

Aeneas Valley Fire District Newsletter

December 2008

This newsletter is an unofficial publication whose intent is to communicate with and inform the public on items of general interest. Every effort is made to insure the accuracy of the content, but if discrepancies occur between official paperwork and this newsletter then use the official source first.

2008 year end wrap-up – It was very good, busy and productive year for the fire district. *Statistics:* Total rollouts (each district vehicle responding) for service stands at 107, not counting responses in private vehicles to emergencies or moving fire vehicles for training/non-emergency reasons. Red-



Hurst extraction tool

Left to right – shovel to show size, cutting tool, hydraulic pump unit, spreading tool

carded firefighters doubled to 21. Two more engines are in service, a structural engine purchased from Lewis County and a brush engine built from a purchased Tonasket police vehicle. *Finance:* The district operated in 2007 from borrowed county money (\$5,000) and earned training/firefighting income (\$12,000). The year 2008 brought our first tax money (\$20,000), earned firefighting income (\$22,000) and awarded grant income (about \$42,000 from 2 grants, a 3rd grant has yet to be valued). *Equipment donations:* These were excellent also. Five vehicles were received for possible use as 1) a medical aid unit, 2) water tender, 3) fire engines and 4) equipment trucks. In addition we also were given fire clothing, breathing apparatus, other assorted items and a hydraulic tool for extricating people from vehicles (see picture). More equipment donations are

being worked. *Training:* - Fire District 16 training in 2008 resulted in 8 *new* red card holders, 6 SCBA (breathing gear) certified firefighters, progress in structure firefighting, and proficiency advancement classes for numerous firefighters. Also volunteers recently completed the classroom portion of Emergency Vehicle Accident Prevention (EVAP) training with the driving portion to be completed in the spring. In addition to the course work volunteers were given the opportunity to use a driving simulator furnished by our insurance company. In this way they could “drive” several emergency vehicles through multiple scenarios programmed into the computer. We also participated in a pump training day with DNR, Forest Service and Canadian firefighters to gain knowledge of the capabilities and operating characteristics of the pumps used by the different agencies.

Commissioner change and permanent Fire Chief - At the December 12 commissioners meeting Tim Kenyon resigned as commissioner to focus on his job as District Chief, which was changed from temporary to permanent. Mike Woelke has stepped forward, and been appointed, to fill the commissioners position. Mike will continue in his capacity as Assistant Chief for Fire District 16. He’s worked for the district since its inception and comes to the commissioners table well informed and ready to serve.

Training grant award – We have just been awarded another grant we’d applied for that involves training. Here is the award announcement: “**Congratulations!** Your fire department has been selected as a recipient of the TargetSafety-Volunteer & Combination Officers Section (VCOS) \$1.5 million [online training grant](#). More than 300 departments applied for this grant and just a fraction of those, including yours, were awarded the funds for 2008-2009.” Besides the invaluable training we stand to receive the district is not required to contribute any matching funds. More details will be given in a future newsletter.

FEMA grant award – The district was officially notified of our grant award by FEMA for the purchase of radios, vehicle emergency light bars, personnel protective clothing and fire shelters, pump, hose and fittings and connectors for fire engines, and a high pressure pump. We will start to purchase those items in the coming year and be reimbursed for 95% of the cost.

Upcoming training - Several of our volunteers are planning on participating in an Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior (S-290) course this January. This class will expand on the basics learned in Red Card training. They have completed their pre-course work and pre-qualifying tests and are expecting to hear of their final selection by January 6. Volunteers that participated in last year's class found it extremely informative. Several volunteers will go to the S-230 class (Engine Resource) held later this winter, while others will 4-6 new members will get their basic red card training. Schedule allowing, two firefighters will attend Ignition Operations training to gain ability in doing controlled burns. And to top it off all firefighters will get their annual refresher in CPR/First Aid. Numerous classes from our training grant are also in the works.

Winter preparation – How well are you protected at home this winter? Like it or not the most important and effective part of fire protection starts with you. Here are a couple of items to think about. Begin with smoke detectors (***If you don't have any then get busy and install enough to cover the house. These should NOT be considered optional.***) Replace the batteries at least once a year and periodically test the detectors to see that they actually work. Next you should have 2 or more LARGE chemical ABC fire extinguishers (at least 5 pounds but preferably 10 pounds or more). The ABC rating is important because it can be used on any type of fire. Those small ones for stove top fires are fine but on much of anything else you could run out of chemical before the fire is out. Optimal placements of extinguishers varies from house to house but consider locating one at each exit door (not hidden from view) and another in the kitchen area away from the stove. Don't forget out-buildings that are a fire potential (i.e. garages and workshops).

Your taxes - There seems to be some confusion on how your fire district tax is calculated. Under current rules the maximum tax that can be charged each landowner is 1 dollar per thousand dollars of assessed value. It gets much more complicated from here but suffice it to say that the district is only allowed a maximum of one percent more money each year over the previous year, keeping in mind your tax bill is capped at the one dollar per thousand of assessed value rate. Your rate may be less but it won't be more than the max. So, over time, through building, reassessment and annexation, the total district assessed value tends to go up and the individual fire tax bill usually decreases. ***At least until something known as a lid lift occurs.*** Then the process starts over at your one dollar per thousand of assessed value and may then decrease again in subsequent years. The state controlled lid lift process allows the fire district commissioners to cause a lid lift once in a 6 year period. The whole tax determination process is complicated so for exact details call the county assessors office. The good thing here is that, no matter how the fire district spends money or incurs debt, your fire protection tax doesn't change. So building a fire station or NOT doesn't change your taxes. The only way your taxes could increase beyond the current limits is if the district voters approved a bond or increase via the ballot box.

That completes our third newsletter. We're still looking forward to your comments and questions. To subscribe, ask questions or make comments please send an email to "avfdnews@amerion.com". Questions can also be mailed to "Okanogan FPD 16, PO Box 645, Tonasket WA 98855-0645". Remember, you probably won't get answers to your questions or concerns if you don't ask! Sorry but this newsletter will only be distributed via email or bulletin board as it's not a funded activity. A small number of paper copies are available at the fire commissioners meetings. A private website featuring meeting minutes and newsletters is at www.aeneasvalleywa.org. Click on "**Fire District Info**"