

## Aeneas Valley Fire District Newsletter

This newsletter is an unofficial publication intended 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.

**2012 Year end stats:** We were called out 21 times so far this year. Firefighters stand at 19 with about 4 people in support roles. We trained 5 new EMT's to bring us up to 7 state certified EMT's (more on this in the "**Medical Aid Unit**" section that follows). In the equipment category we increased our emergency vehicles by four (adding a 1,050 gallon type 4 wildland engine and a medical aid unit. Two structural engines purchased at the end of last year were also put into service.). Grant income was \$6936 while \$3400 was earned via contract firefighting. **NOTE:** Beginning this year the district will be putting together a much more detailed report at the end of each year to document what transpired during that year. It will be put together in the January-February timeframe.

**Medical Aid Unit:** The commissioners approved the implementation of a medical aid unit earlier this year and **FD 16 became a state approved medical aid agency on 10 Dec 2012.** We already had the vehicle but needed to invest money and labor in bringing it up to specs. Five new EMT's were trained to give us the desired seven people for 24/7 EMT coverage. We will neither be a transporting agency nor a replacement for Tonasket EMS service. Rather we will be a supporting agency for Tonasket EMS that provides quicker on-site medical assistance response with then faster transport by Tonasket EMS to North Valley Hospital. *While this item may be covered in a paragraph the reader should be aware that volunteers, especially the new EMT's, put in easily over 1,000 hours of their time and some personal expense to make this a reality!* They deserve everyone's gratitude for a job well ~~done~~ started!

**Property development planned:** Two projects were approved to begin development of property owned by the fire district at 20 Bench Creek Rd. The first would be to install electrical power and an access gate, tentatively scheduled for spring of 2013. The second project would be to build a multi-purpose insulated building using volunteer labor. The goal is to have it completed by the end of 2013. The plan has been run through a legal review and a quick look at the results does not seem to indicate any showstoppers. Further study will be done to verify this before proceeding. We envision the uses would be to provide: 1) a heated building to store a structural fire engine, thereby upgrading the insurance rating to all insured structures within 5 road miles of the building, 2) a storage facility to begin consolidating district equipment currently stored at various members houses, 3) a workshop for vehicles and equipment, 4) a meeting facility for such things as training. Obviously budget is going to determine how big the building will be. Preliminary calculations suggests both projects together will run around twenty thousand dollars.

**Structural firefighting training:** One complaint about the district that seems to never go away is that we have been in operation for a while and are still not trained to fight structure fires, especially since a promise was put forth while we were campaigning to become a district that we could accomplish this in a short period of time. It is a valid complaint but the statement was made when we were very naïve about what it took to be a fully functioning fire district. Seems there are a lot of pesky rules and regulations that get in the way of just yelling something macho and charging into a house squirting water. To reach our goal there are a lot of steps that have to be completed in sequence. For the last 6 years we have been working on those steps and the last piece has just

clicked into place this year. We spent over \$100K to get where we can begin this final phase. The missing piece has been (affordable) certified instructors to run us through this training. A fire department from the coast has sort of “adopted” us and will train us for free (can’t beat that price), we just need to pick up the cost of the training materials. Now that may seem like we are home free but there’s still one big hurdle. To fight structure fires we have to be SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) trained (no problem there) and equipped (OUCH!). To equip one person with new SCBA costs around \$5,500 and we need at least 6 people, preferably 8, which means \$33,000 - \$44,000. We’ll investigate used equipment or try to acquire it on a grant. Either way it takes time and effort. *The good news though is that there is finally a light visible at the end of the tunnel.*

**Winter is coming:** The heat will be coming on and we will be spending a lot more time indoors. Our risk of fire danger increases significantly during these times. Two big items will go a long way to make it safer. The first would be fire extinguishers in multiple parts of the house. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends at least one *primary protection* fire extinguisher for each level of the home. A *primary protection* fire extinguisher should have a fairly large capacity and must be UL Rated 2-A:10-B:C or higher. In addition to your primary protection, you should also have *supplementary protection* fire extinguishers that are UL rated for specific hazards, such as common kitchen cooking fires, and are recommended for placement in specific areas, such as the kitchen. The second item would be smoke alarms. These could just possibly save your life. If you have them change your batteries yearly. If not install them. Don’t forget that these alarms, be they for smoke, carbon monoxide or gas, should be replaced after about 5 years as they become less effective over time.

**Rumor mill:** One thing that never fails to amaze is how the rumor mill can take any good news and make it negative. The latest rumor heard is, now that we have trained EMT’s, they are always in town working for one of the EMS services and, therefore, unavailable in the Valley. **Not true!!** Yes, they do work in town BUT generally only a day or two per week. Everyone should be happy about the EMT’s working in town! The only way to become proficient is to work at it and practice, practice, practice. Calls for EMT’s in our valley alone are not sufficient. Our folks though have taken it on themselves to spend the time and energy to improve their skills and experience so that everyone benefits. We have already provided immediate response to 4 EMT assist calls just in the short time since training was completed

**Volunteering (DON’T skip this!!!):** While it’s easy to think up all sorts of reasons why you can’t/won’t volunteer please consider this. The fire district runs entirely on the efforts of unpaid volunteers who believe it is important enough to get involved. We are protecting not only ourselves but our friends and neighbors as well. Everybody likes the services provided but most figure their support ends with their property tax payment. By joining us **you would make a real noticeable difference**. What works well for us is that have people with of various skills and backgrounds. We would like to put yours to good use, be it emergency responder (wildland and/or structural firefighting, EMT (training available)) or one or more of the many support roles available. Being as how we are all volunteers we try to be as flexible as possible with the degree and timing of our members’ participation. Come talk to us and decide for yourself. For more information call Chief Bob Bauer (486-0785) or Assistant Chief Mike Woelke (486-1386).

This completes our Ninth newsletter. We look forward to your comments and questions.. 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. 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”.

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We are nearing the end of our sixth year of operations and thought a recap of our progress through that time would be of interest to our valley residents. This newsletter will begin with where we started, move on to our status now (which should be of the most interest), with a little bit of where we are headed thrown in.

**2007:** We officially became a fire district January 1 but didn't have any firefighters, equipment, protective clothing, radios, tools, money etc. - NOTHING!! We wouldn't receive our first tax money until 2008. The decision to begin operations right away, in hindsight, might be seen as quite impetuous. However, begin we did. Donations of old radios and fire packs and out-of-service protective clothing (PPE) from other districts and grants of several vehicles via DNR got us rolling. Eleven volunteers completed DNR redcard training that spring. We borrowed \$5,000 from the county to bankroll our big adventure and started operations. To say we appeared as quite the motley crew in our mismatched, worn PPE would be quite accurate. It was a bad time though to be starting a district as our mandated fire shelters were nearing expiration and would need replacing. Also there would be another mandated switch to narrow band radios happening a few years down the road, which would require us to replace all our donated radios. Clearly big challenges were ahead.

**2012 Year end:** We will skim over the how and why of the individual accomplishments while we get down to summarizing where we stand today. Dollar amounts are rounded to the nearest thousand, with that part showing a K. For example \$19,368 would show here as \$19K. Apologies in advance for the "busy" format but we are trying to pack a lot of data in a small amount of space.

***Finances:*** (unless specified otherwise all dollar amounts are for start of 2007 through end of 2012)

**Taxes=>** total through this year is about \$145K (\$24K per year average). Expected 2012 tax income is \$44k.

**Debt=>** The district is debt free.

**Earned income=>** income from fighting state/federal fires stands around \$62K.

**Grant income=>** income (above our portion of the total cost) from state and federal grants is about \$120K.

**Total Income breakdown=>** taxes account for 44%, volunteer generated income is 56%.

**Year end carryover=>** expecting \$44K going into 2013. About \$9K of that are reserve emergency funds.

**Equipment=> (11 vehicles total in service):** 1 type 4 (1050 gallons water) and 4 type 6 (150-320 gallons water each) wildland engines (one doubles as rescue vehicle), 3 Type 2 structural engines (750 gallons water each), 2 water tenders (1200 and 3000 gallons respectively) and one medical aid unit (more on that later). We were able to equip our firefighters with \$60k of structural and wildland clothing via grants. Also mobile radios for our vehicles and new fire shelters and handheld radios for our firefighters were also acquired, mainly through grants.