

Meet some new fire district recruits

By
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IVN Contributing Writer

"The best people volunteer," is a sentiment repeated over and over by everyone involved with the Illinois Valley Fire District.

Twenty new volunteers will wrap up their first phase of fire academy training in early December, swelling the ranks of active firefighters in the Valley to 39.

The additional volunteers mean that the Valley's six fire stations will be better manned and effective responses to local emergencies will be enhanced.

"We've got a well-rounded class," said Deputy Chief and Training Officer Jeff Gavlik. "Everyone is holding their own and it's nice to see the demographic differences. The new volunteers range from their early twenties to their upper fifties and they bring many different experiences and abilities."

After completing the fire academy, the new recruits will continue to be involved in regular training offered by the fire district. The fire academy covers the building blocks

of structure firefighting and touches on vehicle extrication and the basics of first aid treatment. Wildland fire training is a separate course.

"Later on, they'll receive more in-depth medical training," Gavlik said. "We try to train in segments, as to not overwhelm peoples' lives and schedules. Training is always on-going."

Holly Miller, 27, is one of four women in the current class.

"My dad was in the fire district," Miller said. "Two of my cousins are currently serving and my fiancée, Justin Lewin, was the volunteer fire fighter of the year in 2011. So I have a lot of family involvement. That influenced me."

"I'm only 5'1" tall and weigh only 115 pounds, so some things are hard, but sometimes being small comes in handy," she added.

Firefighters of smaller stature are utilized to wriggle into tight places during emergencies, and sometimes having smaller hands is useful as well.

"The instructors believe in me and I'm so much stronger now. I've been building up my strength big time," Miller said. "This training helps everyone face their challenges.

Some big strong guys might not like heights, or maybe others have to deal with claustrophobia. Most everyone has something to overcome."

"We're like a family," Miller said. "We look after each other and the community."

Joe Latva, 55, is retired from the US Navy, has military firefighting experience, and is currently an active member of Josephine County Search and Rescue.

"To utilize all the training I've already had, I decided to volunteer with the fire district," Latva said. "And besides, it's just the right thing to do. We live here and a place is only as good as what we put in."

"It's funny, at this age, to be going through a training academy, but it's a cool feeling," Latva said. "I may be a little older, but I'm not out of it. Life and experience means older people have a larger repertoire of skills and we've learned how to work smart. Providing that example to younger people is really rewarding."

Latva has high praise for the training he's receiving.

"The training is very relevant, realistic, well thought out, and well-planned," he said. "It's real-life train-

ing and the coolest thing is that everyone involved recognizes that we need to do this to make our community work."

Others become volunteer firefighters to make their way into a new career.

Sean Bennett, 27, lives in Grants Pass with his wife and two small children and drives down to the Valley to pull his shifts with the district.

Bennett likes the Illinois Valley and plans to eventually relocate his family to the area.

"People are down-to-earth here and my wife and I really enjoy the river," he said.

Bennett wanted to try something new and, at this point, can't see himself doing anything else.

"I love this work," he said. "I hope to be a professional firefighter at some point and this is a perfect way to start out. The training is awesome and the people are awesome. I plan on volunteering here for a long time."

Bennett also encourages more people to get involved.

"It's a great feeling you get from this," he said.

Robert Webb worked full-time with the district in the past. He completed training in 1997-98 and served

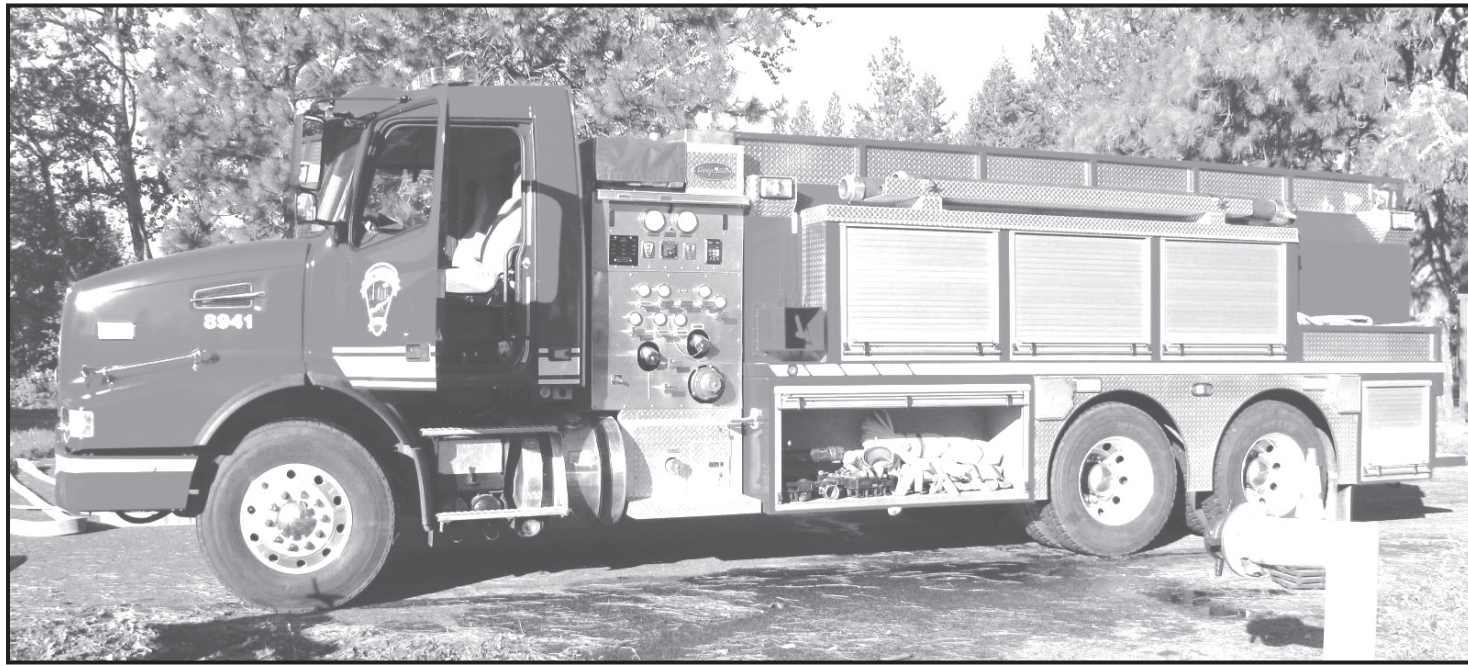
until 2001. Like Bennett, Webb is also looking to make his way into a new career and sees volunteering as an essential stepping-stone to reach his goal.

"I'd like to fight fires professionally someday and there's a lot of hoops to jump through to get there," Webb said.

Webb added that helping people and giving back to the community that has been home to his family for several generations are key priorities as well.

"People in this district have a lot of heart and it's great to be around this energy again," Webb said.

If people want to become involved, they should call Recruitment Officer Robert Sitton at 541-592-2225. Support volunteers are also always appreciated, as they help with food and water at the scene of emergencies, logistics, as well as vehicle transport and traffic management during emergencies. Those interested in firefighting are also encouraged to make contact. While there will not be another fire academy for a year or so, training opportunities in the meantime are readily available.



IVFD has added a 2000 Freightliner to the fleet.

(Courtesy photo for The Illinois Valley News)

IV has a not so new book store

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include garden benches, books & materials for the permanent collection, the street banner, new shelving, a printer, landscaping, a refrigerator for our staff, children's library events and so much more. The book store is located right inside your local IV Branch Library, 209 W. Palmer, C.J. Days & hours of operation are: Wed. 2 to 6 p.m., Fri. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sat. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Jackson/Josephine/Klamath County Schools Seek Disabled Students

On an ongoing basis, school districts in Jackson, Josephine, and Klamath counties conduct Child Find activities to locate disabled children, birth to 21 years of age, who are not currently receiving special education services. Each district wants to find and evaluate the skills of children within its boundaries who have serious physical, educational, emotional, mental, or learning problems so that appropriate educational programs may be provided. Such services must be provided for disabled students under federal and state law. The rights of parents and special education laws can be reviewed at the special education office within the local school districts.

For information contact: Ashland - 482-2438; Butte Falls - 865-3563; Central Point - 494-6231; Eagle Point - 830-6196; Medford - 842-3628; Phoenix-Talent - 535-7522; Pinehurst - 482-1910; Prospect - 560-3653; Rogue River - 582-6003; Three Rivers - 862-3111; Grants Pass - 474-5700; Klamath Falls City - 883-4745; Klamath County - 851-8759.

Se buscan estudiantes incapacitados en las escuelas de los condados de Jackson, Josephine, y Klamath

Continuadamente, los distritos escolares de los condados de Jackson, Josephine y Klamath dirigen actividades "Child Find" (Encuentra Niños) para localizar niños incapacitados recién nacidos hasta los 21 años de edad, que actualmente no reciben servicios de la educación especial. La meta de los distritos es identificar y evaluar las habilidades de niños dentro de sus fronteras, los cuales tienen serios problemas físicos, emocionales, mentales o del aprendizaje para provenir servicios apropiados. Bajo las leyes estatales y federales, está requerida la provisión de estos servicios. Se puede revisar los derechos de los padres de familia y las leyes de la educación especial en las oficinas de la educación dentro de los distritos escolares locales.

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