Message from Interim Fire Chief Bill Hoke

It has been two months since I was appointed the Interim Fire Chief for Medford Fire-Rescue and a busy month is has been. As I visited the shifts getting to meet the Fire personnel and talk one-on-one, I quickly confirmed what I have known for many years: Medford Fire-Rescue is a premier fire department that is one of the best trained and equipped departments in the State. We are in the beginning stages of the largest capital building project in the history of the department. This will result in building new, or remodeling, every fire station in the inventory. Thanks to the vision and commitment of the City Council to public safety, we will be able to adequately house our personnel and equipment in modern, up to date facilities for the next 40-50 years.

We are in the process of a cooperative services study to determine if there are better ways to serve the community while continuing to be fiscally sound. Members of the Board, City Council and staff have been interviewed and have provided input in the process. The end goal is to determine if we can improve on our service to the community. We are committed to provide the level of service the community expects and deserves, and do it at a sustainable level for the future.

The final draft of the study is due to be available in April of this year.

It has been a dry year and that means increased chances of wildland fires in our valley. We all need to have a heightened state of awareness of the threat and take appropriate measures to make our properties fire safe.

It continues to be Medford Fire-Rescue’s goal to provide the a high, professional level of service that the citizens have become accustomed to receiving.

We are here to assist you when you call.

Cooperative Services Study

A feasibility study was commissioned to consider the options to expand or enhance the cooperation between Medford-Fire Rescue and Jackson County Fire District #3. We expect the results of the study will be delivered by the end April. Directors from your Fire District are involved and no conclusion or direction has been reached at this time. We are actively researching and awaiting the results to determine the impact on Medford Rural Fire Protection District #2. We are hopeful our concerns will be addressed in the study and we will keep our District patrons informed.

President Bill Riggert
This year has been unseasonably dry. Near the end of January there was even an extremely rare winter red flag warning, which is a situation where conditions are ripe for wildfire development and spread. Weather experts predict a dryer and warmer than normal summer. The window of opportunity for backyard burning in Medford Rural Fire Protection District #2 may be shorter than normal this year, so it is recommended that you burn early. With all this in mind, be cautious about how you proceed. Consider alternatives to burning, like recycling your debris through your refuse company or by taking it to Biomass One. If you choose to burn, consider the following safety measures.

**When You Can Burn - Weather Conditions**
- On a burn day when the ventilation index is above 400
- When the wind speed is expected to be less than 20 mph
- When the temperature is not over 90° F

**What You Can Burn**
- Residential yard trimmings, leaves and brush

**Precautions: The Burn Area**
- Clear the ground around burn location, at least 10 feet, all directions
- Only a responsible adult should attend the fire
- Keep a hose and shovel near the fire
- Don’t delay calling 911 if the fire gets out of control
- Never leave a fire unattended
- Never burn under overhanging limbs, power lines, or near a propane cylinder
- The maximum pile size is 4 feet in diameter by 3 feet tall, which must be a minimum distance of 50’ from any structure (If the pile size is 3 feet or less in diameter and two feet or less in height, the minimum required distance from any structure is 25 feet)

**Preventing Injury**
- Never use a petroleum product to ignite a debris pile. Many ignitable fluids quickly vaporize and you can find yourself surrounded by flames when you attempt to ignite the pile
- Keep children away from the burn area

**What is Illegal to Burn**
- Wet garbage, automobile parts, asphalt or industrial waste, petroleum products or petroleum treated materials, plastics, rubber products (Tires, wire insulation, etc.), animal remains, any other material which normally emits dense smoke/noxious odors
Preparation for Wildfire Season— Fire Marshal Greg Kleinberg

All indicators predict Southern Oregon will be under an extreme wildfire threat this summer. How ready will you be for fire season? Beginning preparations now will reduce the threat to you and your neighborhood later. On another note, if a wildfire threatens your area, do you know what to do and when to evacuate? Medford Fire-Rescue has embraced a new program called READY, SET, GO! The program addresses the three major phases of wildfire safety: preparedness, situation awareness, and survival.

READY— Preparing for the Fire Threat
- Mitigate the threat by reducing home ignition hazards, creating defensible space, ensuring safe access, and replacing flammable vegetation with fire-resistant vegetation. Experts say as many as 80% of homes lost to wildfire could have been saved if their owners implemented a few simple fire-safe practices.
- Prepare your personal wildfire action plan and rehearse it with family members. Plan escape routes and make sure all those residing within the home know the plan of action.
- Assemble emergency supplies and belongings in a safe place.

SET— Situational Awareness When a Fire Starts
- Pack your emergency items.
- Make final preparations to your home.
- Stay aware of the latest and information on the fire from local media, and your local public safety.

GO—Act Early
- Evacuate early— Most wildfire deaths occur because people wait too long to leave their home.
- Follow your personal wildfire action plan. Doing so will not only support your safety, but will allow firefighters to best maneuver resources to combat the fire.

Medford Fire-Rescue offers free home evaluations for anyone living in wildfire hazard areas within our jurisdiction. Our goal is to educate and advise homeowners about mitigation efforts to make their properties wildfire resistant. Call 541-774-2300 to schedule a free home evaluation.

Retirement

Lance Gray went to work for Medford Fire-Rescue on February 1, 1983 and worked as a Firefighter for 30 years. He moved up as an engineer and Captain as needed over the past 20 years. He retired October 30, 2014.

Lance was the project lead for the Self Contained Breathing Apparatus for over 15 years. He earned his Swift Water Rescue 2 and his High Angle Rope Rescue 3. He was involved with the International Association of Fire Fighters Fire Union (IAFF) for most of his career. He served as the Union President for 10 years and he was a member of the Executive Board for 15 years.

Lance recently moved to Coquille, OR to spend some time with his son and two grandchildren. Now that he is retired, Lance and his wife Karen will travel the United States for the next two years in their RV.

Congratulations and enjoy retirement Lance!

New Employees

Chase Browning was hired as a Fire Inspector with MFR on December 16, 2013.

Chase worked at Browning Fire Protection for the past 20 years where he was responsible for management and the installation of fire protection systems. He worked toward his career in fire service for the past 10 years. He is a Fire Inspector II, Plans Examiner and a Fire Investigation Technician.

Welcome to MFR Chase.

Dan Freauff was hired as a Firefighter with MFR on January 6, 2014.

He was raised in Bend, OR. He attended Western Oregon and Oregon State College. Dan is a graduate of Central community College with his EMS and degree in Fire Science. He worked in Prineville and Crook County. He is a Task Force Strike Team Leader, and a Fire Officer I.

Welcome to MFR Dan.
Exciting news from your fire district!

Medford Rural Fire Protection District #2
200 South Ivy, #180
Medford, OR 97501

2014 Burn Permit Enclosed

District #2
Fire Protection
Medford Rural

Enclosed inside this Newsletter
2014 Burn Permit