



A NEW FIRE CHIEF, Geno Gheller, took over the city fire department after the death of Roy Rowe. Ceremonies June 15 last year were brief. Men of the force lined up smartly and rolled out the engine in a salute to the new boss. Formally announcing the appointment is City Manager G. S. Vergeer, left.

Growth Of City Boundaries Stretches Fire Protection

By NORM CARDOZA

Geno Gheller, the city's energetic fire chief, is in the midst of a massive study to determine the best location for a new city fire substation, its cost estimates and other details of preliminary planning.

Says Gheller, the National Board of Fire Underwriters recommended 10 years ago that the city build a substation and increase its manpower.

And he is determined to bring his department up to what he considers an adequate standard.

Gheller is receiving help from the underwriters in his study. When it is complete, it will be presented officially to the city council and Gheller plans to ask the council to introduce a measure to the voters asking for approval of means of financing the substation construction.

Such a move might even save taxpayers money on the insurance they may have to pay for if the substation is not built.

Klamath Falls is considered by Underwriters to be a "Class 5" city in respect to fire protection. Class 1 cities are considered the best risks.

If the city is reclassified to Class 6, a very definite possibility, says Gheller, fire insurance rates will rise.

Gheller also hopes he someday may be allowed to increase the number of firemen employed. The underwriters recommended a decade ago that the department keep 21 paid firemen on duty at all times.

Gheller is able to keep about eight on duty.

The underwriters also recommended that the department maintain a volunteer force of 10 firemen. The city has 10. And of course the city has grown considerably during that period and shows every sign of continuing

to grow.

For instance, says Gheller, just recently new apartment developments have sprung up in the south city. A huge shopping center will soon be under construction there.

The Oregon Technical Institute campus will soon move within the city limits, if the state legislature appropriates money for the move. And there is talk of a new hospital.

All these projects require more fire protection, says Gheller, to say nothing of all other new homes and businesses that have been built in recent years here. The department's fleet consists of three 1,000-gallon pumpers, a 500-gallon tanker and an 85-foot aerial rig.

The community's disaster car, soon to be delivered, will be added to the fleet. The department also has two resuscitators purchased, like the disaster car, from donations.



AN ADDED SERVICE offered by city firemen is special protection for invalids. Capt. John Mathews, center, and Battalion Chief Harold Uglum, and Mrs. Rudy Jeschke point out fluorescent badge at Mrs. Jeschke's front door that notifies firemen that an invalid lives there. Another badge is placed on the window of her bedroom. Firemen would rescue her before doing anything else in event of fire.



FIRE STRIKES and hundreds of firemen from a variety of agencies are ready to go into action anywhere in the Klamath Basin if they are needed. This dramatic view of catastrophe was photographed by Don Kettler at Caradco Mill in 1958. The men are, from left, Kenneth Free, Millard Shreeve, George Gheller and Jim Brown.



FROM THIS STATION at the Suburban Fire Department headquarters dozens of volunteer firemen may be alerted instantly. This office also serves as a civil defense warning point. The men are Roger Wilkinson, a driver, standing, and Joe Sullivan, engineer.



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