

Volunteers ready for fire, flood

Don't be alarmed when the fire siren sounds every second and fourth Monday night of each month. The horn is calling Heppner's volunteer firemen to training and practice meetings at the fire station.

Twenty-one firemen led by Fire Chief Forrest Burkenbine meet twice a month to organize and prepare for possible fires in rural and city districts.

This year the volunteers fought three rural fires and five city fires.

The rural district covers an eight-mile radius outside Heppner's city limits. Rural fire fighting equipment includes a pumper truck and two pickup units. All trucks are 4-wheeled drive and equipped with radios and tankers. The pumper fire truck carries an 1,000 gallon

water tank with a 750 gallon pumper unit. The two pickups have 150 and 200 gallon water tanks.

The city district includes Heppner city limits. A 750 gallon pumper fire truck with a 600 gallon water tank serves the city. The 4-wheeled drive truck is radio equipped and carries special foam for oil and gas fires, electric generators and smoke injector fans. In addition, a pickup unit with a 300 gallon water tank is available at the station.

"Heppner's fire station features one of the most unique fire alarm systems in Oregon," Burkenbine said.

An alarm system run on air and batteries is the only one in Oregon. The system has a series of 12 horn blasts which sound in a three-minute period when a fire is reported.

Phones are located next to

the alarm button in four locations: the fire station, Burkenbine's house, Central Market and Pioneer Memorial Hospital.

"We have complete 24 hour coverage of these fire phones," explained Burkenbine.

Another feature at the fire station is the flash flood warning alarm siren. This system was started two years ago after the May 1971 flash flood. It operates when the weather bureau notifies the fire station of a possible flash flood in the area. Firemen dispatch in radio equipped trucks to Shobe, Balm and Willow creeks to await flood signs. If flooding takes place an alert is radioed into the fire station and volunteer firemen release the alarm siren. The siren sends off 12 rings within minutes to warn the com-

munity of a flood.

Besides fighting fires and being on alert for flash floods, the Heppner volunteers sponsor a Toys for Tots campaign in December. Firemen, along with other organizations, collect toys for underprivileged children in Morrow County.

A benefit dance is also held

each spring with proceeds going toward training equipment and repair material for the fire station.

The following are members of the Heppner Volunteer Fire Department: Burkenbine, Clyde Allstott, Jack Melland, Jerry Holloman, Bob Hager, Paul Arbogast, Eddie Yeoman, Tom Wilson, Ron Jones, Dale Adlard, Ed Strahm, Larry Bellenbrock, Ted Toll, Jerry Anderson, Dan McBride, Jerry Jones, Ladd Dick, Archie Ball, Larry Morris, Dick Calvert, Butch Laughlin, Charles Thompson, Cliff Green and Ross Walker.

Friends, neighbors turn firefighters

When Frank Anderson's fire broke out this summer, 200 friends and neighbors joined together to stop the flames.

These firefighters are part of a rural neighboring fire control system which is under no fire protection.

"The system started over 10 years ago by the county extension agent to help rural residents fight farm and land fires," explained Harold Kerr, Morrow County extension agent.

An inventory of fire fighting equipment on many Morrow County ranches is kept on a card file in the extension office. This information is also located on a map of the area. When a fire starts, a call is made to the county extension office. The office then calls neighboring ranchers to fight the fire.

"One of the problems with

this system is it's out of date." Kerr said. "A complete new inventory on all ranches needs to be made."

"Also in the past county fire fighting equipment has been used, and if used again it needs to be repaired," he added.

Another fire protection system for some rural residents in Morrow County is the State Forestry fire patrol. Ranchers who own timberland classed one or two pay 12 cents an acre per year for fire protection. Owners of class three grazing land pay 6 cents an acre.

The fire station at Fossil administers the rural fire protection. The station is equipped with five pumper units with 200 gallon tanks. It also mans three look-out stations in the district, at Heppner, Fossil and Condon.

How other towns prepare for fire

Heppner isn't the only fire district in Morrow County. Neighboring Lexington, Ione, Boardman and Irrigon also provide fire protection for their residents.

Fire Chief Ed Baker and five volunteers provide fire protection for the City of Lexington.

The fire station has one fire truck which serves the town. "So far this year we have put out a motorcycle fire," according to Baker.

The following volunteers meet the second Thursday night of each month: Bud Wilson, Danny Wilson, Louie Eng, Warren Schoonover and Bill Smith.

The Ione Volunteer Fire Department hasn't reported a fire for three years.

"This is due to the fact that fire prevention methods and campaigns in Ione have eliminated possible fires," stated Fire Chief Howard Crowell.

With one fire truck, the following 16 volunteers provide Ione fire protection: Elbert Akers, Don Bristow, Bob Drake, Herb Ekstrom Jr., Wayne Hams, Gene Lancaster, Bill Nichols, Paul

Pettyjohn Jr., Bill Rietmann, Omar Rietmann, Bill Rowell, Mike Rowell, George Tucker, Tom White and Tom Wilson.

Twenty-one volunteers led by Fire Chief Larry Phillips provide rural and city fire protection to residents in Boardman.

The station has two fire trucks that contain 1,000 gallon pumper units with water tanks.

"This year we have had 10 rural fires and no fires reported in the city limits of Boardman," explained Fire Chief Phillips.

In early December, the following volunteers will be sponsoring a firemen's ball in Boardman:

Zearl Gillespie, John Hascall, Del Ball, Wayne Kuhn, Bernard Donovan, Gunnar Skoubo, Stan Rauch, Melvin Brosch, Ralph Skoubo, Neil King, Dan Parris, Gene Trumbull, Doug Trudeau, Ron Black, Tom Hilling, Don Harper, Jon Starky, Cecil Hicks, Dan Dalotoso and Delmar Hug.

Three fire trucks and 22 volunteer firemen provide fire protection to rural and city districts in Irrigon.

"The pumper truck, tank truck and brush truck have traveled to 15 rural and city fires this year," stated Fire Chief Don Adams.

The following volunteers meet twice a month: Burley Cooley, Bill Griffin, John Brandt, Fred Frederickson, Pete Richards, Ival Sullivan, Wayne Houghey, Orville Buchanan, Jack Gammen, Bill Cooley, Chuck Christiansen, Leon LeBlanc, Paul Hovinghoff, Paul Snyder, Sam Snyder, Lynn Hobbs, Chester Wilson, Ken Lamb, Perry Pomal, Dick Ryan, Doug Renoe and Vernon Stewart.

LOOKING FOR A JOB?

The Cooperative Rural Manpower Project has announced the following job vacancies in Morrow County: Four farm jobs (two of these are year-round); motel maid (part-time); and domestic help in a farm home for two months.

For further information, contact the local County Extension-Employment office in Heppner, 676-9642.



Heppner Fire Chief Forrest Burkenbine and Volunteer Fireman Paul Arbogast discuss training procedures before the fire meeting.

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