

Protecting the lives, safety, property, & environment of all persons in the community & surrounding areas we serve

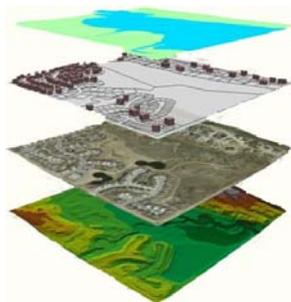
# HOT TOPICS

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR DISTRICT RESIDENTS

Visit our website at <http://www.corvallisrfd.com>

## Going High Tech with Global Imagery Satellite

The Corvallis Fire Department has embarked on an exploratory project with Alsea Geospatial, Inc. (AGI) to convert fire prevention activities into Global Imagery Satellite (GIS) format. GIS images allow near real-time and at-a-glance tracking of fire prevention



activities such as fire safety inspections, public education campaigns, firewise canvassing, and fire investigations. When these separate layers are overlaid on an electronic map, this information can be used for statistical analysis of fire prevention programs. In

addition, our work with AGI is a crucial step toward the conversion of our current paper format for permitting and inspecting to an electronic format, reducing cost, increasing efficiency, and achieving consistency with our sustainability initiatives.

Another goal of this innovative project is to include all of the fire prevention activities on the Corvallis Fire Department website so citizens have access to information about their community at their convenience. The Rural District is one of two project beta-test locations in Corvallis for GIS applications. Global imagery has a particular application in the District because driveways, addressing, and emergency egress routes are a constant concern -- particularly in wildfire events where roads are obstructed and

manmade landmarks are destroyed. Having the ability to pre-mark locations (addresses) on an electronic map increases our response capabilities by making our efforts more efficient. In the future it might be possible for citizens to mark their location during an emergency by using their cell phone.

Oregon's Forestland Urban Interface Fire Protection Act, Senate Bill 360, requires property owners to reduce the risk to structures from wildland fires. The U.S. Fire Administration estimates that at least 90 wildland firefighters died in the line of duty in 2009. Volunteer firefighters are more likely than their peers to die during wildland fire operations. Reducing fuel load, building fuel breaks, and making structures less vulnerable saves lives and property.

Each summer, Corvallis Firefighters canvass various Rural District neighborhoods, helping residents to assess their properties, identify hazards, and formulate a plan to mitigate those hazards. Inspections are usually done on paper and quickly become a huge data management challenge. Replacing paper forms with a digital process simplifies data collection and management and facilitates analysis and mapping. AGI built a firefighter-friendly SB360 application for collecting defensibility data, including addresses and GPS coordinates, that significantly reduces the time necessary to complete a survey.



## CRFPD Purchases Used Apparatus For Wildland Fire

The Rural District, in concert with Corvallis Fire, has purchased two used wildland engines from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire). The first engine to go in service is a CalFire Model #1. This engine is being refurbished by Benton County Public Works (BCPW) and is expected to be in service for the coming fire season. It will replace an older CalFire engine which has been in service locally since the late 1990s.



The Type III unit seats six, has a 500-gallon water tank, and has a hydrostatically-driven pump (allowing the vehicle to pump while moving). Compartments are designed to carry a variety of hand tools specific for wildland use. The low center of gravity helps to ensure safe operations in a variety of terrain types.



In the Willamette Valley, there is a rather narrow window of wildland response - - mid-summer through early fall, so there is clearly a need for these

types of apparatus in the system. There are multiple advantages to purchasing used apparatus. The economic advantage is, obviously, cost avoidance. Corvallis Fire has put other CalFire vehicles in service for about 20 to 25 percent of the cost of a new vehicle. That cost estimate includes acquisition, mechanical repair, paint, body work, and equipment. The downside is that the predicted service life will be shorter than that of a new vehicle (10 years versus 20 years). Maintenance and insurance costs are generally equal between new and used apparatus. The District is able to obtain and refurbish a proven design in less time than would be required to acquire a new vehicle.



## Vineyard Mountain Firewise Project

The Vineyard Mountain Firewise Community Project is underway. Interested parties have met and begun work on projects to improve the safety of Vineyard Mountain properties. Members of the Road, Park, and Water District Boards met with staff from Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and Corvallis Fire to form a Firewise Board.

Funding for the projects comes from three principal sources: Title III funds passed through from Benton County Community Development; Homeowner contributions (either sharing costs or providing labor and mitigating fuels); and the Federal Troubled Asset Relief Program (T.A.R.P.). Blake Mckinley from ODF, West Oregon District, is the Community Wildfire Forester assigned to this effort and is funded through T.A.R.P.

The Firewise Community Board members are Joe Heaney (Chair), Walter Barkan, Patty Lorenz, and John Snelling. This year's "Firewise Day" is likely to occur at a pool party, the date to be determined.

The Vineyard Mountain Road District contracts with Benton County Public Works for roadside mowing. With the fuels reduction work completed last year, roadside mowing will create a larger buffer along the road system. Individual property owners participated in fuel mitigation projects as part of this effort. Examples of work completed include: "limbing" up trees to reduce the chance of a ground fire spreading to the canopy; removing accumulations of combustible materials from roofs, under decks, and adjacent to homes; thinning to increase stem spacing; and brush removal. Contracted labor assisted in these efforts and provided chipping services to help reduce

the volume of materials and allow recycling / composting of vegetative matter.

The photos below illustrate the “before” and “after” of a parcel which was limbed up and cleared of undergrowth (brush).



Before



After

One of the requirements for Firewise Recognition in a community is a contribution of at least \$2.00 / capita. Work completed last year is estimated at a value closer to \$100 / capita. The prudent application of grant funds, homeowner cost share, and a cooperative approach have enabled this effort. Project work completed so far was an identified need in the Benton County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

The Firewise Communities / USA program is a resource for communities, tribes, fire departments, and organizations who are working toward the shared goal of reducing loss of lives, property, and resources to wildland fire by building and maintaining communities compatible with their natural surroundings. It is a multi-agency effort designed to reach beyond the fire service by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers and others before a fire starts. The

Firewise Communities approach emphasizes community responsibility for planning safer communities and effective emergency response, as well as individual responsibility for safer home construction, design, landscaping, and maintenance. Firewise Communities / USA focuses fire prevention efforts where homeowners can make a difference: in their own yards. The program is simple and *community-driven*. Interested communities:

- Form a Firewise board to steer the community’s efforts;
- Enlist the help of a wildland-urban interface specialist to complete a community assessment;
- Create a plan with achievable solutions to concerns identified during the assessment;
- Hold an annual Firewise Day dedicated to a local Firewise project; and
- Invest at least \$2 / capita annually in local Firewise projects. (This investment can be met through donations, grants, and volunteer / equipment time.....and all the money invested stays within the community!)

The community can renew its recognition status annually by completing the items above and filling out a short online form. Help your community to make a difference in wildfire preparedness now. Contact Blake McKinley, ODF West Oregon District:

[bmckinley@odf.state.or.us](mailto:bmckinley@odf.state.or.us) . **Additional information about the national Firewise program can be found at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) .**

## Recent Fires Underscore Need for Vigilance

Two recent fires in the Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District remind us all of the importance of being constantly vigilant regarding fire and emergency preparedness.

One fire originated under a fireplace when the heat from the fire box extended to some combustible under-floor structural members. Fortunately for the residents, they were awake at the time of the incident. Although this particular fire was small, it did produce a noticeable amount of smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) . This dwelling was not equipped with either a smoke or a CO detector – both of which are designed

to awaken sleeping residents in the event of a fire or carbon monoxide issue.

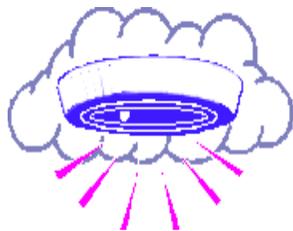
A more recent -- but significantly more devastating -- fire occurred on April, 10 in the 33000 block of SE White Oak Drive.



A fire which originated on a resident's back porch early one Sunday morning completely destroyed the structure and most of the residents' belongings. There were no working smoke alarms found in this dwelling either. Fortunately for the residents, they happened to awaken during the incident as a result of the noise being generated by the fire.

Both of these dwellings were rental properties. As such, they were required to be equipped with both a CO and a smoke detector. Recent Oregon law requires a CO detector in all rental properties where a potential CO source is present, such as natural or LP gas, a wood- or pellet-burning stove, or an attached garage. It is the landlord's responsibility to provide these devices such that one device is within fifteen feet (or inside) of each sleeping room and on each level of the dwelling.

Working smoke alarms and CO alarms save lives IF they are installed and operate properly. Please take time to ensure that you have these life-saving devices installed in your home and inside any residence that you may rent to others. The Corvallis Fire Department can provide and install a free smoke alarm to those who may not be able to afford them.



A question often asked by residents who live outside the city and several miles from a fire station is what they can do to reduce the risk of fire and minimize the damage from a fire. For answers to those questions,

please see the Firewise article in this edition of Hot Topics, as well as the list below:

- Ensure that all smoke alarms are installed and operational
- Install a security system that includes smoke detectors and is monitored by a qualified alarm company.
- Install a residential fire sprinkler system. It may be easier than you think.
- Have your home electrical and heating systems inspected if they are older or have demonstrated any irregularities.
- Notify your neighbors when you are out of town
- Be extra cautious when cooking, using candles, smoking, or enjoying recreational fires.

A member of the Corvallis Fire Department can come to your home and perform a fire safety survey of your site and dwelling, identifying potential risks and suggesting potential corrective action. If you are interested in this free service, please call 766-6961. Let us help you Stay Safe!

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## Meet Your New CRFPD Fire Prevention Staff



**Jeff Prechel, Fire Marshal**, joined the Corvallis Fire Department in 2010; he began his career in the fire service in 1991 in Kirkland, Washington, as a firefighter and subsequently transitioned to fire inspection and investigation. Jeff has a BS in Fire Service Administration, an AA in Fire Science, and is currently pursuing a Masters of Science in Leadership (MSL). He is certified as Fire Marshal, Building Official, Fire Investigator, Fire & Life Safety Educator, Fire Inspector, and Fire Plans Examiner.



**Jim Patton, Fire Prevention Officer**, began his career in the US Air Force fire service in 1982. He completed 10 years of active duty and was in the Oregon Air National Guard for 10 years, having held the positions of Firefighter, Apparatus Operator, Dispatch Center Supervisor, Fire Inspector, and Fire Marshal. Jim holds an AAS Degree in Fire Prevention.

He joined the Department as a Fire Prevention Officer in October 1994.

Jim, who places a strong emphasis on fire safety education, has obtained several grants geared toward public education, including a National Fire Protection Association "Learn Not to Burn Champion" grant, which has provided state-of-the-art educational materials for kindergarten through 3rd grade classrooms, and a FEMA grant for a 40-foot fire safety educational trailer used to teach all age groups about important fire safety principles. Jim has taught campus fire safety at several national conferences and is Chair of the State Fire Marshal's Office Campus Fire Safety Subcommittee.



During the course of her 26 years (so far) in the fire service, **Fire Prevention Officer Carla Pusateri** has held the positions of Volunteer Firefighter, Firefighter / Paramedic / Apparatus Operator, Lieutenant, and, for the past seven years, Fire

Prevention Officer. Carla holds an AS degree in Emergency Medical Technology with an emphasis in Fire Prevention and has earned certification as a Fire Inspector, Public Fire / Life Safety Educator, and Fire Plans Examiner. Her primary areas of interest include child care facilities, schools & day care facilities, adult assisted-living facilities, juvenile firesetter intervention, public education, and fire investigation.



**Fire Prevention Volunteer Laura Sauermann** has worked with City of Salem Fire, Marion County Fire, McMinnville Fire and Corvallis Fire as a CWE student, intern, and / or volunteer. She holds an AS Degree in Building Inspection and has worked

as a residential plans examiner for Marion County. She is currently completing her AS Degree in Fire Prevention and is just a few credits shy of that goal.

Laura is certified as a Building Plans Examiner, Commercial and Residential Building Inspector, Commercial and Residential Mechanical Inspector, Fire Inspector I, and Fire Plans Examiner. Building safety and fire-safe education are her primary areas of interest.



**Lieutenant Rob Yencopal** started his career as a volunteer firefighter at Locke Station and has since returned in the role of career Lieutenant. Rob has been with Corvallis Fire for nine years and brought with him a background in wildland firefighting.

Rob is certified as a Wildland Interface Firefighter, Wildland Interface Engine Boss, Wildland Fire Operator, Mobile Water Supply Operator, Fireground Leader, and Fire Instructor. His primary focus is reduction of hazards in the Urban Interface.

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## Who Are Your Board Members, and When Do They Meet?

The Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District is headed by a five-member board elected at-large to the positions for a staggered four-year term. The Board generally meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Locke Station. The meetings are open to the public, and we encourage you to come and learn more about your fire district. Your board members are:

**Tom Nelson** [Tom.Nelson@corvallisrfd.com](mailto:Tom.Nelson@corvallisrfd.com)  
Chair

**Henry Booke** [Henry.Booke@corvallisrfd.com](mailto:Henry.Booke@corvallisrfd.com)  
Vice Chair

**Howard Jones** [Howard.Jones@corvallisrfd.com](mailto:Howard.Jones@corvallisrfd.com)  
Member at Large

**George Mears** [George.Mears@corvallisrfd.com](mailto:George.Mears@corvallisrfd.com)  
Treasurer

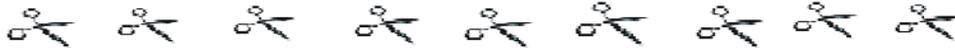
**Bob Conder** [Bob.Conder@corvallisrfd.com](mailto:Bob.Conder@corvallisrfd.com)  
Secretary



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Thank you for reading the current edition of *Hot Topics*. This publication is produced once per year. We value your comments. Please let us know if the information provided was interesting, practical, and/or useful. If you would like to see a topic covered in the next edition or have any comments, please contact us at 541-766-6961 or by e-mail at



These signs assist your visitors and emergency service personnel in easily locating your home. Please allow 6 weeks for ordering, assembly, and installation. If you have any questions, contact the Locke Station at 541-766-6476.

**SIGN IT SO THEY SEE YOU!**

Corvallis, OR 97330  
544 NW Lewisburg Avenue  
Attn: Address Sign

**Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District**

Send this order form & payment to:

If you would like your email included in the Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District's e-mail list, please provide your email address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street Name and Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to order an address sign for my property, which is located within the Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District. I have enclosed a check for \$20.00, made out to the *Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District*.

**RURAL ADDRESS SIGN ORDER FORM**