

“Neighbors Volunteering to Help Neighbors”

MAASH POINT

From The Fire Chief's Desk Planning Our Future



I am happy to report that our fire district, as an organization, is doing well and is looking toward the future with enthusiasm. Popular wisdom supports the notion that ...the only thing that is constant is change. An interesting view regarding change is offered by the American philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, where he says, "The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order". To me this quote speaks of the ability to create a plan for the future that is balanced between detail and flexibility.

In September the District began the process of creating our long-range plan. In order to gain a broad based perspective we assembled a planning group consisting of board members, volunteer firefighters, department officers, and administrators. At our first meeting we reviewed information gathered earlier this year regarding the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and "threats" (things that concerned us). From this information we identified a set of core value areas (what we believe should be the central guidelines to how we operate as a department) that needed to be declared in statement form. The group also agreed that all decisions would be made collaboratively regarding the planning work before us.

In October, we identified a mission statement and refined our core values. Our mission statement is as follows: "We are dedicated to providing fire prevention, fire suppression and life safety services." Our core values include:

Relationships – We value professional relationships that are open, supportive, and caring, that engage all members in the building of our team.

Image – We value being representative of our community with a dedicated, professional image that reflects integrity and serves as a respectful role model.

Finances – We value financial stability that supports ethical, responsible management of resources entrusted to the District.

Attitude – We value a variety of courageous, accountable behaviors and enthusiastic attainment of our high expectations.

Education – We value the flexibility and growth that comes with our dedication to improvement, and support of learning opportunities for individuals, the organization and our community.

Community – We value being participating members of our community through our willingness to be open and honest in all of our dealings.

Service – Because we place a high value on lives, property, and the well being of our community, we value our ability to deliver quality service.

The next phase of this planning endeavor will involve the identification and development of specific goals and objectives. We anticipate a completed strategic plan by February of 2004.

Winter Fire-Proof Your Home

Each season brings with it certain fire precautions. The winter months are frequently associated with activities related to home heating, holiday decorations and extended periods of home lighting. Here are some tips to help keep you safe and warm and make the season more enjoyable.

If you use a **fireplace** or **wood stove**, have the flu cleaned annually, more frequently if you have to burn "green" or wet wood. One of our most frequent calls in the winter is for flu fires caused by creosote buildup in chimneys and stove pipes. Such fires can readily extend into walls, ceiling and attics.

Check your **smoke alarms** monthly. If possible, vacuum dust from the face and vents. Press the test button to make sure they are functioning. It is advisable to have a smoke alarm in every sleeping area as well as other strategic areas within the home. Alarms that are ten years or older should be replaced with new units (new smoke alarms are required by law to have batteries that last ten years).

Develop a **Home Escape Plan**. Every member of your family should know two ways out of every bedroom and a safe place to meet once outside the home.

If you use a **portable electric heater** in your home, make sure you have at least 36 inches of empty space around it when in use. Before turning your heater on, vacuum it to remove dust and lint. Your heater should have a "tip over switch" which shuts the heater off if it falls over. When you start the heater, tilt it to one side to see if the switch is working. Check the heater's electric cord for frays or cracks and while the heater is on, feel the cord to see if it is getting hot. Overheated cords are a common cause of fire. Never use an extension cord. Never use kerosene heaters, barbecues, charcoal grills or camp stoves indoors as they can produce carbon monoxide, a deadly odorless and colorless gas.

Holiday decorations such as **candles** should be used with extreme caution. Use a sturdy fire-proof candleholder and make sure all candles are away from flammable material and

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are out when unattended. Use only **holiday lights** that are UL approved. Check them carefully for broken or cracked bulbs, frayed or bare wires and loose connections. If you have a **tree**, buy one that is fresh (the needles are deep-green and flexible), and water it daily. Use small “twinkle” lights. They not only use less electricity but burn much cooler. Decorative trimming should be noncombustible or flame-resistant. In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are small, sharp or breakable. Avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food as children might try to eat them.

If you have **propane appliances**, make sure they are properly vented. Know the location of the main supply valve from your propane tank. If you smell gas, do not operate any switches, appliances or thermostats. Get everyone outside and away from the building and call 911 from a portable phone (taken outside) or a neighbor’s phone.

If you store **flammable liquids**, make sure they are in tightly sealed containers and placed in a well-vented area away from your home, preferably in a shed or detached garage. When using **gasoline powered tools**, including generators, log splitters and chain saws, make sure to use them out-of-doors.

Backyard Burn Permits

A reminder that if you plan to do any burning of yard waste, you are required by LCFD#1 to get a burn permit. They are available at the main station in Veneta – 88050 Territorial Road – from 8 to 12 or 1 to 5 PM Monday through Friday. You are permitted to burn yard debris consisting of branch cuttings, tree or shrub clippings and fallen leaves. You may not burn tires, oil or tarpaper, household garbage or trash, insulation, industrial waste, construction materials, demolition materials or logging and land clearing debris. The recommended burn pile size is no more than 3 cubic yards, with 20 feet of clearance to combustibles. You should have a shovel and water supply nearby, and always have an adult in attendance. Before you burn, remember to call the Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority (LRAPA) at 726-3976 to find out if it is a “burn day.” Generally, backyard burning is permitted in LCFD#1 from October 15 through May 31 of each year. However, based upon yearly rainfall and associated fire danger, the season may occasionally be lengthened or shortened.

Emergency Preparedness

No matter whether you live in a city, town or rural area, there is always the chance that you will be faced with an emergency that may cause you to be reliant on your own resources for a while. Some emergencies may even require you to evacuate your home and property. You are encouraged to develop and have ready an emergency kit that includes a working flashlight, extra batteries, portable radio, canned/package foods, tool kit, bottled water, first aid kit, fire extinguisher, extra blankets and clothes. You might consider developing a

easily found checklist of items you could quickly gather together in the event you have to leave your home. You might also consider digitally storing on a CD family photos, key documents and information. Keep one copy in a bank safe deposit box and send additional copies to close friends or relatives who live in other communities or states.

The most frequent causes of widespread emergencies are weather related. To help you prepare in the event that such an emergency develops, be aware of winter storm warning terms, including:

- *Freezing rain* – Rain freezes as soon as it strikes the ground, putting a coating of ice on roads and other exposed objects.
- *Flood watch* – Be alert to signs of flash flooding and be ready to evacuate on a short notice.
- *Winter storm watch* – Severe weather may affect your area.
- *Winter storm warning* – Severe weather conditions are definitely on the way.

In the event of a possible emergency, turn in to your local television or radio station for up-to-date information.

Citizen Heroics

LCFD#1’s slogan, “Neighbors Volunteering to Help Neighbors,” is not limited to members of your fire and rescue service. In the past six months, several citizens have made significant contributions to the lives and well-being of their neighbors and friends. On March 25, Pat Cromwell & Cesar Pomajulca pulled a driver from a burning vehicle near Huston Road and Highway 126. In September, Dale Murphy, who lives on Chezem Road at the east-end of the fire district, rescued a young woman from an overturned pickup that was soon engulfed in flames. Several weeks later, Ian Woodin, a ten-year-old living on Nelson Mountain Road, walked over a mile to his parents’ home to report his sister had been injured in a fall. He then waited for the arrival of medical personnel and directed them to the site of the accident. Most recently on Halloween night Elgin Summers of Veneta extinguished a living room fire in a neighbor’s house that could have easily grown to devastating proportions before the arrival of fire apparatus. We wish to acknowledge the actions of each of these citizens for their clear thinking and bravery.

Lock Box Program

As a fire department, it is our job to respond quickly and efficiently to all emergency incidents. One obstacle we face when responding to a residence or business is finding access to the building. This can include the need to pass through an electric gate. We realize these gates cost a great deal of money and can be difficult to get through. To keep damages to a minimum for the homeowner and to make access easier for us, we have what we call a Lock Box Program.

A Lock Box is a small metal box that simulates a safe. It can be mounted to a number of different surfaces, including fence

“Neighbors Volunteering to Help Neighbors”

posts and walls, and can be easily hidden. To maximize security, the box is opened with a special key that only our fire department has. The box cost averages around \$120 with owner installation.

Lane County Fire District #1 is dedicated to providing our patrons with the best service possible. If you own an electric gate, please help us to maintain that service by providing a Lock Box. If you have any questions, please call Heather Hill, Fire Prevention Coordinator of Lane County Fire District #1, at 935-2226.

Smoke Alarm Program

Smoke alarms were developed to alert people of a fire in a structure and give them an early warning to escape before their lives were lost. In the past 5 years, 67% of the homes involved with fires within the boundaries of Lane County Fire District #1 did not have a working smoke alarm. Luckily, there were no lives lost in that time, but that could change.

The state requirements for smoke alarms changed in 2002 in order to deter people from removing their smoke alarms when they emit false signals. Battery life is now required to be ten years, and the alarms must have “hush” buttons to silence false alarms. All tenant occupied spaces must meet this requirement, even if the alarms currently in place are less than ten years old. The same requirement applies to homes being sold.

There are two types of smoke alarms available. Both are effective at detecting smoke, but they do so in different ways. Photoelectric alarms are activated when smoke enters the alarm and blocks a small light beam. Ionization alarms, most commonly used, sense a change in the ions in the air when there is the presence of heat and smoke. It is highly recommended that you install the new types of smoke alarms in your residence.

Lane County Fire District #1 is dedicated to keeping our community safe, and one way we try to do that is by providing and installing smoke alarms to those who need them, at no charge. The following guidelines are used to determine if we can provide a smoke alarm:

- Does the occupant own the home? (If the occupant is renting the home, the owner is responsible for providing smoke alarms that meet the state requirements. The renter is responsible for maintaining those alarms.)
- Does the number of smoke alarms in the home meet the minimum standards set by the Office of the State Fire Marshal of one in each sleeping area and on every floor?
- Is the present alarm more than ten years-old? (Smoke alarms more than ten years-old are less likely to activate due to wear.)

If you have any questions or think that you need a smoke alarm, please call Heather Hill at 935-2226. Additional information regarding smoke alarms can be found on the Oregon State Fire Marshal’s web site at www.sfm.state.or.us

Winter Medical News

By Chris Benson, EMS Coordinator



Well, it appears that the rainy season is here after our standard 3 weeks of summer (it may have been a little longer this year). This means that it is also the season for colds, flu, and respiratory ailments. As we start to spend more time indoors with all of the doors and windows closed we become much more likely to develop health problems. The lack of fresh air in our homes and work places as well as the close proximity to other people, increases our chance of exposure. Opening up the home or business once in a while and circulating in some new air can help this. Also, changing the filters in your furnace and utilizing an in-room filter will significantly reduce your exposure to all of the little nasty bugs.

For those of you that use wood heat, I would strongly recommend the use of a humidifier. Wood heat has an exceptional drying effect on the air in your home. This can be very hard on those with asthma or other respiratory conditions. In addition the dryness has a tendency to make all of us more susceptible to colds, illness, and the flu. The dryness of the air also makes it tougher to recover from any sickness. Many of the nosebleeds, eye irritation, and chapped lips and hands can also be attributed to excessively dry air. Humidification can be accomplished with a commercially available unit or by just boiling the occasional pot of water. You might consider getting a small tabletop fountain. This will help with humidification and could provide a nice relaxing addition to your home.

Remember that maintaining good health is always easier than trying to get your health back.



CERT Training Begins January 6, 2004

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program helps train people to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in their communities. When emergencies occur, CERT members can give critical support to first responders, provide immediate assistance to victims, and organize spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site. CERT members can also help with non-emergency projects that help improve the safety of their communities.

Training sessions cover disaster preparedness, disaster fire suppression, basic disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, and team operations. The training also includes a disaster simulation in which participants practice skills that

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they learned throughout the course. The CERT course is taught by Lane County Fire District #1 (LCFD#1) personnel.

The first LCFD#1 CERT course will start January 6, 2004. Classes will be held on Tuesdays from 6-9 p.m. for seven weeks. In order to successfully complete the CERT training, participants will also need to attend a disaster simulation, which will be held on March 6. If you have any questions regarding this program, would like to schedule a presentation, or would like to register for the course, please contact Shannon Benson, CERT Program Coordinator, at 935-2226.

CERT goal: To do the most good, for the most people, in the least amount of time.

Volunteers Still Needed!

Last summer’s newsletter mentioned the critical need for more volunteers in Lane County Fire District #1, particularly in all areas outside the city of Veneta. We were fortunate to have several individuals step forward and join the department, but a significant need still remains. A number of our stations, including Fox Hollow and Wolf Creek have no volunteers available to respond and many of our other outlying stations, including Lorane Highway, Spencer Creek, Crow, Butler Road, Noti, Walton, Central and Elmira only have two or three who are able to respond. Most of our volunteers live in and around Veneta, which means that on emergency calls

requiring multiple personnel, there may be a significant delay in getting sufficient resources to a scene.

Our slogan is “Neighbors Volunteering to Help Neighbors” and we hope you will be willing to donate some of your valuable time. If you are interested in joining the department, please call 935-2226 to request an application.

Upcoming Events

The Lane Memorial Blood Bank Bloodmobile makes a regular stop at the Lane County Fire District #1 main station in Veneta. If you are interested in attending these blood drives, call Heather Hill at 935-2226. Bloodmobile dates include:

- Friday, December 19 4-7 PM
- Wednesday, February 18 Time to be announced
- Wednesday, April 28 Time to be announced

Basic First Aid/CPR classes are available free of charge. The next Adult First Aid/CPR class will be held Wednesday, January 7 from 6-9 PM. The next Pediatric First Aid/CPR class will be held Saturday, January 10 from 9-4.

Flash Point is published by Lane County Fire District #1 several times each year. Please direct comments and questions to the Editor, Stan Turner, by calling 935-2226 or sending written comments to LCFD31, P.O. Box 275, Veneta, OR 97487.

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