

Mist-Birkenfeld Fire District celebrates 25th year of volunteerism

Most people can only imagine what it would be like to wait three hours for an ambulance, or 45 minutes for a fire engine. But residents in the sparsely populated Nehalem Valley area of Mist and Birkenfeld weren't using their imaginations—it was reality! In the late 1970s, they decided it was time to take care of the problem.

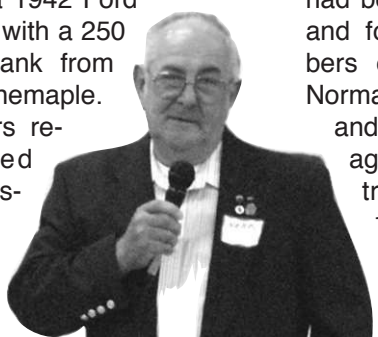
A Quick Response Team was formed, whose members took a crash injury management class, then continued studying to become state certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). The medics were "equipped" with a lime green 1969 Pontiac ambulance donated by Rainier Fire.

Volunteer firefighters ac-

quired a 1942 Ford pumper with a 250 gallon tank from Elsie-Vinemapple.

Others researched a fire district that

Norm Mueller



had been formed in the 1950s and found three board members of the dormant district. Norman Mueller started to work and, with help and encouragement of many, the district was reactivated in 1979.

The new board of directors – David Crawford, Sr., Amos Cutright, Art Laubach, Ralph Learned and Larry Oblack – appointed Mueller as Fire Chief, a volunteer position.

From that renewal, the people of the district continued to work hard, improving their skills at every opportunity and seeking funds to provide the services needed.

Olympic Forest Products gave \$1/99-year lease for a fire hall – built mostly with donated

materials and labor. Used turnouts were acquired, along with a 1956 American La France engine.

When the Mist gas fields were developed, Arthur Laubach started working on a formula that would allow more money to come to the district. It was hard, it required an act by the legislature, but it was accomplished.

Terry Bair took over as chief in 1981, followed by Randall Hansen in 1984. M-BRFPD became the first all-volunteer district to qualify every firefighter as a Firefighter 1.

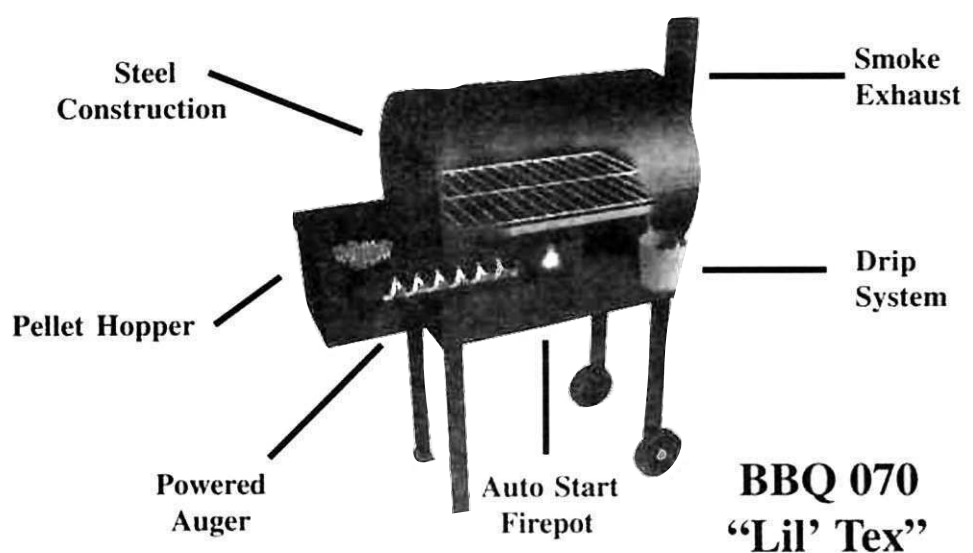
Dave Crawford, Jr., became chief in 1986 and, in 1988, Northwest Natural provided an endowment that pays for a full-time fire chief.

In addition to its main station on Hwy. 202, the district now has four substations – and their outstanding training efforts continue.

There was a lot to celebrate last Saturday. Perhaps Terry Bair said it best:

"Service is the best gift you can give to your community."

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APPLIANCES

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Assistant Fire Chief Mary Lou Busch



Sally Smith, Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District.



Ann Berg



Nick Berg

Couple sets hard-to-beat standard with 25 Years of volunteer service with the M-BRFPD



Bill De Jaeger, chairman of the M-BRFRD, and Fire Chief David Crawford, Jr., display 9/11 tribute art donated by Haakinson-Groulx .