

Firefighters to compete in muster

As many as 2,000 persons could compete in the Sandy Fire District's Fly-In Muster this weekend, Aug. 15-16, at the Country Squire Airpark, organizers say.

The muster will pit teams from up to 60 West Coast fire departments in races testing firefighting skills and equipment from yesteryear, they say.

The event is scheduled from 10 a.m. to about 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at the air park, 2.5 miles south of Sandy on Bornstedt Road. Spectators will be admitted free of charge.

It includes competition for men, women and teen-agers, concessions, a dance and beer garden.

Drawing teams from California, Washington and Oregon, Sandy's muster promises to be the state's biggest, said Chuck Hanson, Sandy's assistant fire chief. One of the attractions is that points earned at Sandy will add to totals for state championships in Oregon or Washington, he explained.

About 2,000 persons attended the last muster hosted by Sandy in 1984, said Co-Chair Chuck Chaffin. Up to 30 teams were entered then.

"We would really like to see more residents there. I think they would enjoy it," Chaffin said.

The public can see firefighters and their families compete in events such as "motorized hose wagon," "motorized pumper," "bucket brigades," "hose coupling," "hose drags," steam engine operation and hand pumping.

Sandy's men's and women's teams are defending state titles in the motorized pumper for 1940s-era engines.

A Portland Fire Bureau steam engine from the 1880s "is worth just coming out to see," said Chaffin, president of the Sandy volunteer firefighters. It is valued at between \$70,000 to \$100,000, Hanson said.

The latest model firefighting vehicle there will date from the 1960s. Sandy's is a 1940 model.

Contests are categorized by the



The Sandy Fire Department's muster teams will defend state titles this weekend aboard their repainted 1940 engine. Members include (front, from left) Co-Captain Donna Wilson at the wheel, Margaret Grassl, Mavis Yeager, Danee Crappa, Patty Olson, Suzi Blaisdell, (middle) Gary McQueen, Steve Olson, Scott Crappa, and (back) Co-Captain Steve Wilson, Mike Murray and Art Blaisdell.

Photo by Christine Bierman

ages of the vehicles, Hanson said.

"All the stuff we use at our events are antiques," Chaffin said.

The muster involves teams of five or six firefighters, both volunteer and career. Men and women compete in the same categories but separate events.

In the motorized pumper event, teams race to hook a hose to a hydrant, drive up to 150 feet, attach the hydrant line to the engine, take another line and put on a nozzle to hose down a target.

Contestants from Sandy include team Captains Donna and Steve Wilson, Margaret and Martin Grassl, Suzi and Art Blaisdell, Patty and Steve Olson, Nancy and Russ Ridgeway, Scott Howland, Nici Dubois, Gary McQueen, Danee and Scott Crappa, Matt Ligatch, Mavis Yeager, Mike Murray and Pat Beckman.

In the motorized hose wagon, contestants lay out a line and attach a nozzle.

In the bucket brigade, team members pass a bucket 20 feet and fill it with water.

The steam engine and hand pumper events require contestants to draw water and spray it for distance, or to spray down a target 150 feet away.

Teen-agers may compete in coupling and dragging hoses.

The muster teaches teamwork, a crucial skill in any era, but "tests only a little bit of the skills we use now," Hanson said.

Seventy trophies will be awarded.

Calling it a family-oriented event, Hanson said, "The competition goes on during the day and the sharing the rest of the time." Many contestants camp at the muster

site.

Following competition Saturday is an adults-only dance at 8 p.m. featuring the Picture This band.

Picture This plays a variety of music. Two members, Brian Hadley, guitarist, and Mark Hadley, drummer, hail from Sandy.

Civic groups from Sandy will sell concessions, hats and T-shirts, and professionals who run the Portland Rose Festival's beer garden will cater the Sandy Fire Muster's version.

The muster is well-received by the Sandy area, Hanson said, pointing out that 125 businesses purchased advertisements in the program and the Clackamas County Bank donated \$500 for the programs themselves.

The muster's official sponsor, Hamm's Beer, gave \$2,000.



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