

Vets from A1

on the recall list. But I said ‘no,’ because we were dedicated to Lane County. We were committed to serving this community, to serving our neighbors.”

Buckwald explained that “If there is a fire up here and someone pulled the fire alarm, no one would know about it because we are not connected to anything. We are in a ‘no fire’ district, meaning no one will answer our call for help if we need it — so the responsibility for our safety lies with us.”

Inmates participated in 44 fires during Buckwald’s initial time supervising the work camp, he recalled. When the camp was shut down in 2008, Western Lane State Forestry felt the impact when there was a fire.

“They had to wait for a crew of 20 firefighters to show up from Washington or Coos Bay, when what they really needed was a crew of 10 for four hours — which is what we used to provide,” said Buckwald.

Now, the Staff and Board of Veterans Legacy is bringing the old inmate firefighting program back to life for veterans who will be residing at Camp Alma. They will be trained as certified firefighters, learn vital work skills that will help them reintegrate into their community and build comradery among their fellow resident Veterans — a literal lifeline so to speak.

“The need for fire protection preparedness is obvious given the remote lo-

cation of Camp Alma and the surrounding forested mountains, but an important piece the truck brings is the team building potential for our veteran clients,” said Dr. John LeBow, President of the Board of Veterans Legacy. “Working together as a unit to be ready for forest duty, be it fire or just mitigation chores with our neighbors, always brings positive outcomes to the self-esteem — something that is so needed in healing and going forward,”

LeBow said he envisions the scenario where veteran teams would be “on call” in case of a fire emergency even after reintegration into the community following their stay at Camp Alma.

“Of course, keeping this rig shined and ready will always be a point of pride for everyone at Camp Alma,” LeBow said.

In fact, Buckwald plans to build a spacious garage for this “point of pride,” giving the rig a designated place and presence on the land at Camp Alma, and in the lives of the veterans who Veterans Legacy serves.

Veterans Legacy is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) dedicated to healing veterans who suffer from the wounds of war, through agrarian therapy, art therapy, integrated clinical therapy and a special focus on building skills to serve as a lifeline for reintegration into communities.



COURTESY PHOTO

Engine 43, which last served the Harrisburg Fire Department, is now part of Veterans Legacy firefighter training.

“Our heartfelt thanks to Lieutenant Michael Christensen and the Harrisburg

Fire Department for their generosity in deeding a fire truck to Veterans Legacy,”

said LeBow.

Mullen, Community Outreach and Engagement Director

—Submitted by Tamara

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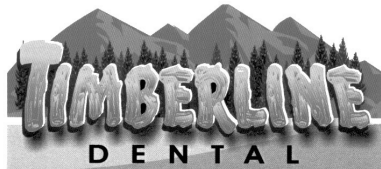
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