

Fire department combines protection and first aid service

By Cindy Ralston



Sparky, Estacada Fire Department mascot, patiently awaits a fire call. Sparky, the full-time resident of the fire hall, is always near the action.

Since the first official record of its beginning, the Estacada Rural Volunteer Fire Department has been through many changes.

The first official record of organized fire fighting in the Estacada area was a meeting held in August 1910 when two fire companies were formed to man two hand-drawn hose carts.

The fire hall was then located on the property now occupied by the American Legion Hall and one of these carts was stationed there while the other was located in a small building on the grade school property on upper Main Street.

A major change in the Estacada Fire Department was the donation of a Model-T Ford to the City of Estacada. This was the first motorized equipment used by the fire hall and was used as a hose wagon. It also pulled hand-drawn equipment if enough power was available.

This truck is still on display at the fire station and is still in good running condition. It is often seen in the Estacada Timber Festival parade along with other fire fighting equipment.

In 1938, the City of Estacada purchased a new 500-gallon per minute pumper and at that time all out-moded equipment was disposed of.

The Estacada Fire Department was confined to city limits until 1951 when the

local firemen purchased and leased some equipment.

A considerable amount of valuable property was saved and in 1954 the Currinsville-Cazadero Fire Protection District was formed. All equipment has been purchased by the fire district since that time and since that time the name of the fire district was changed by a vote of the people to Estacada-Rural Fire District No. 69. When the City of Estacada was annexed to the rural fire district, the district also spread out to include outlying areas such as Springwater, George, Eagle Creek and other areas.

The fire department was once housed in a section of the Estacada City Hall until 1964 when the present fire station was completed.

The current fire department consists of 44 volunteers who spend an average of 12 hours per month in training and exercises. These volunteers include school teachers, sawmill employees, telephone company employees, mechanics and housewives.

Chief of the fire department is Rex Jeffries and he responds to 90 per cent of the calls unless he is not at home. The fire department is on call 24 hours a day. Paid fire fighters are on call for eight hours a day.

Besides responding to fire calls, the Estacada Fire Department provides rescue and special aid services. The department has a special rescue vehicle and responds to everything from cuts to heart attacks. Jeffries said the department responded to 93 alarms last year most of which were first aid calls.

The volunteers are the main manpower of the fire district according to Jeffries. The fire department consists of a paid staff of five. This staff includes the Chief, Secretary, Captain and Lieutenant.

Eighty-five square miles are covered by the fire department and of these 85 square miles 75 per cent is timber and brushland. The two fire stations, one located in the George area and the Estacada Fire Station adequately cover the fire district.

The Fire Department maintains its treasury and operating revenue is obtained through celebrations, ball games, parties and advertising campaigns. A special fire department celebration is the annual Fireman's Ball.

The Estacada Fire Department has undergone many changes but the old familiar bell purchased around 1904 is still the property of the firemen and is mounted in the new fire hall tower.



Photos by Norma Bennick

Robert Wiley, Estacada Police Chief, has been on the corp for seven years as chief. According to Wiley, vandalism is on the downward slope.

Police Department

The city of Estacada is patrolled 24 hours a day by four officers and Robert Wiley who has been Chief of Police for seven years.

Most of their calls are for thefts and burglaries. "The best prevention for theft is neighborhood cooperation, by watching each other," said Wiley. "People should also install solid core doors with good frames and dead locks."

Besides handling thefts and giving citations the police force also gives talks to schools and other public groups.

"As on the national average 70 per cent of the crimes are committed by juveniles," said Wiley, "but vandalism is on the downward slope."

"The biggest recent crime was April 1st at the high school when burglars stole numerous items including cameras, tapes, and projectors," said Wiley.

