

Kevin Roberts is the choice for Fireman of the Year

For Kevin Roberts of the Vernonia Volunteer Fire Department, 1991 was a banner year. Not only was he named Fireman of the Year at the department's annual awards banquet, he was promoted to the rank of Captain, as well.

Achieving the rank of captain in the department isn't as easy as it might seem; though the criteria are not standardized, they are implicitly understood as they are applied in evaluations by superior officers and peers.

Candidates for promotion are nominated by fire department members and elected to the position, with nominations generally based on tenure, experience, performance, character and leadership qualities.

Roberts has gone through the process several times, starting with the department as a high school trainee fifteen years ago and becoming a regular five years later. Since then, he has advanced in the hierarchy through 3rd, 2nd and 1st lieutenant, being scrutinized, evaluated, nominated and elected at each stage by fellow department members.

The new ranking brings new responsibilities, including assumption of command at a fire or other emergency scene to which the department responds, if he is the top ranking member, and a collaborative role when a superior is present.

Roberts is also chairman of the Impaction Committee which evaluates the department's physical needs, making recommendations and, ultimately, application for impacted area funds from Columbia County's gas fields.

In the interaction of fire department recruits, a very strong bonding is apparent, as Kevin says, "We spend, on average, about 24 hours a month together at training, fire and accident scenes. We get to know each other very well and depend on each other."

Roberts is happy to be a Captain—and proud.

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Firemen plan to expand Toy and Joy involvement

When Al Jesse, supervisor of the Columbia County Volunteer program, a division of the state Dep't. of Human Resources, approached the Vernonia Volunteer Fire Department about participating in Toys for Joy, a program that provides Christmas gifts for needy children, he was asking about participation for next year.

Members of the department thought it was such a good idea that they adopted the program immediately and set about doing it on their own, this past Christmas.

Headed by Joe Thornton at Vernonia Auto Parts, gifts

were solicited from customers in his store as well as from other sources, providing 40-50 gifts.

A gift wrapping party was held at the fire station and names of the recipients were attached. Then, on the Friday before Christmas, with Greg Schaumberg as Santa Claus, these gifts were combined with gifts donated through Sentry Market's Gift Tree and delivered by Santa Claus, in a Vernonia Fire Department vehicle, to happy children throughout the community.

"Toys for Joy was so successful and so rewarding," Thornton said, "that we are already planning to join in the program on a county-wide basis next year."

VERNONIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT - 1991 ANNUAL REPORT	
FIRE COMPANY	EMS COMPANY
173 Incidents (73 Rural, 100 City)	233 Calls (107 Rural, 126 City)
27 Different types of incidents	172 Patients transported (40 Advanced Life Support, 72 Basic Life Support)
342 Man hours on the scene and putting equipment back in service	78 First aid (no transport)
1,232 Firefighters responding	4,271 1/2 Personnel hours
7.1 Firefighters responding to each call (23% of roster)	706 1/2 Training hours
16.65 Minutes per firefighter on scene at each call	227 1/2 out of town training
367 Total equipment responses	33 Stand-by calls (at fires, football games, Jamboree Logging Show, etc.)
197 Equipment hours on incidents	8,946 Miles driven

Fire District: From page 1

district which would have its own tax base, and would provide fire and ambulance for both. There would be no change in the service — the same people driving the same vehicles, would continue to respond. The change would be only in the administration, where one board, elected by all the people of the combined district, would be responsible for organizing and budgeting. There won't be any change in the costs because the same expenses will be there. There would be one budget, argued, discussed, compromised, and published annually. There will be one tax rate, although it may get 'squeezed' a bit inside the city because of the infamous Measure 5. Nobody knows quite how that will work out.

The city has to have fire protection — it's required by state law. The rural has to have fire protection — insurance rates are prohibitive without it. Everybody, sooner or later, may need an ambulance. The most efficient way to provide these services would be to consolidate our administrations.

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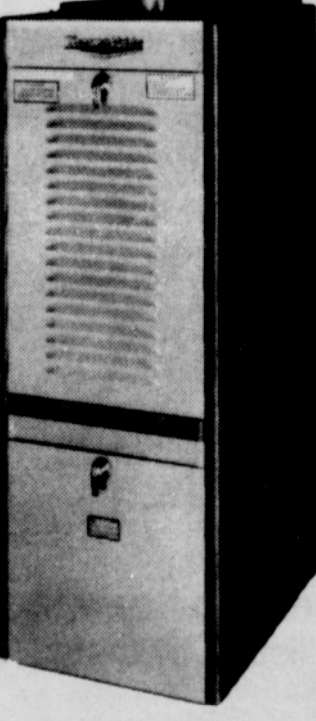
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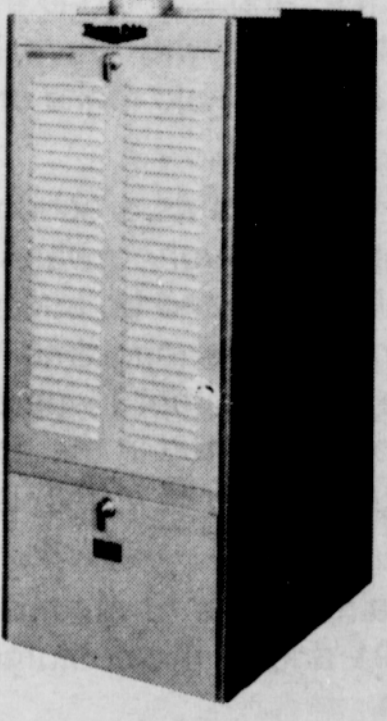
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