Is it Fall already? I hope you’ve enjoyed your summer. It has been busy for us at the Fire Department. Fortunately, we have survived another fire season with minimal fire incidents. The fires we have experienced in our area were caught early and remained small.

I would like to update you on our newly purchased fire engine and the status of our fire station construction projects. We accepted delivery of the new Pierce Fire Engine this October. Take a look at the photo; it is a handsome piece of firefighting equipment we have added to our fleet. At the time you receive this newsletter we will still be working on the final touches to place the engine in service. There are several Medford Fire Department specific items that will be added and/or installed, including, mobile data computers, radios, and hand tools, to mention a few. As you may recall, the City of Medford purchased an identical new fire engine at the same time and it is going through the same metamorphous. The Fire District’s new fire engine will be housed in Fire Station #2 under construction on Stewart Avenue.

This brings me to the next topic. The Fire Station building projects. Fire Station #2 on Stewart Avenue and the replacement Fire Station #4 on Table Rock Road, next to the Railroad Park, are progressing rapidly. It is hard to believe that we just broke ground on both of them this spring. We are on schedule to open the stations in Late February or early March of 2017. The weather has cooperated and the contractors should have most of the critical outside work done prior to the rainy season this fall. We are looking forward to serving you from the new locations, especially from the new location off of Stewart as we suspect it will reduce our response time to the southwest section of the District.

Have a safe holiday season and if we can answer any questions you might have about our service, do not hesitate to give us a call. Our business office number is (541)774-2300.

As always, it is an honor to serve you,

Brian Fish, Fire Chief
Deputy Chief Greg Kleinberg submitted an Oregon Residential Specialty Code amendment on September 13, 2016 for Section R324 Wildfire Hazard Mitigation. The goal is to make new homes built in wildfire hazard zone areas more wildfire ignition-resistant. The current code language allows for any class-rated roof and vent screening to have up to 1/2” openings (now 1/16” to 1/8” is recommended from testing to prevent ember intrusion). These two items alone are insufficient to give homes a good chance of surviving a wildfire. The amendment adds other necessary components to reduce the chance of fire and embers from igniting roofs, walls, and penetrating openings. The proposal is modeled after what California has required for several years following many devastating losses. This change will make our communities safer as more homes are built in wildfire prone areas. The amendment will save future homes and neighborhoods from being destroyed in wildfires and reduce the life-safety threat to both citizens and emergency responders.

The Oregon Residential Specialty Code Committee begins meeting in November regarding the proposals. Any support for this proposed amendment would be greatly appreciated. You can email or address your letter of support to:

Building Code Division
Code Para-Technical Specialist
PO Box 14470
Salem, OR 97309-0404

Attn: Laura Burns,
Code Para-Technical Specialist
bcd.ptsptech@oregon.gov

Having a well maintained fire department vehicle access road is essential for responding emergency personnel to make it to your home effectively for fire as well as medical responses. An effective response is where emergency personnel can get to your home in the minimum amount of time to deal with an emergency. Having a deficient road can lead to an ineffective response or, in some cases during a wildfire, eliminate the response to your property entirely.

The access starts with well-marked address signs. The signs start at the main road, and, if there are points in your driveway where different addresses branch off; each decision point should have an extra address sign that points the direction to your home. You can obtain rural address signs free of charge at Medford Fire-Rescue headquarters (signs are funded by Medford Rural Fire Protection District 2).

The road should be well maintained, capable of accommodating the weight and size of emergency vehicles in all weather conditions. The Fire Code calls for a minimum 20’ wide road with a vertical clearance of minimum 13 1/2’. Jackson County requires a minimum 12’ wide road, a minimum 22’ fuel break, and fire vehicle turn-around areas for driveways exceeding 150’. There should be additional turn-around areas every 1/2 mile, and turnout areas (7’ x 50’ with 25’ tapers) every 800’ for driveway lengths in excess of 200’.

Fuel breaks are essential to maintain if your home is to be considered defendable. During a wildfire, firefighters triage homes and may choose not to defend a home where they feel there is a risk of being trapped by the fire. An example is a road that has a tunnel of vegetation.

If you have a private bridge leading into your home, it is advised to have an engineer evaluate the load carrying capacity of the bridge. Code requires bridges to be marked with this capacity so that firefighters can be assured the bridge will carry the weight of their heavy vehicle. The bridge should be able to carry 50,000-60,000 pounds, depending on the length. We will be starting a bridge program this year documenting a simple rating of bridges on our mapping program to our responders; red (don’t cross), yellow (use caution - cross at your discretion); and green (safe to cross).
Medford Fire-Rescue is proud to announce the addition of three new firefighters: **Cole Rohrbough, Tyler Nelson, and Kris Miller**

On October 17, 2016, the recruits will begin an eight week academy designed to prepare them in firefighting, emergency medical skills, including advanced life support, rescue, and many other aspects of emergency response. You will see their pictures in the March newsletter.

**Retirement**

Kelly began his journey with Medford Fire-Rescue on May 1, 2000 as a Firefighter. Kelly has contributed over 15 years of experience to the City and his achievements will not be forgotten. Enjoy your retirement Kelly!

**Have you ever called 911?**

If you have ever called 911, it is likely you needed immediate assistance from police, fire or medical. Many people experience an emotionally heightened state or even feel panicked while placing the call. Dispatchers are trained to work through the panic and obtain as much information as possible, while deciphering the emergency response needed. They are not only thinking of the emergency at hand, but also for the safety of others in the vicinity and the responders. Some of the questions the dispatcher asks, may not seem necessary to the caller. But, those questions are essential to public safety responders.

911 operators are Certified Emergency Medical Dispatchers. This certification is an internationally recognized program with training and protocol designed to address every medical emergency imaginable. Dispatchers attend monthly training to keep their skills current.

What can you do to be prepared if you have a medical emergency? Sarah Leonard, Supervisor at Emergency Communication of Southern Oregon offered some helpful information:

- Report a **complete** address or location by specific name (Many calls are made by people passing by with a cell phone and they do not provide a specific address).
- Know the phone number that you are making call from.
- Be ready to clearly and briefly communicate a chief complaint or problem.
- If it is a family member, know basic medical information and history.
- If you don’t know, say you don’t know.
- Don’t get impatient with questions. Even when the dispatcher stays on the line with you, know that help is already on the way.
- The dispatcher will tell you to gather medications in preparation for first responders. This is very helpful to medical personnel treating the patient.
- Some medical emergencies will prompt the dispatcher to send the police too.
- Every question has a purpose.

Hopefully, you will never have to place a call to 911. But, knowing the questions that you will be asked, will better prepare you to communicate the emergency and aid in a better outcome.