



Hot off the Press

Volume 1, Issue 1

Summer 2015

Community Reminders:

Backyard Burn Ban is in effect in Benton County from **June 16th through September 30th.**

If you have questions about recreational fires in your area, please contact Philomath Fire and Rescue at 541-929-3002 or ODF at 541-929-3266.

Upcoming Events:

- School starts August 31st. Keep your eyes open for little ones on their way to and from school.
- PF&R Volunteer Academy starts the end of September, so get your applications in by September 15th!
- Football season is right around the corner

Go Warriors!

- National Fire Prevention Week is October 4th— 10th, stop by the Fire Station for our Open House!

A message from the Fire Chief

In my 8 years as the Fire Chief in Philomath, I've learned a lot. I've learned that motivated people will step up in ways you didn't predict. I've learned that change happens, whether we want it or not. And I've learned that the needs of the community have changed since I started my fire service career here in 1977.

In talking with members of the community, it's clear that our approach to safety and code enforcement was not always a good fit for Philomath. Our approach became less about education and partnership, and more about enforcing the strict letter of the law. While we continue to believe that the Oregon Fire Code is a beneficial safety standard for the community, we recognize its application must be tempered by the uniqueness of each situation.

In response to the needs of the community, we have decided to no longer employ a Fire Marshal on staff. We intend to focus, instead, on education and outreach as the

primary means of working with our partners in the community. To do this we have recently hired Rich Saalsaa as our new Fire & Life Safety Lieutenant. Among other things, Rich's position will embody the responsibilities of EMS Officer, providing community training in First Aid and CPR, and will coordinate training for staff and volunteers to ensure that our own people are trained and equipped to provide the level of care that the residents of the Philomath community deserve. Rich will also be responsible for working with businesses and organizations to make sure they understand both the importance and applications of Fire Code.

In the last several months, Philomath Fire & Rescue has had to adjust to transitions of three of our seven paid staff, most recently, the retirement of Marcia Gilson. We've decided to use this time of change to rededicate ourselves to the services we provide to the community,



to our public safety partners and to our own personnel. In addition, the Board of Directors adopted a new Master Plan. This plan was developed with community input and we believe it provides the best opportunity for our mutual and continued success. If you are interested, details of the plan are available on our website, www.philomathfire.com.

Philomath Fire & Rescue will continue to meet the changing needs of the community through the actions of our dedicated and motivated personnel.

Changes in the air

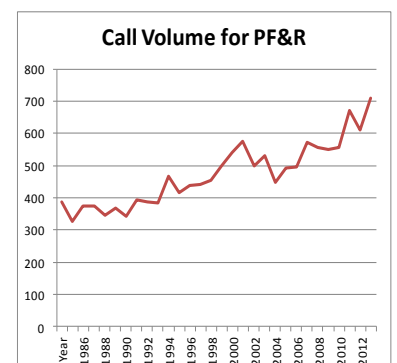
In addition to the changing faces of the Philomath Fire and Rescue staff, you may notice some changes to the building, too. Station 201, Philomath Fire & Rescue's main station, located at 1035 Main Street, was built in 1976 and was designed to house just one firefighter at that time, who responded to about 70 calls per year. Almost 40 years later, it is now home to 7 full-time paid staff, 3 resident volunteers, and over 40 community volunteers. Early in 2016 construction will begin for a seismic retrofit, to improve our building's resili-

ence to seismic events.

While evaluating the building for the seismic upgrade, Chief Phelps noted that the condition of the building came under scrutiny, inadequate dorm and office space, as well as the presence of asbestos tile, have become key concerns.

"We've done what we can to make the best use of our building, but we recognize that there is room to improve." Chief Phelps also said that the Fire District Board is looking at ways to address the needs of

the station and the growing community. "We respond to more calls now than we ever have before and want to provide the level of service the people have come to expect."



Philomath Fire and Rescue

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Visit our website: 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.

PRSR STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM RETAIL

Local
Postal Customer

Time well spent—Become part of our Team

When you think of your local fire department, maybe you think of those risqué firefighter calendars with everyone in suspenders and oil, gripping rescue equipment ever so seductively. Maybe you think of smoke-filled houses and men and women, clad in fire protective outfits, obscured behind full-face masks. Or maybe you've had a close encounter and you remember them as your rescuer in your time of need. Did you realize that these day-to-day heroes live among you?

Philomath Fire and Rescue, established in 1930 as a volunteer department, still relies heavily upon the support and involvement of community volunteers. In addition to the 6 career staff, over 40 local citizens, like Levi Schell and Rich Saalsaa, donate a few hours each month to protect their community.

Rich Saalsaa has been a member of the Philomath Volunteer Association since September of 2014 "I joined Philomath Fire & Rescue to make a difference in my community ...to work with an extraordinary team is why I decided to freely give

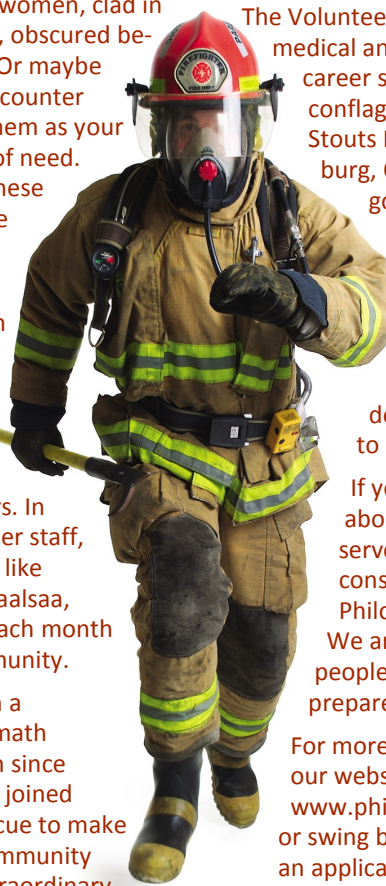
my time. I don't know of any other organization that has the unique qualities of being a volunteer firefighter. It's the people who make *the* difference." Rich recently accepted the position as Fire & Life Safety Lieutenant.

The Volunteer Firefighters respond to medical and fire calls alongside the career staff, and they report to conflagrations like the recent Stouts Fire outside of Roseburg, Oregon. Levi Schell was gone for 6 days helping with the Stouts Fire, "I learned a lot. By day 4, though, I was ready to come home." He, and other volunteers like him, made the decision to do all they can to protect their neighbors.

If you've ever wondered about how you can help serve your local community, consider volunteering with Philomath Fire and Rescue. We are always looking for people who are prepared to be prepared!

For more information, check out our website, www.philomathfire.com or swing by the station to pick up an application.

Volunteer Today!



Backyard Burn or Recreational Burn?

Do you have downed branches, yard debris and clippings you're burning to get rid of? Philomath Fire, with guidance from the DEQ, has two designated seasons for our District members to burn their backyard debris. These dates typically run **mid-October to mid-December** and again from **mid-March to mid-June**. During burn season we update the DEQ advisory daily; you can call 541-929-5903 for times burning is allowed.

Outside of burning season, another burning option is a Recreational Burn Waiver, this is strictly for small, backyard campfires, cooking fires, or to meet the needs of ceremonial fires. We offer this waiver in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Forestry. This is NOT a waiver to burn your yard debris! We invite you to visit our website, www.philomathfire.com, and click on the Fire Prevention link. Here you will find the expected standards that you will agree to abide by before starting any fires. We collect your email on the form only to contact you in the event of high fire danger and/or extreme weather. Please remember, a waiver does not constitute a right to burn anything and everything at all times. If we make contact with you due to a complaint of smoke, you may be asked to extinguish your recreational fire. Also, it's not a bad idea to get a waiver for pit fires for cooking. Lastly, a site visit will be needed for any large "Bon fires" you may plan.

If you have any questions about any type of burning, please contact us at the station via the website, in person, or at 541-929-3002.