

### Calls responded to May 1-31

Fire	1
Emergency Medical Service	36
Hazardous Condition	1
Service Call	7
Good Intent	0
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	0
Special Incident	0
No Emergency Found	0
False Alarm	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>