

## Aeneas Valley Fire District Newsletter

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.

**Year end wrap-up:** It has been a quieter yet busier year. Total call-outs stand at 24 at this time and we earned about \$4,400 dollars contracting on DNR fires. We ended 2009 with 19 firefighters. The fire district did purchase our first piece of property for a future fire station and we have more than tripled the size of the district (see next two items). We also put two water tenders into service and already made back 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the purchase price of the large 3,000 gallon tender on two fires this year.

**Annexation activity:** Efforts by some valley residents to be annexed into the fire district resulted in an annexation petition being submitted to and accepted by our fire commissioners and passed to the county for final processing. The Okanogan County commissioners approved the annexation on 24 November 2009. Since the voters' signatures collected in the area to be annexed were greater than the 60% needed for a super-majority, a public hearing and election were not required. Annexation is a Washington State defined process (RCW 52.04.011). It increases the fire district size from 18.5 to a little over 60 square miles. It's our understanding that fire district tax for the annexed area owners will not show up on property tax statements until 2011. In the meantime, the new area will be covered by the fire district. *See attached annexation map.*

**Property purchase final:** The fire district has completed the purchase of a 6 acre piece of property located just off Aeneas Valley Road on Bench Creek Road. Plans are that this will be the location of our first fire station in the valley. When depends on district priorities, funding and possible grants.

**Not happy with those new traffic signs on Cape Labelle?:** If you think the money could have been better used elsewhere you are probably correct. However, as we all know, the devil is in the details. If the road traffic counters register more than 100 vehicles per day then the county is required to take the road out of "primitive road" status. State law then requires them to put up the traffic signs. The county did it as cheaply as they could and still comply with legal requirements.

**Effort being made to get aid unit operational:** One of the goals for Aeneas Valley Fire is to operate an aid unit in the valley that would provide residents with often critical transitional care until a transporting ambulance can arrive from Tonasket. In December seven of our firefighters participated in ARC Emergency Response training to receive certification that would allow them to provide aid. This training is in addition to the February CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer training that our firefighters received. We are now looking into ways to meet standards for an aid vehicle. Money has been budgeted to get it up and running but grants as well as equipment donations from other agencies will be considered to keep it going. Meanwhile FD16 will provide lift assistance (help lifting and loading patients or equipment) to Tonasket EMS at their request.

**District overview:** For an overview of the district and its activities we created a 9 page information packet for the annexation activity. It is good general information even for existing district members. To view it on the web go to [www.aeneasvalleywa.org](http://www.aeneasvalleywa.org). Click on "Fire District Info", then "minutes/newsletters/history". Under "newsletters" select "Sept 2009 Annexation Proposal".

**Fire information day held at Round Lake:** On July 5<sup>th</sup> we held a fire information day at Round Lake with all the fire district in-service vehicles on display. DNR joined us with one of their

wildland engines. Fire related pamphlets and information were available to visitors. Left to right below are the 6 district vehicles in service (2 water tenders, 1 structural engine, 3 wildland engines).



**SCBA program suspended:** Our program allowing us to use Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) is being suspended. All our SCBA was donated to us by other districts and now the mandated end-of-life of the air bottles is approaching. Efforts to find bottles with a longer life have not been productive so far. We are now hoping to pick up new (to us) air bottles as other districts receive grants to replace their existing SCBA gear. Stay tuned for further developments in this area.

**The Chiefs corner:** We are well into the winter months and several preventative measures can be taken to make these months more enjoyable:

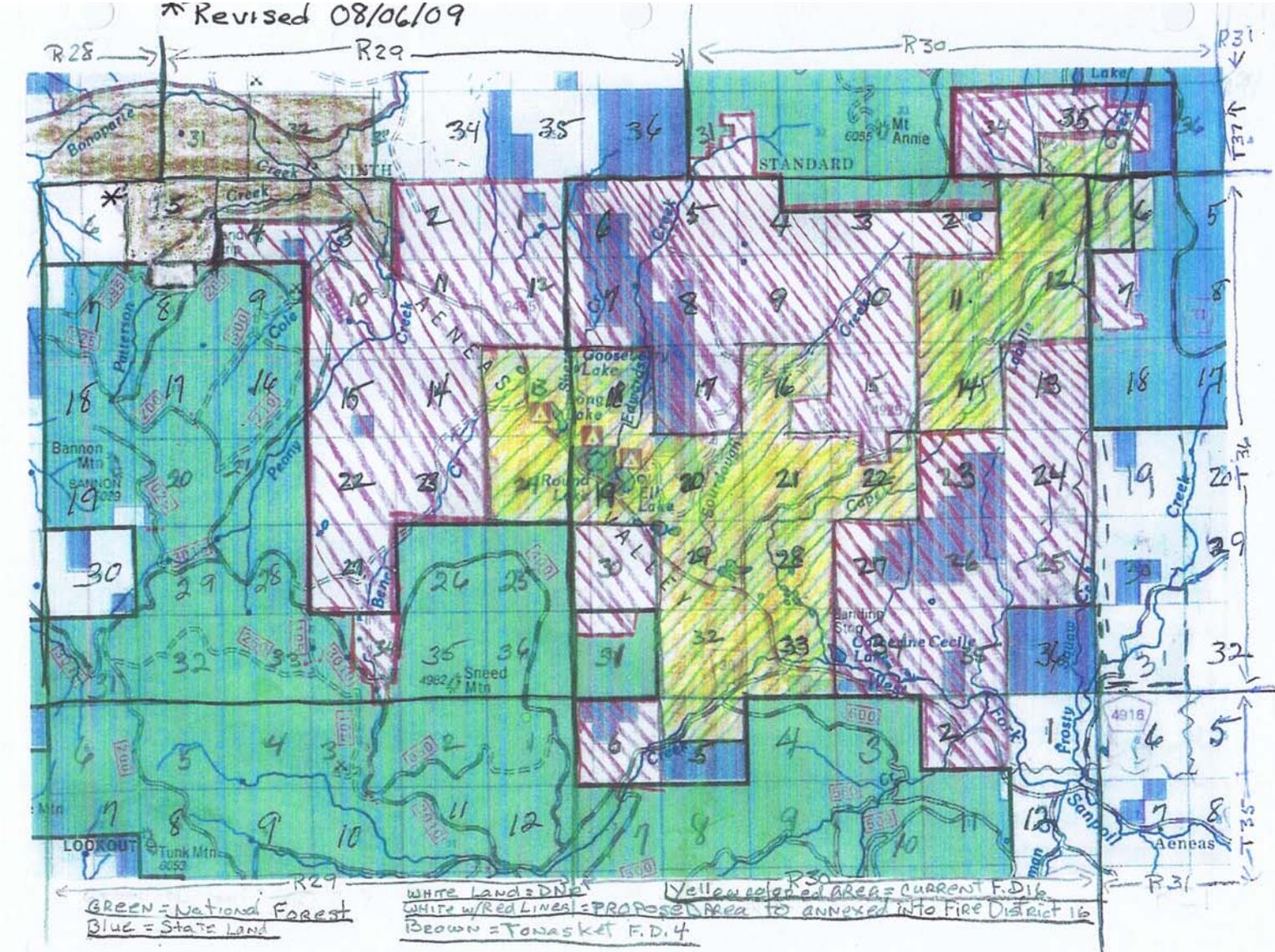
- Have a 5 to 10 lbs. ABC dry chemical fire extinguisher available in your home and read the instructions on how to use the item and where to place it.
- Have your drive way cleaned and your address clearly posted so emergency services, EMS, Sheriff's deputies and Fire personnel can make it in to assist when called.
- Be sure to change the batteries in your smoke alarms and be careful on the chair or ladder.
- Have your chimney inspected and if necessary cleaned or repaired each spring.

**Grant activity:** Our 2008 AFG grant award of \$33,000 bought us radios, fire shelters, some PPE, fittings and adapters for engines, a pump, parts and supplies to build 2 pumper units for wildland engines, a portable water tank and other miscellaneous items. We are still awaiting word on two 2009 grant requests for 1) new structural and wildland protective clothing (PPE) (\$63,500), and 2) a new fully equipped 3,000 gallon water tender (\$166,500). Decisions are expected at any time.

**Rumor control:** *Paid employees* - This is simple, NOBODY has been paid a single dime by the fire district since it was founded. *Money earned by contract tender owner* – Tim Kenyon, the owner, has donated all monies earned by the tender for the last 3 years to the fire district.

**Know where you are:** With the proliferation of GPS units it would seem logical to report fire locations using Latitude/Longitude (lat/lon) values. In reality, most emergency services maps are the township/range/section (TRS) kind. The 911 street address is preferred but if you report in lat/lon we must locate another map with that system and convert GPS to TRS coordinates, losing valuable time. So at least know your TRS where you live. Refer to your property parcel number. The first six digits are township, range and section values (2 digits each) in that order.

That completes our fifth 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". 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 monthly fire commissioners meetings. A private website with meeting minutes and newsletters is at [www.aeneasvalleywa.org](http://www.aeneasvalleywa.org). Click on "Fire District Info".



yellow striped = original district, red striped shows annexed area