

Fire Insurance Rating May Not Be Reconsidered For Many Years

Medford's fire insurance rating, which has not been changed in 25 years, may not be reconsidered for another several years, according to City Manager Robert A. Duff.

He said the rating—now class 5 on a 10 class scale, has stayed the same for three reasons:

1. Between 1933 and the war, Medford grew little, and its fire protection facilities remained much the same.

2. During World War II no rerating surveys were conducted.

3. Since World War II Medford's growth has been so rapid that it has been all the various city departments could do to keep up with it, let alone improve service to a point where a better rating—and result lower insurance rates—could be hoped for.

Rural District Rating

Rating of the Medford Rural Fire Protection district, which since 1932 has purchased protection from the city, is class 9A, Medford Fire Chief Gordon R. Barker said.

The last complete grading of the city by the Oregon Insurance Rating bureau was in May, 1933, Duff said. He explained that the rating board engineers had visited the area several times each year since the last rating and had made suggestions for improving or maintaining the rating.

The bureau has just completed a grading of all the buildings other than residential within the city, he added, but the results would not be available until April of May.

Lapse of Time

The reasons for the lapse

of time since the last grading, is due mainly to the war and the increase in the size of the city, the city manager continued. Grading is usually not made by the state bureau, Duff explained, unless requested by the city, as long as the city is maintaining or improving their rating.

In 1933, Medford had a population of approximately 11,000 and included 2,080 acres. Today there are 23,571 persons living within the city limits which now includes 5,594 acres.

No gradings were conducted during the war, Duff continued, and when it came time for regrading, the problem of annexation and population growth had just started. Grading requests were postponed until the city's departments, especially fire and water, could catch up with the area they were protecting.

Study Fighting Force

In 1950, Fire Capt. Leo Weidner of the Portland department, now assistant fire chief there, spent four months in Medford studying the fire fighting force of the city. His suggestions resulted in a \$125,000 bond issue, approved by the voters, for the expansion of the department.

With a portion of the money the west side fire station was constructed, and an aerial ladder purchased, Chief Barker reported. Seven men were added to the department staff, he explained, but added, that at that time Medford covered 2,080 acres and had a population of 17,170. Shortly after the new equipment was purchased 80 acres were annexed to the city.

Further expansion in the department came in 1952 when a division of fire prevention was organized within the department and a fire marshal added to the staff. It was during that same year that 37 street alarm boxes were placed in service with the telephone alarm system switchboard at the police station.

Pumper Purchased

A 1,000 gallon-per-minute pumper was purchased and later that year the Rural Fire Protection district was organized. A contract was signed with the city for fire protection of some 27,741 acres with an estimated population of more than 8,000 persons. But Medford was still expanding—54½ acres were annexed to the city in 1952.

The following year a tank-pumper was put into service and four firemen were added to the department. But Medford grew on—3.8 acres were annexed to the city.

And Medford still grew—in 1954 an assistant fire chief and seven firemen were added to the staff and the east side station was activated in rented quarters on South Keene Way dr. Then 45½ more acres were annexed to the city and the next year saw the city leap ahead again by another 99 acres.

New Station

In 1956, another 1,192 acres were annexed to Medford. It was in this year that the east side station was constructed at 530 Highland dr. The completion of the station completed the expansion program begun in the department with the approval of the bond is-

sue in 1950, except for an indicator switchboard for the street alarm system which was added in 1957.

At the close of 1956 the Medford Fire department was manned by 37 men in three stations with two 1,000 gallon-per-minute pumps, one 750 gallon-per-minute pump, one 500 gallon-per-minute pump, one combination tank-pumper carrying 1,250 gallons of water and equipped with a 500 gallon-per-minute pump, one 85-foot aerial ladder truck, a utility pickup equipped with a 200 gallon-per-minute portable pump, a sedan and a station wagon, all equipped with three-way radio on the city frequency.

In reserve was the 1924 model, 1,000 gallon-per-minute Stutz pumper. With the exception of the Rural district and equipment and men added for rural protection, the Medford fire department was at the recommended strength for a city of 17,170 population and an area of 2,080 acres, Chief Barker explained.

Two Men Added

Two men were added to the department last year and the city annexed 1,950 acres. Today the 39 men in the department include Chief Barker, an assistant chief, fire marshal, six captains, six engineers and 24 firemen.

In 1950 the greatest distance from the fire station to the city limits was two miles, today the distance has been increased to nearly four miles. Travel distance to the Rural district boundary at the most remote point is slightly more than 4½ miles, the fire chief

YMCA Membership Drive Scheduled

Membership drive activities will get underway at the Young Men's Christian association Tuesday, Paul Mitchell, drive chairman, said today.

He said there will be seven wings in this year's drive, which has been themed around "Space Adventure". Wing Commanders include Jake Toews, Charles Jones, Bob Boyer, Fred Sears, Jay Pierce, Mrs. Lanell Wilkes, Sam Harbison, Ed Hass, Alex McDonald, Dr. Frank Wilson, Mrs. Owen Kunkel and Glenn Jennings.

Tuesday, Feb. 4, has been set as the "kick off" date. A meeting of all workers and commanders is scheduled and instructions given workers. Report meetings have been scheduled Feb. 7 and Feb. 11.

Crater Well Drilling Submits Only Bid

Crater Well Drilling company, 6061 Crater Lake ave., was the only bidder for drilling a well at the Ft. Klamath ranger station, according to the forest service.

The station is located about 32 miles north of Klamath Falls. The firm's bid was \$2,820.

There are about 12,000 trailer parks in the U.S.

Responsibility Told

Professional men in science have a responsibility to encourage more young people to seek science careers, according to Dr. William J. Thompson, Medford optometrist, at a recent meeting of the Lane County Optometric society in Eugene.

Dr. Thompson, director of professional services, Oregon Optometric association, said that now, as never before, the optometrist and others in the science and health professions need to do everything they can to foster a healthy interest by present day students to fill the future needs of the professions.

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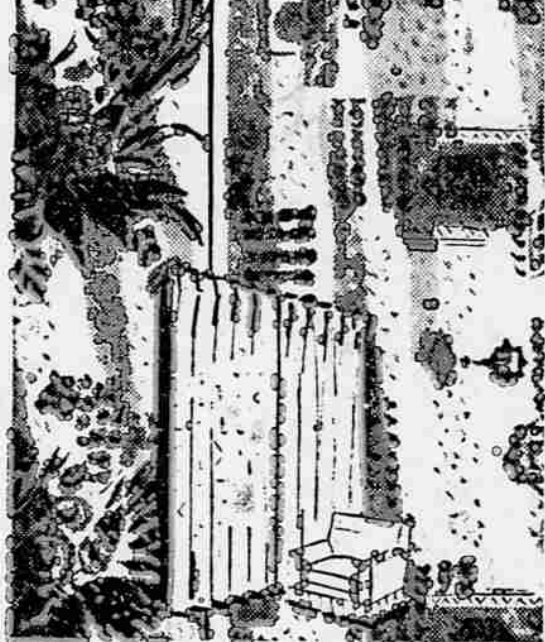


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