

## Aeneas Valley Fire District Newsletter

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

**2013 Year end stats:** *Personnel:* We have 23 firefighters (up 4 from 2012), 6 of those being trained EMTs. *Vehicles:* one wildland truck was rehosed / upgraded (from 200 gallons of water to 800). Our active vehicle inventory is 11 vehicles (5 wildland engines (one being also equipped as a rescue vehicle), 3 structure engines, 2 water tenders and 1 emergency aid unit. *Responses:* FD 16 made 45 responses so far to 28 incidents (a response is each day we spend on an incident actively working it). Medical calls accounted for 18 incidents and wildland fires saw 19 responses (see [aeneasvalleyfire.com/fire\\_department\\_info/fire\\_calls](http://aeneasvalleyfire.com/fire_department_info/fire_calls) for definitions of terms used). *Financial:* Income for 2013 (Jan-Nov) was \$59,503.57 (taxes = \$44,109.15, grants = \$1,778.00, fee for service = \$13,391.42, donations = \$225.00). Total spending (Jan-Dec) = \$54,970.71. We also put aside \$20,000 in an investment account with the county for future big projects. While we won't get rich from the returns at least we'll be earning a little extra on money that would otherwise be sitting idle.

**Property development update:** Two projects were approved in 2012 to begin development of property owned by the fire district at 20 Bench Creek Rd. *Project 1:* Install electrical power and property access to provide a place to store our winterized vehicles. Also some maintenance work would be done there. That project has been delayed until spring of 2014. *Project 2:* Build a multi-purpose building using volunteer labor. The goal is to have it completed prior to spring of 2014. Work has begun and we'll work on it through the winter. The big determinant now is the weather.

**Structure firefighting training update:** Thanks to Yelm fire and certified instructor Lt. Ann Holeman one FD 16 group has already completed the classroom training to be structure firefighters. Once the practical portion of the test is completed we'll head to the Washington State Fire Training Academy at North Bend with Yelm FD in the February-March timeframe for some live fire exercises. At that point we should be Firefighter 1 qualified. Because we need SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) gear to effectively function as qualified structure firefighters we applied for a FEMA grant for 12 sets of SCBA for a total cost of \$78,180. Until we get our own SCBA Yelm Fire has been letting us train using their SCBA gear. Word on that grant is expected in the first half of 2014. Our share of the cost would be \$5,909. If this all comes together as hoped we will have gone from a brand new district to a full service fire district in just over 7 years!!! While that may seem slow to some, it is in fact incredibly fast. There are a lot of hugely time consuming and incredibly expensive steps (most of which have to be done in a specific order), along with lots of training and many, many volunteer hours that had to be expended to reach our goal.

**Further progress:** In anticipation of the property development and structure firefighting coming together we're in the planning/purchasing stages of outfitting 2 structure engines (the third engine is already complete) to properly respond to structure fires. We plan to open a second station (the first being donated heated space) so that we can extend the WSRB class 9 insurance rating to property within 5 road miles of the property, allowing most property owners to reduce their home insurance rates. We'll keep you apprised of our progress, which will be as time and money permits.

**Web site update:** Late this year a new web site devoted to our fire district was brought online. It's still growing but you can find things like a history of incidents responded to, meeting minutes, resolutions passed, financial info such as the budget and spending along with other assorted information. The site is [aeneasvalleyfire.com](http://aeneasvalleyfire.com) and we are looking for your input on how to make it

better. It should be noted this site is privately funded and maintained by someone who is a district member. It is not under the control of the Fire District, although the district is solicited for input.

**From the Chiefs desk:** I wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season and best wishes for the New Year. Here are some items to consider in order for your Fire Department to serve you better.

1. Have a visible address on your property entrance to speed emergency response to you.
2. Change the batteries in your smoke alarm(s). If you don't have any consider installing some (amount needed varies with dwelling size and layout).
3. A carbon monoxide (CO) alarm is an additional measure of safety. They are inexpensive (around \$15) and just plug into an electrical outlet. CO is a deadly gas that is tasteless, odorless and colorless. It extracts oxygen from the air (to form carbon dioxide) but the main danger is that it binds to hemoglobin sites in your blood that normally carry oxygen. Hours of breathing fresh air will slowly release CO from the hemoglobin but by then you might have suffocated. Most combustion sources, i.e. wood stoves, are a potential source.
4. Check your fire extinguisher. Is the needle still in the green on the gauge? Having a spare as a backup is money well spent. For the kitchen get a "K" rated extinguisher!
5. Chimney fires are our biggest worry this time of year when we keep our wood stove continually burning, especially with improperly seasoned wood and choking down air to the fire too far so combustion is incomplete. When did you last clean your chimney?
6. Only a few fire trucks carry water this time of year due to the cold. Where possible we have attempted to keep them in heated garages but those are very limited. Those that are heated may require extra time to arrive. Call 911 early if you have a fire or medical emergency.
7. When calling 911, help us get to you by giving clear directions to your home or accident. Also the better description you give of the emergency the better prepared we'll be on arrival.
8. Use extra caution when driving Aeneas Valley Road this time of year. Icy spots persist when the sun cannot warm the road due to trees or hills shading it.
9. It's a good idea to have a few items in your vehicle during winter travel, such as drinking water, some food perhaps and maybe a couple of warm blankets. I use a warm sleeping bag. You never know when you or someone else might need it. Sand, for getting traction, is a good idea (cat litter works great also). Most folks go prepared that live in our area.
10. For those that have a live Christmas tree indoors and maybe have decorated their home the potential for fire is highly elevated, especially if you also use room heaters. It would be a shame to spoil your holiday season just because a misplaced candle or heater lit up something flammable and the house was lost or severely damaged.

My intent is to say that all the people who live in Fire District 16 are special to us volunteers. We train hard and often to be prepared when needed. We ask that you do all you can to help us help you. With kindest regards, Robert Bauer, Fire Chief.

**Breaking news:** Because of a sudden opportunity from DNR we just picked up a 2000 Freightliner truck tractor from California through a federal surplus program. Over the coming year it will be converted to the new platform for our current 3,000 gallon water tender. Its hill climbing ability will let us reach fires much quicker and the automatic transmission will increase our potential pool of drivers due to the lower levels of skill and training required.

This completes our tenth newsletter. We solicit your comments and questions, which can be mailed to "Okanogan FPD 16, PO Box 645, Tonasket WA 98855-0645". This newsletter will only be published via email, bulletin board and web site ([aeneasvalleyfire.com](http://aeneasvalleyfire.com)). A small number of paper copies are available at the monthly commissioners meetings.