



## Community Calendar:

**Philomath Frolic & Rodeo  
Craft Fair**—Nov. 7, 9 am -  
5 pm, Nov. 8, 10 am—3 pm at  
the Philomath Elementary  
School.

**Turkey Bingo** - Friday,  
November 20th, from 5 pm -  
8 pm, in the Philomath High  
School auditorium. Bingo will  
start at 5:30 pm. This event  
benefits the outdoor school  
for the middle school.

**Thanksgiving Break**—  
Nov. 25—27

**Christmas Tree Lighting** —  
Dec. 1 at 6:30 pm on the lawn  
of the Benton County  
Historical Museum.

**Santa at the Library**—  
Dec. 12, 10 am to Noon

**Winter Break**—Dec. 21—  
Jan. 1

## Personnel Spotlight:

We'd like to welcome **Ryan Rush** to PF&R. He is our newest career firefighter and comes to us with 12 years of fire experience. Previously he volunteered at Santa Clara Fire in Eugene. For more information about Firefighter Rush and the other PF&R staff and volunteers, visit our website: [www.philomathfire.com](http://www.philomathfire.com)

# Hot off the Press

Volume 1, Issue 2 Fall 2015

## A message from the Fire Chief

We have challenges ahead of us, but there have always been challenges. The Board, with a lot of community and stakeholder input, has developed and adopted a Master Plan which plots a course for success over the next 15-20 years. Some of the challenges we face are predictable, some are the same challenges volunteer agencies face all over the country, and some are somewhat unexpected.

Our fleet, facilities and equipment all continue to age, regardless of anything else we do. We're in a building that was built 40 years ago when we had one full-time position. We have a fleet whose replacement costs go up faster than inflation due in part to the changes in technology. We have equipment that's essential for personnel safety and service to the community that needs to be replaced periodically. That's all pretty predictable.

From 2004 to 2014, the population of Philomath grew by about 15%.

Over the same time period, our annual call volume has grown by over 50%. At the same time, we've seen a 66% decrease in Volunteer Officers. While we work hard at recruiting and retaining volunteer personnel, it's difficult for volunteers to dedicate the time necessary to become an Officer with the department. Our continued commitment to responding appropriately to emergencies in the community will require changes to our staffing model.

In 2014 we were awarded a grant for a seismic upgrade to our main station. Natural hazards, like earthquakes, floods or storms, are difficult to predict and expensive to plan for, so we're grateful for the assistance from the State on this project. We are currently working with a design firm to complete the engineering evaluation and project design. The design, as completed, will allow us to remain in operation in the event of a code level earth-

quake. This will allow us to continue providing services to the surrounding community in a time of need.

Another unexpected challenge has been the turnover of paid staff this year. When I retire at the end of the calendar year, I will be the 5<sup>th</sup> member of the paid staff to leave since March. I believe that with this challenge has come opportunity. We've been able to take advantage of the changes to do some restructuring. We've also been fortunate with the replacement personnel we've hired this year. Philomath is a great community and I'm sure it will attract several highly qualified candidates for my position. I believe that these new personnel, along with the leadership of the Board, will be able to embrace these challenges in a way that will better protect and serve the community as we continue to develop and grow.

We remain dedicated to planning for the future while caring for the needs of today.

## A message from the Board

Many of you are aware that Tom Phelps is retiring as Chief of Philomath Fire & Rescue. The District's Board of Directors knows that the quality of the leadership, responders, and administrators that work in paid and volunteer roles are key to providing the emergency response service you expect. That's why it is our top priority to recruit the best Chief possible to lead the District's staff and activities.

Our first step when Chief Phelps announced his retirement was to express regret at his departure. We have a lot going on in the District. With grant funding, we are retrofitting the main station to ensure it

withstands a major earthquake. We are also evaluating options for new funding to maintain, upgrade, and replace facilities, equipment, and the array of apparatus used for response. The Chief also has been busy recruiting new staff to replace some of the seasoned firefighters, medical responders, and administrative staff that recently retired or took different positions.

The Board has contracted a recruitment firm for help in managing the search for a new Chief, a typical step for Districts like ours. We received input from the community, the volunteers, and the staff about what Philomath needs in our next

Chief. We opened the recruitment for applications in mid October, will screen candidates in November, and should start interviewing in December. There will be additional opportunities for community involvement in the recruitment process when we have finalists identified in early January. We hope to have a new Chief working in the District early in 2016. In the meantime, we are working diligently to keep you safe and sound, which after all, is what Philomath Fire and Rescue does best.

**- Board of Directors of Philomath  
Fire and Rescue**

## Philomath Fire and Rescue

1035 Main Street

P.O. Box 247

Philomath, OR 97370

Phone: 541-929-3002

Visit our website: [www.philomathfire.com](http://www.philomathfire.com)  
and like us on facebook!

The preservation of property through the  
extinguishment and prevention of fires.

The protection and care of human life through  
education and treatment.

The development of character through  
commitment and teamwork.

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U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
EDDM RETAIL

Local  
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## Preparing for Winter Weather

While we have been enjoying a long fall season, winter is coming. Here are some safety tips to prepare for the winter months:

### Clean Your Chimney

Keeping chimneys clean is a key step in preventing chimney fires. Cleaning your chimney or flue can remove soot, blockages and built-up creosote from your chimney liner, firebox, smoke chamber, and damper. Creosote is a highly flammable substance that builds up inside your chimney or liner as a result of burning wood. It takes only a small accumulation of creosote glazing to create the potential for a chimney fire. How often you need to clean your chimney depends a great deal on how much you use it. The kinds of fires you build and the type of wood you use also govern frequency. As a rule of thumb, it's a good idea to have chimneys cleaned at least once a year, usually before cold weather sets in. Scheduling a fall cleaning will also clear out anything that might have fallen into the chimney during the summer. PF&R loans out chimney brushes to citizens who live in our District, for all those do-it-yourselfers. Even with the diligence of the community, PF&R responds to 3-5 flue fires each year. If you haven't yet cleaned your flue, this weekend may be a good time to do it!

### Winter Driving

The number one safety rule is: Slow...Down. Particularly do so in foggy or icy conditions, or when there are a lot of leaves/needles on wet pavement. Allow yourself plenty of time in your travel plans.

### Christmas Tree Care

With this information, you will be able to enjoy your tree much longer and reduce the chance of a tree fire:

**Start with a fresh tree.** A Charlie-Brown-Christmas tree just won't do. To see if a tree passes muster, run your hand over its branches. If a lot of needles come off in your hand, it isn't fresh enough. Fortunately for us in Oregon, we get really fresh trees. Felling your own will generally guarantee freshness (although you should still do the hand test—we have had a couple of dry years).

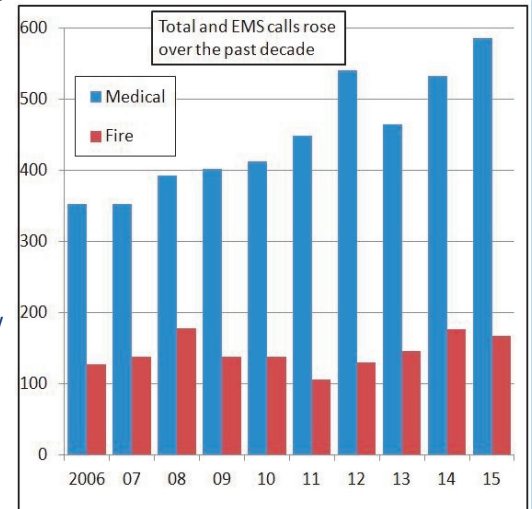
**Hydrate your tree.** After you make a fresh cut at the bottom of the trunk, put the tree in water, and water it daily. A dry tree goes up in flames more easily than a watered one. Keep your tree away from heat sources that can dry out your tree like heater vents, radiators, or fire places. And make sure it doesn't block escape routes. Pitch the tree when it reaches old age. Even if you water them, trees usually last a **maximum of four** weeks.

**Be Safe This Winter!**



## Responding to Change

In the 1970s, Philomath Fire & Rescue responded to about 70 emergency calls per year. Times have changed! In the past ten years, calls for emergency medical services (EMS) have risen dramatically, while fire calls have remained steady. How has PF&R responded? All career staff, and 90% of volunteers, have EMS licenses and can respond to medical emergencies. Duty officers, resident volunteers (who live at the station), and "home responder" volunteers respond quickly to after-hours calls. We also have "EMS volunteers"—volunteers whose entire duty is to provide EMS staffing. To meet the challenge of increased call volume, PF&R is considering new staffing models that will get crews out the door even quicker than they do now, while maintaining our robust response to both fire and medical emergencies.



## EMT Classes Starting Soon!

Philomath Fire & Rescue relies on their medical staff and could always use more. If you've ever thought about becoming an emergency responder or how you can serve your community, come talk to us today! PF&R will reimburse for EMS classes for current volunteers.

This class is an intense and rewarding experience and will require a strong commitment by the participants.

**Dates:** Jan 11th—March 12th

**Registration Deadline:** Dec 7th

Information on requirements and registration online at: [blogs.lanec.edu/ems/corvallis](http://blogs.lanec.edu/ems/corvallis)



**Lane Community College EMS Program**

Marleena Pearson

Phone: 541-463-5619

Email: [pearsonm@lanec.edu](mailto:pearsonm@lanec.edu)

Website: <https://blogs.lanec.edu/ems/>