



Gaston Rural Fire District Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

Newsletter Date: June 9, 2008

GASTON RURAL FIRE DISTRICT

102 E. MAIN ST
GASTON, OR
97119

Special points of interest:

- Variety of Volunteer Opportunities with the District
- Multiple Federal FEMA Grants over the last four years have dramatically improved the quality of our equipment and the safety of our Firefighters
- The District is planning for the future with a goal to upgrade our aging fleet of vehicles

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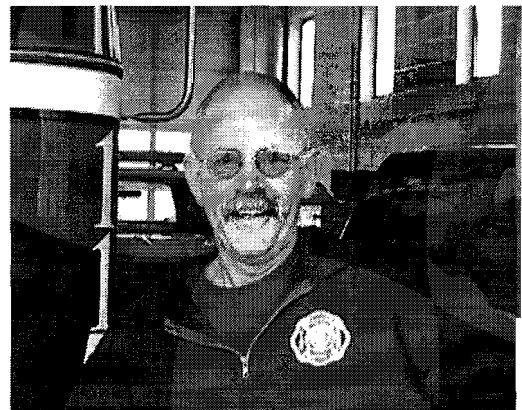
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From the Chief

The Gaston Rural Fire District proudly serves the City of Gaston and the surrounding area, including ScogginsValley-Hagg Lake, Laurelwood-Baldpeak, Patton Valley-Cherry Grove, and the Wapato area of Yamhill County. The size and rural character of the District sometimes hinders the flow of information from the District to the community. As such, the goal of this newsletter is to keep you informed on the health and operation of your Fire District.

The Gaston Rural Fire District is primarily an all Volunteer Department. We do have a part-time paid Fire Chief and Administrative Assistant. In addition, the District has two full-time paid firefighters who work Monday to Friday, during the day, to supplement the District Volunteers. Most Volunteers are employed during the day. Unable to respond to calls while at work, the majority respond to evening and weekend calls for help. The District is always seeking new members for our volunteer staff. Retention and recruitment of volunteers is imperative to keeping costs low. To help with recruitment, we run a student program through the Gaston High School. If you are interested in being a Firefighter or helping the District in other ways, such as photography, computer diagnostics, or web site maintenance, please contact us by phone or email.

The Fire District is funded totally by your property taxes which include a special levy passed by the voters in 2004. This levy has been critical to the success of the Department in the last few years, allowing us to meet the rising costs of operations and to reserve funds for equipment purchases. These funds were essential in the District having the match funds available to apply for Federal Grants. In the last four years, the District has received over \$500,000 in grants for breath-



ing apparatus, hose, nozzles, protective clothing, and this year a new pumper. All these items were crucial and would have taken years to procure without the grants.

While the current levy has allowed the District to maintain our current level of service, unfortunately it expires in 2010. The District will ask the voters to renew the current levy with an additional 25 cent per thousand increase this year. It is important to note the new levy will not take effect until 2010 and will allow the District to continue present operations at that time given inflation over the last five years. In addition, it will allow the necessary funds to replace an aging Brush Rig and additional Pumper. Thereby ensuring a dynamic and responsive District through 2015 and beyond.

It has always been and will always be the goal of the District and Board to operate as efficiently as possible. Thanks to our volunteers, we have and will continue to meet this goal.

Did You Know

The Gaston Rural Fire District has several active programs over and above call responses:

Water Patrol Program Student Program CPR or Babysitting Classes

The District has a new web site (GRFD.US) Check it out and give us your feedback.



District volunteers participating in a House Burn training exercise this February.

Volunteer Opportunities

The District is staffed by 32 dedicated volunteers from the local community. Those volunteers are highly trained and motivated. When they are able, due to their primary work schedule, they respond to both fire and medical calls during the day. The majority respond to evening and weekend calls. The District can't thank them enough for giving up dinner with their families or a good night sleep to help their neighbors in need.

In addition to responding to calls, volunteers are required

to attend regular training and station drills every Monday evening. This training allows them to maintain a high standard of firefighting and medical response skills.

Throughout the year, the District Volunteer Association is very active in events around town. These events include Christmas decorations along Highway 47, an annual Easter egg hunt, the pancake breakfast during the "Wapato Show Down", and hot chocolate/coffee during Halloween night. These activities are to benefit

the community while at the same time raising funds for the Rescue II Fund.

So please join the District in thanking your volunteers for all they do for the community and those in need throughout the year. If you are interested in joining these dedicated individuals, call or stop by the station and complete an application form. Please remember there are a variety of volunteer opportunities in addition to firefighting.

**More
importantly the
safety of your
local volunteer
firefighters has
been
dramatically
improved.**

FEMA Grants

Prior to 2006, the District participated in a joint grant with Forest Grove and Banks in obtaining new turnouts (protective suits) for the entire department. In 2006, we received a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant with \$103,999 in federal dollars for new breathing apparatus and spares for the Department. In addition, 2006 saw the receipt of another joint grant with Forest Grove and Banks for

new hose and nozzles for the Department. Finally, 2007 saw our largest FEMA Grant with the award of an apparatus grant for a new pumper. This grant means the receipt of \$248,900 in federal dollars. Every grant comes with a 5% or 10% match of District funds. Due to the Local Option Tax approved by the voters in 2004, the District had those funds available.

The District received over \$500,000 in Federal funds and

only spent approximately \$70,000 in District funds. The return on the tax payers dollars was more than 7 to 1. Stated differently, the District received over \$570,000 in equipment for roughly \$70,000. More importantly, the safety of your local volunteer firefighters has been dramatically improved. Thank you for your support of the Department and its personnel.



One of two water craft operated by the District

Water Patrol Program

In 2005, the District's Chief conceived of a quick response emergency service to Hagg Lake. Through private grants, the District was able to purchase two Sea Doo personal watercraft. In addition, multiple community donations funded personnel equipment. **The program is staffed entirely by volunteers** made up of Firefighters and EMS personnel from multiple Washington and Yamhill county agencies under the direction of the

Gaston Rural Fire District. These volunteers must be, at a minimum, an EMT First Responder, complete a 16 hour water rescue and personal watercraft course, and pass a swimming evaluation in order to participate in the program.

Volunteers and watercraft are posted at the lake on weekends between Memorial Day and the end of September, given weather conditions and staffing availabilities. Water Patrol members work

closely with the Washington County Sheriffs Department, who also monitor the lake during this peak time.

Thanks to this program, when there is an emergency during the busy weekends at the Lake, emergency personnel will likely be on scene providing immediate care. Be sure to thank these volunteers for giving up their personal time at no cost to the District when you see them at the Lake.

Cadet Fire Science Program

The Gaston Rural Fire District, in conjunction with Gaston High School, offers Gaston High School students a Cadet Program in Fire Science. This program was implemented in 2004 and trains students in basic firefighting techniques and emergency medical care. Students attend the class at the Gaston Fire Station three days per week for 1.5 hours per day. Upon successful completion of the program, each student is eligible for certification as a Firefighter I and an EMT First Responder.

We are very pleased to announce that, beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, the Fire District /High School Fire Science Program has been accepted by Portland Community College. Students will now be able to obtain college credits for successfully completing the program. Credits can be applied toward an Associate of Applied Science degree in Fire Protection Technology.

Students who are exposed to the fire service feel a great satisfaction in helping their community. Many go on to

pursue a career in fire service and most continue to volunteer as firefighters in their community. In fact, several past members of this program are now active volunteer members of the Gaston Rural Fire District.

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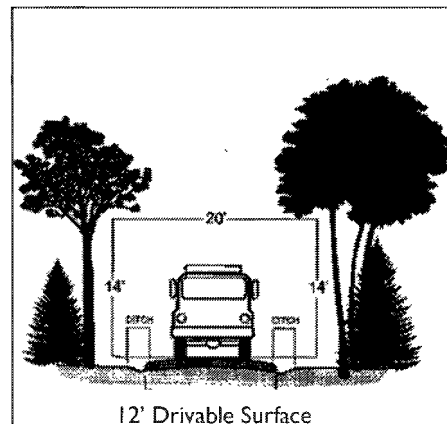
CPR or Babysitting Classes

Gaston Fire is offering free "Friends and Family" CPR classes to citizens residing in the Fire District. Students learn adult/child CPR and how to remove foreign body airway obstructions. Classes are held quarterly in the evening at the Gaston Fire Station and last approximately two hours.

In addition, the District offers Babysitting and "When I'm in Charge" classes. Babysitting classes are designed for youth ages 11-15 and last 6 hours with a Red Cross Certifi-

cate issued upon completion. The "When I'm in Charge" classes are designed for youth ages 8-11 and addresses situations they may encounter when home alone. This 2.5 hour class includes role-playing, safe response to phone calls/visitors, internet and gun safety, as well as what to do in an emergency.

Contact the District at 503-985-7575 or email gdfd-admin@comcast.net for more information or to register for a class.



Address signs are available from the District for \$25 installed.

*Can we
find your
house?
Please
ensure you
have
adequate
clearance
and a
legible
address*

Defibrillators

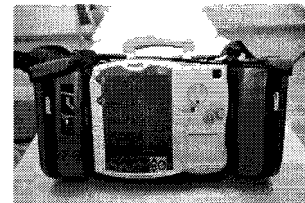
Thanks to generous donations from Joan Billet-Courtney and the Knights of Pythias, the Volunteer Association has purchased the District three defibrillators since December 2006. These defibrillators are located on the Rescue unit and main engine in addition to being part of the Water Patrol Program.

The defibrillators reset the patient's heartbeat with an

electric shock. The new machines replace aging units and have greatly improved reliability. Defibrillation is critical in most cardiac arrest cases and the new equipment means this critical care can now be provided without a paramedic on scene.

This past year, one of these defibrillators was used successfully to revive a local resident suffering from cardiac arrest.

Thanks to the generosity of local donors, Department personnel had the right equipment at the right time.



Defibrillator shown is carried on District's Rescue 11

**GASTON RURAL
FIRE DISTRICT**

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We're on the Web!
GRFD.US

The Gaston Rural Fire District, established in 1913, has proudly served the District for 95 years. Over the last year, the Department averaged 30 volunteers. These volunteers are your neighbors and friends who give up their nights and weekends to help the community. This past year, they responded to 339 calls of which over half were medical in nature. Please help us help you and complete a Medical Emergency Card (identifying your pre-existing medical conditions and current medications) and post it on your refrigerator. Cards are available on our web site (**GRFD.US**) and at the station.

**It is with your continued support that we continue this
proud heritage of the Volunteer Fire District.**



Gaston Rural Fire District

102 E. Main Street
Gaston, OR 97119

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