

Firefighters: 'It's a national problem. It's not a Seaside problem'

Continued from Page 1A

are not required to be EMTs, or vice versa, "but a majority of our calls are EMS calls, so if you want to do more, you'd be smart to get some of those classes," Eddy said. Beyond that, volunteers can aim to be emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

In short, volunteer firefighters are not off the hook because they provide their services for free. They deal with life-or-death matters. When someone reports an emergency, they want assurance the people responding "know what they're doing, can do it safely, can manage the incident and can do it as best as possible," said Eriks Gabliks, director of the state Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.

In order to accomplish that, he said, "We are collectively professionalizing what the fire service does." Part of it is responding to how society has evolved. For instance, several decades ago, departments were not as concerned about hazardous materials. Now basic Firefighter I training has incorporated information so firefighters know what hazardous materials are and what to do if they encounter them, Gabliks said.

"What's happened over the years, as the fire service has gotten more complicated, the training has matched up with it," he said.

Training also varies based on geographic location and department needs. Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department requires volunteers to get wildland training. The Warrenton and Astoria fire departments must be prepared to respond to emergencies at the nearby Port of Astoria or Astoria Regional Airport.

As requirements and industry standards evolve, there is occasionally "some grumbling," Eddy said, "but there are ways to work around it."

"You do a little bit at a time, especially with volunteers," he said. "You can't dump everything on them all at the same time. It's overwhelming. You just try to chisel the changes a little bit at a time, and pretty soon, the changes are done."

'No cushion'

For departments in small communities, with limited

pools of people to draw volunteers from, it is a juggling act to stay on top of training. Many volunteers have jobs, families and multiple other responsibilities, and that's to be expected. However, being a volunteer in an industry that requires training and certification, not just at the start, but also on a continual basis, "can be tough," Daniels said.

"It's hard for people to find time," he said. "And it's a national problem, it's not a Seaside problem."

Boone said the fire departments are not bound to follow the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training's curriculum, which is very specific to meet the National Fire Protection Association's standards. However, he added, "I'm not aware of a real alternative."

Certification also is tied to getting grants and a department's insurance rating, Daniels said. The Insurance Services Office rates fire departments across the country — deciding on a scale of 1 to 10 what level of fire protection a community has — and insurance companies use the information when writing policies for homeowners in each fire protection district, Gabliks said. The Insurance Services Office takes training into consideration when giving a department its rating.

On the flip side, the standardized system is accompanied by bureaucracy that can strain small departments, and the training is geared toward the lowest common denominator.

For the Seaside Fire Department, "there is no cushion," Daniels said. The department has three full-time staff members and a part-time employee, but its call volume has nearly doubled in the past decade. In order to keep providing programs, like the summer life-guard program, or to add new programs, like a Community Emergency Response Team, and to stay on top of training volunteers, the department will eventually need to add more paid staff, he said.

Boone, one of the "last volunteer chiefs standing," said when he started more than 30 years ago, only a couple of departments had paid chiefs. Now, bureaucracy has grown to the point where there is



Katherine Lacaze/EO Media Group

Fire Chief Joey Daniels and Seaside Fire & Rescue recently acquired a new apparatus for the station that will be ready for service in a few weeks. Across the county, small departments juggle limited resources with training requirements and answering calls to meet their communities' needs.

'I give kudos to all the volunteers because they've taken a huge step over the past 30 years as far as commitment and training and education.'

Bill Eddy

Gearhart fire chief

a need for full-time staff to handle training and administrative work to keep up with state standards. Sometimes, when various demands get too burdensome for small departments, they have to prioritize.

The volunteer forces also face the challenge of keeping people excited and involved when they have limited roles due to restrictions during the initial training. They can still help with equipment or community fire prevention programs — jobs that don't have to meet state or national standards.

"There are pieces and parts for everybody," Boone said.

Across the county, departments must figure out ways to recruit and retain volunteers, which can be "tough," Boone said. His strategy? "You got to make it fun" and "keep smiling." At the Hamlet department, a local resident brings dinner for the volunteers one drill night per month. "That's the way she can contribute to the department and keep it attractive and fun."

Each squad has specific obstacles, as well. Because Gearhart is an expensive area to live, the department has a hard time keeping volunteers for a long period of time, Eddy said.

A support system

The Clatsop County Firefighters Association coordinates and offers fire and EMS training opportunities and events, such as a recruit academy, and also promotes and facilitates camaraderie and cooperation between the county's fire service organizations.

The Department of Public Safety Standards and Training provides "training to trainers" and works with local departments' training officers, Gabliks said. They also provide props for training exercises.

"We try to be a helper to the local fire departments to help them meet their training needs," he said.

Ultimately, volunteer firefighters must willingly give their time to meet industry standards of proficiency.

"I give kudos to all the volunteers because they've taken a huge step over the past 30 years as far as commitment and training and education," Eddy said. "A lot of the departments down here definitely have gotten a lot more professional over the last 30 years compared to what they were. It's just taking the fire service system a step up."

LNG: City would have to look at any proposal

Continued from Page 1A

Fritsch said that the city would have to look at any proposal — whether a new golf course or a \$6 billion LNG facility — relating to an alternative use of the easement land since the discussion would necessarily involve the city, the local entity that directly benefits from the dredging.

"If the city would like to talk to us about the use of the property, or why we use the property, or our navigation

mission, nothing would preclude use from sitting down and talking with them about that," Rabe said. "But we don't have a need at this point to find an alternative site."

Oregon LNG could not immediately be reached for comment.

Legal history

Last summer, the U.S. District Court in Portland ruled in the Army Corps' favor in a dispute with Oregon LNG, which claimed the Army

Corps has no right to the land beneath the water where the company's proposed LNG facility would be built.

The federal court found that the statute of limitations to bring the claim under federal law had expired and dismissed Oregon LNG's lawsuit.

Now, the company argues that the Army Corps — which has held an easement to deposit dredging spoils on the site since 1957 but has not done so since 1992 — has ef-

fectively abandoned the property.

The question about the easement is one of many facing Oregon LNG as the company attempts to build an export terminal in Warrenton and an 87-mile pipeline to a natural gas link in Washington state.

A hearings officer is likely to rule soon on Warrenton permits for the project, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is expected to complete the final environmental review in February.

Sautner: 'I discovered that everyone in Washington, D.C., makes people in Oregon look like hippies'

Continued from Page 1A

calls and correspondence, light data entry, and working on specific projects with Legislative Assistants and Legislative Correspondents, and attending Congressional hearings and briefings."

Sautner said she would research whatever Wyden's office asked her to, analyzing media coverage of the senator, organizing the mailroom and giving tours around the U.S. Capitol.

"I discovered that everyone in Washington, D.C., makes people in Oregon look like hippies," Sautner said. "I came to Job Corps with two suitcases full of clothes."

Katrina Gasser, who is the community liaison for Tongue Point, reached out to Job Corps graduates, and Sautner said she now has her two suitcases and several boxes of tasteful professional attire ready.

On break until her internship starts Jan. 11, Sautner

is researching how to get around in Washington on the city's Metrorail mass transit network. She will live at the Potomac Job Corps Center in Washington work 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday on Capitol Hill.

Sautner is trying to get up to speed on Sen. Wyden before the internship starts, but doesn't seem worried. "I am one of those people who reads for fun. That sounds sarcastic, but I read a lot of books."

After Washington, Sautner

heads back here to Job Corps, where she will have another four or five months before her certification in glazing. Unsure about her exact direction after Job Corps, Sautner said she is interested in weatherization training, whether it's on the job or at a school.

"I'd like to get a business degree in college," she said. "Although I could do it in Job Corps, it feels like if I pay for it myself, I'll be a better citizen."

— Edward Stratton

Happy New Year!

Local New Years Eve Celebrations



Bring your friends AND JOIN THE FUN

KARAOKE
9PM UNTIL CLOSING

Come celebrate the New Year with us!

- Large Variety of Wines & Cocktails
- Domestic & Imported Brews
- Sandwiches, Soups & Salads
- Astoria's Best Fish & Chips
- Charbroiled Burgers
- Succulent Steaks

OPEN 7 DAYS
LUNCH & DINNER

PORTWAY TAVERN

422 WEST MARINE DR. | ASTORIA | 503-325-2651

ROCKIN' NEW YEAR'S EVE

PARTY

THURSDAY DEC. 31ST
9PM-1AM

LAST YEAR OF LIVE MUSIC

from The Distractions

NO COVER
934 DUANE ST ASTORIA
503-325-0801

Clatsop County Historical Society presents
Rockin' In the New Year - 50s Style!

Elvis! Buddy Holly! Ricky Nelson! LIVE!

Dancing - Casino - Best 50s Costume Prizes

50s Diner with the World's Best Burgers & Shakes

by Baked Alaska and Frite & Scoop

Thursday, December 31st
7:00 - Midnight
\$100/single OR \$700 for table of 8
Masonic Lodge, 1572 Franklin Ave, Astoria
Wear Your Coolest 50s Outfit

call: 503-325-2203
email: cchs@cumtux.org
www.newyeareveontheoast.com

Sponsored by:


