

Applegater

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Celebrating
~27~
Years

Locals form prescribed burn association

BY AARON KRIKAVA

An important and powerful tool for fire safety in our region has become a reality. After years of dedicated, 100 percent volunteer efforts, I and other dedicated community members have created and developed the Rogue Valley Prescribed Burn Association (RVPBA).

Prescribed burning is the application of controlled, low-intensity fire on the landscape to reduce fuel loads, cycle nutrients, inhibit noxious weeds, and increase native plant growth. Controlled burning is the most efficient, economical, and ecological tool for land management in our fire-adapted ecosystems. As a wildland firefighter, I've seen firsthand that water does not put out large-scale wildfires—the use of fire does. The PBA I've organized is working to put that vital tool back into landowners' toolboxes.

The RVPBA is a group of community members, including local professional fire practitioners, working together to share equipment, knowledge, and volunteer time to accomplish prescribed burns on private lands. This "neighbors helping neighbors" approach to controlled burning has been used extensively in the Midwest



Applegate community members are part of the first prescribed burn association in Oregon.
Photo: Alan Journet.

and Southeast for decades. The first prescribed burn association on the West Coast was started in Humboldt County in 1971, and the concept has expanded quickly since then, with more than 20

California prescribed burn associations in various stages of development. Ours is the first PBA in Oregon!

This spring, RVPBA held two successful community-conducted prescribed burns

on private lands in the Applegate. The first one, on April 4, had a great turnout with 30 attendees. Participants had the opportunity to observe a controlled burn in action, learn the methods and techniques professional fire practitioners use to safely conduct a burn, help out as part of the burn crew if they were interested, and meet and build relationships with their neighbors. Everyone went away with a better idea of how fire behaves and how it can be used as a tool to make our communities safer and our forests healthier. Many attendees also left with a new relationship with fire, shifting from one of fear to one of respectful appreciation.

The process begins when an interested landowner contacts the PBA and plans a site visit. A qualified fire practitioner then meets with the landowner to do an initial evaluation for using controlled burning on the site. A burn plan is developed to determine appropriate weather conditions and resources necessary to keep the burn contained. This is called the "prescription."

The PBA then works with landowners to get necessary permits from the Oregon Department of Forestry and Oregon Smoke Management. The long-range

See **PRESCRIBED BURN**, page 21



The Applegate Valley Fire District's new engine has improved fire response capability.
Photo: Sandy Shaffer.

Meet the newest member of the Fire District's fleet

BY SANDY SHAFFER

Yes, this new type-six white beauty is now officially #8563 and is now responding out of our district's headquarters in Ruch. The "old" 8563 vehicle is 23 years old and has been moved to one of our district's other six fire stations that has fewer calls.

I talked to Captain Greg Gilbert and our Fire Chief Mike McLaughlin about the benefits of this new engine, and there are many! But the biggest benefit that I

heard from both men was that this new engine can carry five firefighters while the older engines can only hold three! When you need to get a team on a fire fast, you need the *whole* team! In other words, this is a fire engine for the 2020s.

Imagine having to drive a vehicle such as a bus or a moving van up and down your own narrow, long driveway, to and

See **AVFD FLEET**, page 11

Applegate Evening Market offers much more than merchandise

BY DIANA COOGLE

"The camaraderie of the Ruch community" was the impetus driving the vision for the Applegate Evening Market, inaugurated on May 5, 2021. Its three organizers, Alison Hensley Sexauer, Sarah Osborn, and James Mulhern, envisioned a fun, family-friendly, community event, with music, a beer garden, local vendors, and crowds of Applegaters.

"We wanted it to be more than a farmers market," Alison said. "We wanted it to be a cultural and community convening." That's exactly what they got on opening day. Hundreds of people flocked to the Electric Gardens Flower Farm (the old Fiasco Winery) at 8035 Highway 238.

Parents pushed toddlers in strollers. Children played with balls. Newcomers to the valley and old-timers shared greetings. Shoppers chose vegetable starts from Feral Farm, tried on African-fabric wrap-around skirts by Tali Threads, picked up some bright orange carrots or a bag of greens, bought soy candles or a McKee Bridge T-shirt or a whimsical hat or a lavender wreath. Neighbors chatted with neighbors



Naphtali Shannon Riley of Tali's Threads shows off one of her offerings.
Photo: Diana Coogle.

in front of booths, and revelers drinking cider from Blossom Bar Cidery listened

See **EVENING MARKET**, page 2

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