



# Medford Rural Fire Protection District #2

Fall/Winter 2019

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Medford Rural Fire  
Protection District 2  
*2019 Fall Newsletter*

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## New Training Structure by Battalion Chief Tom McGowan



Medford Fire-Rescue (MFR) celebrated the opening of its new fire training facility on August 14 at Fire Station 4. The building was dedicated to Duane Venekamp, who served on the Medford Rural Fire Protection District 2 (MRFPD2) Board as Secretary/Treasurer from 1973-2015. He was passionate about fire-rescue services that impacted this community that he called home. In addition, Venekamp strongly believed in MFR's core values, "Honor - Integrity - Service." We were privileged to have the Venekamp family present at the dedication/ribbon-cutting ceremony.



In 1969, about one acre was allocated to the fire department for the development of the training grounds with infrastructure improvements. Additions to the training tower took place in 1974. This year, the MRFPD2 Board contributed the funds needed to make the next upgrade possible. The new training structure was built as an addition to the existing training tower. It consists of a large exterior infrastructure with internal movable walls. The walls can be rearranged, allowing firefighters to practice in a variety of floor plans that we often see in the community. The building itself provides a safe and secure environment for our team to practice a range of skills, including



confined space operations, forcible entry, rope rescue, suppression tactics, and more. This, in turn, will make us better community servants and first responders. "This new training facility will ensure that Medford Fire-Rescue firefighters will be among the best trained firefighters in our state and in our region," said Medford Fire-Rescue Fire Chief Brian Fish. "The new building will help to improve our readiness when it comes to residential fires."

A special thank you to our MRFPD2 Board for their guidance, vision, and for elevating the quality of training for MFR firefighters. The Board's faith and trust in the leadership of the fire department is a true testament of a high-quality partnership.



The new training structure is at Fire Station 4, on Table Rock Road, and will be used to train MFR's approximately 90 fire personnel and partner agencies throughout the year.

Daylight Savings Time Ends  
November 3, 2019



It's the perfect reminder:  
Check your smoke detectors and  
change the batteries when you set  
your clocks back an hour!



## SPACE HEATER SAFETY TIPS



- Plug your heater directly into a wall outlet. Don't use an extension cord to plug in your heater.
- Buy a unit with automatic shutoff in case it tips over or you forget to shut it off. Don't leave heaters unattended.

## When is a Burn Pile Too Big? by Fire Marshal Greg Kleinberg



Many have asked the question, "How big of a burn pile can I have?" For residential backyard burning of debris located at least 50 feet from any structure, the size of the pile is limited to four (4) feet or less in diameter and three (3) feet or less in height. For backyard burning located 25-49 feet from any structure, the size of the pile is limited to three (3) feet or less in diameter and two (2) feet or less in height. In lieu of piles, a burn barrel can be utilized to burn debris. (Note: You may see a larger pile size for commercial agricultural for-profit operations. We recommend these be limited to 10 feet or less in diameter. There are other specific permit rules for these as well.)

The reason for limiting the size of burn piles is so they stay manageable and do not become a threat to the community. If a pile is too big, it cannot be easily managed. If you have a large pile, separate it into smaller piles and burn them on separate days. We have experienced many out-of-control fires caused by

either piles being too large, piles not being constantly attended, or deteriorating weather conditions. In all cases, the burn piles are required to be constantly attended until the fire is extinguished. A clear 10-foot fuel break is recommended around the burn site. There is also a requirement for a means of suppression near the burn pile (minimum of a 4-A rated fire extinguisher or other approved on-site fire extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, water barrel, garden hose, or water truck). To avoid a costly accident, please follow all the permit conditions and confirm it is a burn day prior to igniting a pile.



### Pile Between 25'-49' From Structures:

- Maximum 3' in diameter
- Maximum 2' in height
- Clear flammable materials and vegetation within 10' of pile



### Pile More Than 50' From Structures:

- Maximum 4' in diameter
- Maximum 3' in height
- Clear flammable materials and vegetation within 10' of pile



### Pile Is Too Big!



## Building Ignition-Resistant Homes by Fire Marshal Greg Kleinberg

If you are building a new home in a location with possible hazards threatening the home, wouldn't you want your home to have a good chance of surviving the environment it is built in? In 2016, I introduced a code amendment in the Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) that requires new homes built in wildfire hazard zones to be constructed more ignition-resistant. It is modeled after what California has required statewide since 2008, which has proven to be an effective measure that protected homes in subsequent wildfires. This proposal worked its way through the process in Oregon and finally became effective on January 24, 2019, if adopted by the local jurisdiction, as ORSC Section R327.4. The requirements are intended to provide minimum standards that reduce or eliminate the ignition potential presented by wildfires for new homes and their accessory structures built in wildfire hazard zones. The specific provisions deal with roofing, rain gutters, exterior venting, overhangs/soffits/eaves, exterior wall coverings, walking surfaces, and glazing in windows/doors/skylights. Materials and methods are utilized that reduce the chance of home ignition caused by embers and flames. Builders are already following some of the requirements, but if all of these provisions are implemented as a package, it is expected to increase the chance that a home survives a wildfire. This does not mean you have to build a concrete home, but rather make informed decisions about what materials and methods are chosen that are acceptable (have been proven to be more ignition-resistant or have gone through a testing process). Some of the most common materials used have passed a testing process, others have not. Approved material lists can be found on our website: [www.medfordfirerescue.org](http://www.medfordfirerescue.org) (click on Fire & Life Safety > Wildfire Home Safety > Building an Ignition-Resistant Home). I am working to adopt this in the City of Medford and then will work to adopt this countywide.



**Combustible materials and no defensible space (left) vs. non-combustible materials and defensible space (right).**  
The house on the left ignited after 10 minutes of being exposed to embers during a test administered by the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety.

## Budget Committee

by Dan Marcisz, District Board Member



**MRFPD2 is required by Oregon Law** to prepare an annual operating budget. MRFPD2 has five board members to oversee the Special District's budget process and expenditure. Each year, when the budget is prepared, the board of directors and an appointed budget committee review and publish the annual budget.

The committee must consist of a matching number of citizens to board members. This group of citizens provides valuable input to the process on behalf of the taxpayers and their perspective provides the board with feedback during the decision-making process. The committee is provided with a draft of the proposed budget for review and comment. As a committee, they are only required to meet once a year. However, they hold the position for the entire fiscal ending June 30, and may be called upon for input throughout the year. Many of the members of the committee have served multiple years. The current fiscal year members are Gayle Bate, Nicholas Bate, Bob Hulse, Lisa Sandrock, and Kris York.

The MRFPD2 Board of Directors as well as the ratepayers owe the budget committee a hearty thank you. We value their time, interest, and commitment. If you have the opportunity, please let them know how much their service to our district is appreciated.

# Fire District 2 Newsletter ★ Fall 2019

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Fall Newsletter

Medford Rural  
Fire Protection  
District 2

Honor ★ Integrity ★ Service