

VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Honoring our Veteran Firefighters

By Training Captain Will Steinweg

As you all know we have been training 12 new recruits here at Vernonia Fire. They have put in countless hours of their own time to go through classes and hands-on activities to get their Firefighter certification. They have all individually logged over 200 hours of training to get where they are now, and have one more class to complete before they graduate from our fire academy. Many of them are also going through EMT school to learn more skills to further support the Fire Department with our ever growing call volume.

What hasn't been talked about much is the volunteers that have been with the department for many years. We have a great crew of core volunteers that have continued to answer the call for service to their community for over 100 years combined. We rely heavily on these eight volunteers to not only continue their service, but also help train our new recruits. They sacrifice many hours of their lives to come to the station and help our new volunteers learn the skills that they will need to be

successful in this demanding profession.

To put it into perspective for everyone that is not familiar with the volunteer fire service, this means that these volunteers have put in at least 12,240 hours of training in their careers as volunteer firefighters to just maintain a Firefighter 1 certification. Most of these individuals are certified higher than a Firefighter 1 level which requires even more hours of training to maintain all of their certifications. They must have the same certifications as professional firefighters, but they don't get paid for what they do. These hours don't include the number of calls they go on every year, or the time they spend out in the community for public education. They also put countless hours into fundraising for their non-profit association. On top of all that, they need to know every piece of equipment and fire apparatus we have in the station, how it operates, and when to use it, to do their job efficiently.

As the Training Captain for Vernonia Fire, I would like to recognize these individuals for all they do and for the years of service they have pro-



vided to the Vernonia community.
Brandi Abney-18 years of service
Dean Smith-16 years of service
Kristina McCord-14 years of service
Thomas Moss-14 years of service
Loren Loomis-11 years of service
Dan Hanson-11 years of service
Jason Smith-9 years of service
Dawn Moss-9 years of service

Again, these individuals have sacrificed hours of their lives to help this community and I personally would like to thank all of them for the service they have provided.

Recruitment/Retainment Corner

By Trish Smith

As some of you have seen or heard around town, we have recently completed Vernonia's first Fire Academy with our (12) new recruits. These outstanding and very brave individuals are usually already volunteering at a different service and are not easy to find in a small rural community such as ours, but once these fine folks hear about a need, they really do come out of the woodwork.

Once more we are looking for some of Vernonia's finest men and women to again answer the call. Let me say that the volunteer fire department of today is much different than the one of the past. We have seen the fruits of our labor from the change in culture here, realizing that a healthy volunteer pool comes as a result of a healthy leadership group. Chief Smith and Captain Steinweg have been focused on providing for the broad spectrum of needs that come with having this

large group of volunteers. These include new personal protective equipment, physical and mental health awareness, training for advancement, and incentives for our top responders.

I have attended a couple of training events at Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) in Salem this year, and have had the opportunity to interact with volunteer firefighters from all over the state. I see other small-town, rural departments having some of the same issues with recruitment and retention that we have had. However, I feel very honored to play a part in the change that has taken place here at VRFPD. After taking a Recruitment and Retention Coordinator Certification, (RRC) course, I have been equipped with the tools to help to streamline on-boarding for new recruits.

The application process has been tightened up to make our expectations clear, and follow-through with new members simpler.

We have some exciting new training planned for this summer including, an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) class for those 16 and over, a babysitting class, wildland fire awareness, and another fire academy, as well as an ongoing rescue team training that is open to the community.

The VRFPD really does have a lot to offer.

If you have questions about how to join our fire department or volunteer ambulance and what we have to offer, please call, text, or PM me! Trish Smith (971) 203-4199

Calls responded to April 1-30

Fire	1
Emergency Medical Service	33
Hazardous Condition	0
Service Call	7
Good Intent	1
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	0
Special Incident	0
No Emergency Found	0
False Alarm	2
Total	44

VOLUNTEERS WANTED



Here's What We Do!

VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

VRFPD is currently accepting applications for Volunteer Fire Fighters

- You must have a High School Diploma or G.E.D., a valid Oregon Driver's License, and be at least 18 years of age
- Currently, you must be able to attend weekly training on Monday nights
- Willing to attend the Fire Academy
- Live or work (employer willing to let you respond to calls) within VRFPD's District
- Applications can be picked up at the Fire Station

VRFPD

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