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FIRE: continued from page A1 STANFIELD AGREEMENT

With the agreement, former Stanfield Chief Jim Whelan was transferred to HFES as the division chief of training, and a Hermiston paramedic has been stationed in Stanfield. Stanton said he was also busy last year preparing for the November ballot measure to fully combine the two districts, and although the reformation effort ultimately failed, the agreement is still in effect. He said, by reducing the administrative overlap, each district benefits: Hermiston receives a training chief, and Stanfield receives a paramedic.

"The IGA, I think, is working really well," he said. "Both boards have agreed to extend it another year, so that's good."

HERMISTON AND STANFIELD CONSOLIDATION EFFORT

Stanton said each district's board of directors may choose to pursue the reformation again in the future.

"We're going to do some survey work, try to get out to all the folks and ask them what they knew about the consolidation, what they didn't know, what were their concerns — try to get some feedback to see where that leads us," he said. "Obviously, we still feel that, for the future, that's the best course of action for the organizations and for the public. We just didn't have enough time to get out and educate enough people, so that would be the biggest thing for us for the next time to have. We're optimistic we'll do a better job on the education side next time."

UMATILLA AGREEMENT

HFES also began providing ambulance services for the Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District July 1.

"I think it's going well down there," Stanton said. "I hope the citizens down there understand that it's a better level of service with paramedics all the time coming to them, 24/7."

Stanton said HFES received 222 emergency medical services calls to Umatilla, which adds to the call volume, but the agreement provided funding for three additional paramedics hired in 2014.

NEW PERSONNEL

Stanton said, in addition to the new EMS staff and the changes from the Stanfield agreement, more retirements and promotions led to even more personnel changes at HFES last year.

He said Battalion Chief Dale Ternes and Lt. Scott Cahill each retired after 27 years of service.

Stanton said he now has two new battalion chiefs, a new captain and EMS coordinator, three new lieutenants and several new hires to replace people who had been promoted.

"I think everybody is kind of working into their new roles," he said. "It's easy when you've got a great staff."

DISPATCH CONSOLIDATION

The 911 dispatch center in Hermiston merged with the Umatilla County Sheriff's Dispatch Center in July last year, and Stanton said the merger will ultimately benefit HFES.

"Only dealing with one dispatch, obviously, is a

better thing for us because we had both," he said. "If it was a city call, we dealt with this dispatch. If it was anything outside the city, we would deal with county. That was cumbersome at times. It is nice dealing with just one dispatch center. We're still trying to work out some of the bugs. We're still trying to improve it. It's a lot of change, and everybody is adjusting to it."

SUBSTATION WRECK

Stanton said another incident that added to the busy year was when a semi-truck crashed into

Fire Station 2 at Highway 207 and Punkin Center Road in June. He said the repairs were completed late last year, along with some additional upgrades to the old facility.

"Our interns staff that (station), and they got moved in right after Christmas," he said. "It was good to finally get that done and ready for those kids to live there. Obviously, there was a chance to do some upgrades of the 30-year-old flooring and stuff like that."

2014 STATISTICS

Stanton said HFES re-

ceived 3,669 total calls for service in 2014: 3,217 EMS calls and 452 fire and other related calls.

"Our EMS runs were up 7 percent from the prior year, and fire calls were up 5 percent, so that led to a 6.5 percent total call volume increase from 2013," he said. "Some of that's reflective of taking on the Umatilla ambulance, obviously, but our volume continues to creep up, too. Usually, we expect somewhere between 3 and 4 percent is about an average of what it would crawl up a year. The calls kind of work with populations: As populations grow, so do calls."

Of the EMS calls, 602 were for inter-facility transports, and Stanton said a majority of those were to the Tri-Cities, but HFES continues to transport people to Portland and Spokane.

Of the fire calls, 36 were buildings, 57 were natural cover, 28 were vehicles and 13 were other fires. The calls in this category also included 58 rescues or extrications, 18 hazardous conditions, 63 service calls, 107 good intent, 64 false alarms and eight special incidents.

"Our actual working fires aren't necessarily increasing," Stanton said. "It's the technical res-

cues, the public assists, hazardous materials calls — those are the types of calls we're seeing increases in. Our fire calls, per se, are pretty much staying the same about every year."

Stanton said HFES sent resources to significant natural cover fire calls elsewhere, but the district experienced an average year.

He said the most significant incident last year was an ammonia leak at Hermiston Foods in June, which required Denny's to be evacuated and people to be sheltered at the Best Western Inn, but no one was seriously injured.



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