

Barry started on the Tribe’s wildland fire crew

BARRY continued from front page

Community Response Teams to train and prepare for responding to emergencies of all sorts within the Grand Ronde area.

“We live in a community that does such an awesome job of sticking together and creating such a healthy, successful life for our people and something that protects that is safety preparedness,” she said.

More details about that program will be forthcoming.

“We’re still just crafting this posi-

tion,” Barry said. “Obviously there’s a goal and a direction we specifically want it to encompass, that’s kind of vague, so I can assess what the needs are in the community that can slip through the cracks, and then go out and assist with that in any way.”

Barry said she got her start at the age of 20, working on the Tribe’s wildland fire crew for a season. In December 2020, she transferred to the Tribe’s Emergency Services Department, went through the fire academy and obtained training to become an EMT. She loved all of

it, she said. When the department started talking about using grant money for a new position focused on prevention, rather than response, she was immediately interested and began her new role in June 2024.

“I’ve been on the ambulance for three years, so it’s been interesting switching to preparedness, from acting as the emergency is unfolding,” she said.

While not every emergency can be prevented, Barry said taking steps to prepare ahead of time can make a world of difference.

“It’s super fun and really rewarding to feel like I can really impact my community with safety preparation,” she said. “It’s really open for any direction we want to take it, so it’s exciting.”

With spring underway, she’s encouraging homeowners within the department’s response area to call for assessments of their properties’ defensible space. The wildland interface, which is the term used by firefighters for areas where homes are located in or near forests and wild lands, is particularly vulnerable to the dangers of wildfires.

Increasingly, fire departments are asking residents in such areas to focus on making their homes and properties better able to withstand wildfires. That can include work such as cutting tree limbs around the house higher to prevent fire from racing up into the crown of the trees, being careful about what kind of vegetation is located near homes, making sure that driveways won’t be engulfed by fire if residents need to flee and similar considerations.

Department members will visit the property, Barry said, and provide an assessment.

“So, I’m really hoping more people reach out this year,” to request the service, Barry said.

Elders who have physical or financial limitations can also ask for assistance in carrying out the advice they receive on improving their property’s defensible space.

“We have in the past hired a couple of seasonal employees to go out and help with that,” Barry said. “It’s increasingly important to consider wildfire susceptibility. In the past, Oregon hasn’t had the same risk of fire that we do now. People are so used to this not happening to us; now we are faced with educating people on what it looks like to start prepping in late winter and spring, so that when summer comes and that fire risk goes up, you’re not trying to backtrack dangerous situations.”

Although it was late March when Barry was interviewed by Smoke Signals, she said that she had already responded to a wildfire.

“A field was on fire,” she said. “And it’s March and it’s been raining, and it rained all day today, which is good for that property owner, but it goes to show that it’s never too early to start preparing.”

Barry said it’s important to keep aware of various potential hazards.

“This time of year, it’s always like, making sure you’re prepared because our weather is changing really quickly; it could be raining today and snowing tomorrow ... keep in mind to be prepared to drive in different conditions,” she said. “Ready go bags (should be packed) because we’re always under threat of an earthquake.

She encourages people to reach out to her with questions on how to start planning and preparing for earthquakes or talk to family members about creating a plan.

For more information about the defensible space program or emergency planning, email Kaylene. Barry@grandronde.org or call 503-879-1701. Email is preferred where possible, she said. ■

TERO individual funding spotlight: Alan Cureton

Alan first came to TERO seeking assistance with his Class B commercial driver’s license in 2023, which he obtained and began utilizing.

In 2024 Alan came back to TERO looking to upgrade to his Class A CDL. After quickly completing the program, Alan went to work immediately and says that he is, “very thankful to the Tribe and TERO for the assistance and I have been working for more than six months now enjoying my new career as a truck driver.”

Alan first heard that TERO was able to assist with the funding for his CDL course by speaking with TERO Director Harris Reibach and then working directly with TERO Training and Development Coordinator Jacob Boekhoff to get the course set up and funded.

The TERO staff thanks Alan for his hard work and representation of the program!

For more information on the TERO Skills Bank Individual Funding Opportunities and other TERO opportunities, contact the TERO office or the TERO director. TERO Office: 503-879-2188 or tero@grandronde.org



Alan Cureton

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

HEALING FOUNDATIONS

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Drop In April 2nd 11am-6pm



Seeking Input On:

- Budgeting
- Goal Setting
- Time Management
- Health & Wellness
- Cultural Connection
- Building Independence

Where: Veteran Services & Community Programs Building (Old Procurement)

Please call Joanna Brisbois for questions or interest 503-879-2149

Snacks & cultural activity provided

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Emergency Services
Defensible Space Program



We are excited to announce our new Defensible Space Program!

This program is aimed to help our community reduce potential impacts of wildfire. We will be educating the community on actions that help prepare their homes and properties from the threat of fire. We will also be offering free defensible space home assessments and mitigation services to qualifying properties! Evaluations and recommendations are available to assist property owners in strengthening their defensible spaces.

As the threat of wildfire increases each year, so does the importance of spreading information on how to protect and enhance the resilience of yourself, your home, and property. Reach out today for more information.

For more information please reach out to:

Grand Ronde Emergency Services - 503-879-3473
Kaylene Barry - kaylene.barry@grandronde.org