

# VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## Training and Other News

Another year has come and gone at Vernonia RFPD. This year was especially interesting for everyone involved. With the continuing battles we are having with COVID-19, training has been tough to say the least. We have been doing our best to continue the education of our volunteers with different online training platforms.

This year was also our Maintenance Recertification year for the Oregon Fire Service. Every two years the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) asks for our records to re-certify our firefighters that hold any firefighting certifications with the department. We are happy to say we were able to re-certify every one of our firefighters.

This year was also our DPSST accreditation year. This is where DPSST sends out a rep-

resentative from their agency to audit our training records and accredit the fire department to teach classes in-house. We were able to pass our audit with flying colors and we were able to add more classes to the list of classes we, as a department, can teach in-house. Currently we are now able to teach: NFPA Firefighter I, NFPA Firefighter II, NFPA Driver/Operator, NFPA Pump Operator, and Wildland Firefighter (type 2). With this new accreditation we will be adding NFPA Rope Rescue Operations Level, NFPA Rope Rescue Technician Level, Wildland Firefighter (type 1), and Wildland Apparatus Operator to the list.

We are still moving forward as a department and continuing to improve our training standards. With the addition of adding more classes to our accreditation, we will be able to provide more



services to the community members of Vernonia.

Once again we would like to thank everyone for supporting us in this endeavor by passing the local operating levy and we will continue to serve the community the very best we can.

## Volunteer Update

The year seems like it is flying by, can you all believe we're over half way through January? Vernonia Fire District has made a lot of changes in the last year, and we have so much more work to do, it feels as though we're just getting started. We have officially filled all six positions in the joint Resident Volunteer program with our sixth person moving up here from San Jose, California! This program is a massive undertaking and one that is continuing to mold and change as the program grows! We saw an instant increase in daily staffing with the addition of our first two residents, and now with our third member in Vernonia starting in February we will be moving our Resident Volunteers to a 24 hour on, 48 hour off schedule giving us additional staffing seven days a week!

Our long term goal is to be able to utilize our in-district volunteers, our resident volunteers, and our out-of-district volunteers, to get to the

point of having one engine staffed with at least three people every weekend! This doesn't come without challenges, one of the big ones being where do we house these volunteers? These are things we will be working on over the next several months as our programs continue to expand.

We pushed right up against 700 calls for 2020, continually increasing the need to grow our volunteer ranks, and ensure that we are getting enough firefighters, and apparatus to every emergency response. We also saw a number of times throughout the year where multiple emergency calls happened simultaneously, straining local resources and spreading crews thin. What does all of this mean? It means we need more people to help, more people that are willing to get up and respond when the pagers go off, and people that believe in our motto "neighbors helping neighbors."

## Winter Driving Safety Reminder

With Oregon winter weather fully arrived and the possibility of snow over the course of the next couple of weeks, we need to remember that time and patience are our friend when driving. Highway 47 has pockets of roadway that sees much more shade than sunshine, where frost appears and disappears, creating slick road surface conditions at different times and in different places.

In addition, deer and elk season for our bow hunters has begun. As the hunting season progresses, and the eventual rut, our plentiful wildlife will be on the move. Keep a close eye out for deer and elk crossing our roadways.

If you have a deer or an elk run out in front of your vehicle, apply firm pressure on your brake pedal and try to reduce your speed as much as possible without locking up your wheels. It's never a good idea to swerve in an attempt to miss the animal. Quite often drivers will attempt to swerve around the animal and end

up losing control of their vehicle.

Hitting the animal will be better for you than losing control and possibly rolling your vehicle over and off the roadway. No one wants to injure an animal with our vehicle, but it's more important for you to take action that will protect you and your family from serious harm.

Please put together a survival kit for your car and let people know where you are headed. Leave a little early if possible and be patient with others. As always, if you see emergency vehicles please slow and pull to the side until we pass and if you come across an emergency scene please do not just drive through without being directed. The VRFPD is still limited in responders and may not be able to secure the scene and provide traffic control while taking care of the patient, and that is when someone could easily be hurt by another driver passing through the scene.

## Toy and Joy 2020 Wrap Up

The Christmas trees are down, the stockings are put away, and the season cheer has left us once again. Which means that Toy and Joy finished another successful year. This year, Vernonia Fire helped over 100 children get toys for Christmas. While this is a low number from seasons in the past, we were happy to help each and every one of them. We could not have done it without the help from our community. We picked up toys three times from True Value, due to the barrel overflowing and received a wonderful donation from the Free Wheelers. We want to thank each of the business locations that once again let us put barrels up, and to every

individual and family that donated toys and money. We really could not continue this program without everyone's help. Each year, watching this community give to help one another is a heartwarming feeling and proves the true meaning of Christmas. While it seems that the season is over, we are always thinking about Christmas and how we can improve on things for the next year. Here is to a wonderful new year, hopefully one better than the last. We can't wait to get things going come November of 2021.

*Thank you from the bottom of our hearts,  
Your friends at the Vernonia Fire Station*

### Calls responded to December 1-31

Fire	5
Emergency Medical Service	33
Hazardous Condition	1
Service Call	8
Good Intent	4
False Alarm	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>

**VERNONIA  
RURAL  
FIRE DIST.**



**CAN YOU FILL  
THESE BOOTS?**

**VOLUNTEERS  
WANTED**

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