A long standing mutual aid agreement between all the fire departments in Jackson and Josephine County facilitated a major fighting effort along Interstate 5 on July 5th. An incendiary device was utilized to start a fire along the Greenway south of US Cellular Sports Park. Gusty winds pushed the brush fire across Interstate 5 to burn over 25 acres and threaten 100 homes. Two dozen fire engines, 100 firefighters, a bulldozer, and a helicopter were quickly activated to handle this fast moving fire under the formal mutual aid agreement. As a result, no structures were lost, no firefighters or civilians were injured, and the cost of extinguishment was estimated at $25,000.

Without the partnership, the fire would have consumed a much larger area, destroyed several homes, and potentially injured citizens due to its fast moving nature. Mutual aid enables each fire department to fund a daily firefighting force large enough to handle the everyday types of incidents, but not incur the expense of having enough resources on hand in each department to handle every type of fire that may occur. This sharing of resources is at no cost to the receiving department. Medford Fire Rescue has provided mutual aid numerous times to departments as far away as Cave Junction. This sharing of resources within the Rogue Valley is an outstanding example of fire departments working together to keep costs down for all taxpayers.

May Election
Jack Tait and Duane Venekamp were re-elected to the MRFP#2 District Board as a result of the May 2009 Regular District Election.
- **Duane Venekamp** currently serving as Secretary/Treasurer and has been involved with the board for over thirty-six years.
- **Jack Tait** currently serving as a Director and has been involved with the board since July 2007.

Do you have questions regarding Swine Flu (H1N1)?
See the following web site:
www.jacksoncounty.org/h1n1
Spot Light on Bill Riggert—Executive Support Pam Webber

Bill Riggert was elected to a four year term as a Director on the Board in 2007. He is currently serving his one year term as President of the Rural Board.

Bill was born during the Depression era of the 1930’s in Mitchell, South Dakota. His family soon moved from the “Dust Bowl” (see “Grapes of Wrath”) to Southern California, landing in Watts, California.

While going through school in Los Angeles, he often visited a favorite aunt in Medford where he came to love this community. At 17 he left L.A. for Medford and went to work for U.S. National Bank. He soon met Rita and they were married in 1950. They share pride in one son and one daughter and resulting grandchildren. Bill and Rita have been married 59 years.

Bill’s work life revolved around the lumber and plywood business in So. Oregon and No. California some 40 years and culminated with his retirement from Timber Products Co. as Controller in 1995. “During my time with Timber Products, I saw the Medford Fire-Rescue respond to more than one significant fire at our plant” says Bill. “They were always so professional and fearless. They saved the day more than once. When I was asked to be a candidate for the Rural Board, I was honored to do so.”

“It is really a privilege to be part of the working partnership between our district and Medford Fire-Rescue. Chief Dave Bierwiler and his troops are most proficient and give our district more than excellent protection. It is fun to be a part of a government department that really works, and works very well.”

Winter & Holiday Fire Safety—Fire Marshal Greg Kleinberg

Portable Heaters
Responsible annually for an average of 62,200 fires, 670 deaths, 1,550 civilian injuries, and $909 million in property damage

Safety measures:
• Keep heaters a minimum of 36” away from combustibles.
• Plug directly into a wall outlet. Don’t use an extension cord.
• Use only heaters with built-in high temperature and tip-over shutoff features.
• Do not use un-vented fuel-fired heaters indoors.
• Do not hang combustible items to dry over a heater.
• Turn off portable heaters when family members are sleeping or leave the house.
• Keep heaters out of high traffic areas and exit paths.

Consider Fire Sprinklers
Consider having a residential fire sprinkler system installed in your home. They are designed to maintain a survivable environment. Your chances of surviving a fire approach 100% when fire sprinklers and smoke alarms are installed in your home.

Fireplace/Chimney/Flue
Responsible annually for an average of 25,000 home fires, 20-50 deaths, 90 civilian injuries, and $126 million in property damage

Safety measures:
• Have your fireplace or wood stove inspected at least annually for deficiencies and creosote buildup. Repair and clean as necessary.
• For wood-burning purposes, choose only well-seasoned wood.
• Never burn paper or trash in your fireplace.
• Use a fireplace screen.
• Keep furniture and other combustible items a minimum 36” away from the hearth.
• Never leave the fire unattended.
• Dispose of ashes in a metal container and place the container outside.
• Install a carbon monoxide (CO) detector.

Turkey Fryers
Can be very dangerous

Safety measures:
• Only use this appliance outdoors, away from buildings and other combustibles.
• Never use this appliance on wooden decks or in garages.
• Make sure the appliance is placed on a flat level surface.
• Never leave the appliance unattended.
• Never place a frozen turkey in hot oil. Thaw the turkey first.
• Do not overfill the fryer.
• Never allow children or pets near the fryer. The oil can remain hot for several hours after the appliance is turned off.
• Keep a multi-purpose fire extinguisher nearby.

Have Working Smoke Alarms
It is recommended you have a smoke alarm on every level of the home, in the immediate area outside of the sleeping rooms, and in every bedroom.

Winter & Holiday Home Fire Safety Brochure
Available at:

Medford Fire-Rescue
Fire Marshal’s Office
Ph. (541) 774-2300
www.medfordfirerescue.org
Firefighter Training Update—Deputy Chief Dan Petersen

Four probationary firefighters are finishing probation. They started their career with Medford Fire Department in September of 2008. The first hurdle was an extensive two month fire academy that provided them with the skills necessary to be assigned to an engine. Since that training they have been required to complete several written examinations and practical task performances. In August they spent 120 hours attending an advanced academy that provided instruction on how to drive and operate the brush units and water tenders.

During this probationary year they received state certification as a Firefighter 2, Wildland Interface Firefighter, Driver, Mobile Water Supply Operator, Wildland Fire Apparatus Operator, and a Child Safety Seat Technician.

Capping off their last probationary requirement was the ceremonial dip in the portable pond carried on our water tender.

Congratulations to Firefighters Chronister, Landen, Martin, and Turke

Fire Personnel Promotions—Chief Dave Bierwiler

Join us in congratulating the following Medford Fire-Rescue personnel in their achievements.

Fire Inspector Karl Giepel
Karl started as a volunteer at Rainier Volunteer Fire Department at the age of 15. He attended Chemeketa Community College working toward his Fire Science Degree. Karl was hired with Medford Fire-Rescue in 1984 as a firefighter, at the age of 19 and was promoted to Fire Engineer in 1996. He was promoted to Fire Inspector in July 2009. He is a Child Safety Seat Specialist, and an International Code Council Fire Inspector I. Karl is currently in the process of attaining his Fire Investigator Certification and becoming involved in the Juvenile Fire Setters Program.

Fire Captain Justin Bates
Justin is a graduate of Chemeketa Community College. Starting his career he took a summer position at the McMinnville Fire Dept and later he worked for Grants Pass Public Safety. In 1998 he was hired by Medford Fire-Rescue as a Firefighter, Intermediate EMT. Justin was promoted to Fire Captain in October 2008. He is a Child Safety Seat Specialist, the lead instructor of the Recruit Academy, a member of the Training Committee and the Technology Committee.

Fire Engineer Jason John
Jason is a graduate of the Central Oregon Community College. He worked as a volunteer at LaPine Rural Fire Protection District and later worked for OR Department of Forestry as a Wildland Firefighter for several seasons. Jason was an Engineer for the City of Newport Fire Dept from 1997 until he was hired on as a Firefighter, Intermediate EMT with Medford Fire-Rescue in 2001. He was promoted to Fire Engineer in August 2009. He also taught Wildland Firefighting for the OR National Guard at Camp Rilea, OR. Jason was recently the Lead Instructor at the OR Fire Instructors Association Conference. He is also the Lead Instructor for both the Medford Fire-Rescue Advanced Recruit Academy and Tender/Brush Operations.