

Protect the life, property, and environment of the communities we serve with professionalism, integrity, and compassion.



News and Information for Rural District Residents

HOT TOPIC

Chief's Message

Last year I introduced myself as the new Fire Chief of Corvallis Fire and the Corvallis Rural Fire District. What a year we have had since that time. It would be easy to write my entire article about the challenges COVID created for the fire service and many other challenges we faced. I decided as people are getting vaccinated and cases are slowly declining, to focus this year instead on a positive opportunity I am asking the community to get involved with. I do however, want to thank all front line members of CFD and CRFPD for being flexible in adapting to all of the changes and professionally maintaining great service through these challenges.

During my first two years, our Management Team has had three two day retreats. The purpose of these were to create a ten year strategic plan, a work plan and a yearly tactical plan on how to move the department forward. We identified 96 goals we would like to accomplish in the 10 year period. Each year going forward we will have one two day retreat to select the goals to tackle for the following year. Some of these goals are multiyear projects. Here are the 2021/2022 goals and the category they fall under:

Facilities:

- Update CFD facilities to accommodate a diverse workforce

Operations:

- Perform a complete assessment of the current volunteer program
- Develop department-wide storage plan
- Develop policies, procedures, and special bulletins
- Dispatch relationship and usage
- Initiate pre-planning assessment efforts around an integrated emergency communications system
- Enhance existing CFD radio system

Emergency Medical Services:

- Evaluate department-wide performance standards

Training:

- Evaluate current hose loads, nozzles, and GPMs

Apparatus and Equipment:

- Establish an apparatus and equipment maintenance program ensuring efficient, effective, and timely care of apparatus and equipment – providing public safety reliability

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Chief's Message cont.

Community Engagement:

- Promote and embrace a culture of diversity
- Auxiliary program
- Maximize use of social media to educate the community members of Corvallis on fire safety, EMS, and general information about the Fire Department
- Engage public with consistent message when given the opportunity

Physical and Mental Wellness:

- Define the Chaplain's role and familiarize Chaplain to crews
- Develop a process to allow for a "timeout/stand-down" after significant events

Recognition:

- Enhance employee recognition system

Prevention:

- Revamp inspection program

As you can see we chose to take a big bite of the apple. All of these goals are on top of the day to day requirements of being ready to respond to a variety of types of calls we receive. Last year between CFD and CRFPD we responded to over 7,900 calls. All of the goals listed above are assigned to one or two Management Team members to chair, and then have line personnel volunteer to be part of what teams interest them. The one area I chose to be the chair of is Community Engagement. I am passionate about seeing the Fire Department being a part of their community versus just serving it. We have put together a program going forward based on three levels of participation.

Learn:

I have a presentation on the history of the American Fire Service, information on where CFD and CRFPD are at today, and the challenges we face going forward. I am planning on making a new presentation each year and am willing to give them to any community group that is interested. Including time for questions and answers, this presentation takes about an hour. If you are a member of a community group interested in having me present this to you, please reach out as I am actively seeking opportunities.

Participate:

We currently have two ways to participate within CFD and CRFPD. We have a volunteer program that allows you to pick up shifts in the Fire Department and participate in everything we do from fighting fires to going on medical calls. This does require you to complete an academy and commit to a minimum number of shift hours a year. There are options for those volunteers looking for housing, to have free housing included at a fire station as part of this program.

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) is another way to participate. This is an intensive training program that helps community members help out in the case of a large scale disaster like a Cascadia earthquake. The paid members of our department will be overwhelmed with calls in a situation like this, and it may be weeks before we are able to get back to normal operations. CERT teaches community members how to help out to fill the gaps in that situation. There is also ongoing activities for CERT-trained individuals to allow you to continue training and build friendships.

Auxiliary is a new way we are looking at how community members could participate. It is a way that community members can help out and participate with the fire service without having to respond in an emergency and participate in solving the problem. We have a list from another department of what their Auxiliary Team does that includes 67 items such as: installing smoke detectors, help host community open houses at fire stations, participate in pancake breakfasts, and many other items. What I am looking for right now is six members of the community to join with a few members of the department and create what it is we want our Auxiliary Team to do. Once we have a policy and a clear picture of our duties, then we will need help in recruiting to build it. If being at the ground

Chief's Message cont.

floor in this is something that sounds interesting to you, please reach out to me

Shape:

Similar to the Auxiliary Program, we are looking to create a Diversity Advisory Committee. The intent of this committee is to review how we as a fire service meet the needs of the entire community and not just the majority of the population. It's easy to look at our makeup of members and say we want to have it more in alignment with the makeup of our community. It's not as easy to understand how to make certain groups in our community, who have not seen the fire service as a great career path for their children, consider that option and become a desired path from early on.

We also have the challenge of filling our blind spots. "We do not know, what we do not know," is kind of an old saying, but what I am referring to is, are there things we can change in the way we deliver our services that respects cultural diversity that we may not know we are currently not meeting? An example would be certain religions find it insulting to enter their place of worship with your head uncovered. Could we simply place baseball caps on the apparatus to meet this need? This is but one example of how we would like to take a deep dive into our understanding of the entire community we live in and get the privilege to work in.

The ask for the Diversity Advisory Committee is to have six diverse community members commit to a one year minimum of meeting monthly at first, and then maybe quarterly, to look at how we can best serve the entire community and how we can incorporate that into our current practices. Obviously, any changes would have to allow us to meet our mission and not create a major time burden in doing so. After a year we would look to offer other community members a chance to serve and again look at different perspectives. Members would be able to stay on if six new members could not be recruited to replace them.

In summary, if you would like to have me give a presentation to your community group, would like to volunteer to be a firefighter, become CERT-trained, help build the Auxiliary Program, or participate in the Diversity Advisory Committee, please reach out to me. Thank you for your ongoing support of both CFD and CRFPD.

Pictured to the right are three brush rigs. These rigs are used to respond to wildland fires that occur in the Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District.



New Weight Restriction on Van Buren Street Bridge

The Oregon Department of Transportation has placed a new 12 ton weight restriction on the Van Buren Street Bridge effective March 24, 2021. This will prevent all Corvallis Fire Department (CFD) structure engines and tenders from crossing the bridge. All current wildland engines, medic units, command and staff vehicles are not affected by the new weight restriction so there will be no delay in response for medical calls or wildland fires in the Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District (CRFPD) in Linn County. All Structure engines and tenders will need to use the bypass bridge to cross the Willamette River. This will slow CFD's response into the CRFPD east of Corvallis for structure fires and motor vehicle accidents by a few minutes. To combat the slowing of the response time for structure fires, the City of Albany and the Tangent Rural Fire District have agreed to have a structure engine from each department dispatched on all structure fires in the Linn County CRFPD. This new response model will be in place for several years until the construction of a new bridge has taken place. This is a challenging situation, CFD has done their best to develop a plan to continue to provide the best and most timely service as possible to the valued customers in the Linn County

CRFPD. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Chief Ken McCarthy or Deputy Chief Ben Janes at 541-766-6961.



“All current wildland engines, medic units, command and staff vehicles are not affected by the new weight restriction...”

Carbon Monoxide Safety

Often called the “invisible killer”, carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel can be sources of carbon monoxide. If you have heating and cooking equipment in your home that burn fuel, you should have a carbon monoxide detector. Here are some helpful tips to keep you and your family safe:

- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Choose a CO alarm that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory and test them at least once a month.
- If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department.
- If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel declare that it is safe to re-enter the home.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
- A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.
- Gas or charcoal grills can produce CO — only use outside.

If you have a heat producing appliance in your home that burns fuel and you start to experience any signs of carbon monoxide poisoning such as headache, dizziness, weakness, vomiting, chest pain and confusion, please move to fresh air as quickly as possible and call 911.

Two Ways Out is Not Just for the House Anymore

With the ever increasing presence and threat of wildfires, knowing two ways out is not just for your home escape plan anymore. Knowing two ways out of your neighborhood in the result of an evacuation is important as well. The same principles apply to two ways out of your neighborhood as two ways out of your house.

- Create an evacuation plan. Discuss the plan with everyone in your home. Your evacuation plan should include pets and large animals, such as horses and other livestock.
- Know at least two ways out of your neighborhood. Pre-establish several different routes in case certain roads are blocked or closed.
- Have a designated meeting place where everyone should meet. This is critical to determine who has safely evacuated from the affected area.
- Practice your evacuation plan, to include loading up your pets and animals and taking them with you.
- Practice using more than one route out of your neighborhood. Meet at your designated meeting place.
- Tell your neighbors about Ready! Set! Go! and your wildfire evacuation plan.

Having this plan in place and having practiced it will greatly increase your chances of survival when the evacuation order comes. Your local law enforcement agency orders evacuations. If you feel threatened by a wildfire, do not wait for an official evacuation order.

There are three levels of evacuation:

- **LEVEL 1 Evacuation means “BE READY” for potential evacuation** Residents should be aware of the danger that exists in their area, monitor emergency services websites and local media outlets for information. This is the time for preparation and precautionary movement of persons with special needs, mobile property and (under certain circumstance) pets and livestock. If conditions worsen, emergency services personnel may contact you via an emergency notification system.
- **LEVEL 2 Evacuation means “BE SET” to evacuate** You should be ready to leave at a moment’s notice as this level indicate there is a significant danger to your area, and residents should either voluntarily relocate to a shelter or with family/friends outside of the affected area. Residents may have time to gather necessary items, but doing so is at their own risk. THIS MAY BE THE ONLY NOTICE YOU RECEIVE. Emergency services cannot guarantee that they will be able to notify you if conditions rapidly deteriorate. Area media services will be asked to broadcast periodic updates.
- **LEVEL 3 Evacuation means “GO” evacuate NOW** Leave immediately! Danger to your area is current or imminent, and you should evacuate immediately. If you choose to ignore this advertisement, you must understand that emergency services may not be available to assist you further. DO NOT delay leaving to gather nay belongings or make efforts to protect your home.

If you are advised to evacuate, take your emergency supply kit, lock your home, and choose a route away from the fire hazard. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of the fire and smoke. Tell someone when you left and where you are going.

Remember the eight Ps in case an immediate evacuation is required: people, pets, personal computer, prescriptions, paperwork (important documents), pictures, phone (cell), and plastic (credit/bank cards).

Sources: CalFire and Oregon Office of the State Fire Marshal



Lessons Learned from the Oregon Wildfires of September 2020

As the rain is tapering off and the sun is beginning its annual tradition of longer and hotter days here in the Willamette Valley, the Corvallis Fire Department would like to share some knowledge and lessons learned from the wildfires that occurred in both Marion and Lane Counties last September.

On March 24 Fire Prevention Officers conducted a site visit to the Santiam Canyon. The extent of the wildfires that ran through Marion and Linn Counties from September 7 through September 23, not being fully contained until December 10, is awe inspiring. After stopping to examine areas along the Santiam Canyon from Mill City to Idanha, a few items stood out that contributed to the survivability of several structures: Terrain, Clear/Green Space, and Building Materials.

TERRIAN: The photo below shows a cluster of homes that proceed up a slight rise with the bottom of the picture being at the bottom of the rise. According to residents, the fire front moved downhill. The downward change in terrain slowed the fire front enough that the last house pictured has melted siding and the structure south of that (not clearly captured) had minimal damage to one area of siding.



Lessons Learned from the Oregon Wildfires of September 2020 cont.

CLEAR/GREEN SPACE: The two photos below show how a clear, or green space, around a dwelling increases its survivability during a wild fire event. In the first photo, the house on the left had tree and shrubbery remnants against the house foundation, which resulted in the house not surviving the fire. The house on the right, survived the fire with ample clear space surrounding it. The second photo shows how the fire encroached on all sides of the house as it moved downhill. The large green space deterred the fire from igniting the house. The green space is able to absorb some of the radiant and convected heat from the encroaching fire.



SIDING and ROOFING MATERIAL: The ability of a structure to withstand a wild-fire can depend not only on the roofing material’s ability to not catch fire when hot fire brands land on the roof, but the siding’s ability to withstand heat. T-111, shake, and other wood siding did not prevent the fire from ravaging a house, but a cement based siding gave a structure a better chance of absorbing and dissipating the heat from the passing fire front. This theory has gained so much attention that the new Wildland Urban interface (WUI) construction requirements list both metal approved noncombustible and cement based products, Hardiplank is one product, as the types required in new construction.

The Corvallis Fire Department would like you to keep in mind terrain, clear/green space, and building materials in respect to your dwelling and wildfire risk. As you can see from the photos above, they can all make a difference in whether or not your house may or may not survive a wildfire.

“...clear, or green space, around a dwelling increases its survivability during a wildfire event.”

Did You Know?

Station 6 provides Residential Wild-fire Assessments in the CRFPD. We will come to your property and provide education on defensible space and recommendation on what you and your neighbors can do to prevent the spread of wildfire. Please contact us to arrange a time.

Sign It So They See You!

Order an address marker to help visitors and emergency personnel locate your home. Signs will be placed as soon as ground conditions allow.



Firedmed

FireMed is a way to defray or lessen costs of medically necessary ambulance transports. Learn more about the FireMed program and complete an application to become a member.

Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District
544 NW Lewisburg Ave, Corvallis, OR 97330
541-766-6476

CRFPD Burn Advisory 541-757-6971

<http://www.corvallisrfpd.com>

Who Are Your Board Members, and When Do They meet?

The Board generally meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at Locke Station. The meetings are open to the public, and we encourage you to come and learn more about your fire district.

The Board members are:

Bob Conder, Chairman
Bob.Conder@corvallisrfpd.com

George Mears, Vice Chairman
George.Mears@corvallisrfpd.com

Phil Sollins, Treasurer
Phil.Sollins@corvallisrfpd.com

Alex Polikoff, Secretary
Alex.Polikoff@corvallisrfpd.com

Don Barton, Member at Large
Don.Barton@corvallisrfpd.com



Corvallis Fire Station 1 with Fire Engines (from left to right) 132, 134, 133, 136, and 131

Corvallis Fire Department
400 NW Harrison Blvd, Corvallis, OR 97330
541-766-6961

<http://www.corvallisoregon.gov/fire>