



Foothills Fire and Rescue

THE FIREFLY



A Publication for the Community by Foothills Fire and Rescue

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Volunteer Advantage! Career vs. Volunteer

By Ed Daniels

Many times volunteer firefighters joke that the residents of our District don't even realize that we are volunteers. Actually, it's true, and we help keep it that way! We train and try to act like professionals. We don't want you to be able to tell the difference between your volunteer professionals, and the career professionals of our neighboring West Metro, Denver or Aurora Fire Departments. Did you know that there are about 22,600 fire departments in the United States, and that about 21,000 (93%) are staffed by volunteers? There are more than one million volunteer firefighters in the United States, and only about 185,000 career firefighters (16%). All Foothills responders are volunteers. Genesee Fire Rescue is all volunteer except for one full and one part-time responders. Highland Rescue is all volunteer except for 10 hours of paid paramedic coverage each weekday.

Is a volunteer response staff good or bad? Recently, a Denver Post article quoted arguments for both sides. If you read it, you probably wonder, "Is a volunteer force good enough for our District?" That is a subject that your Fire Department and Fire Protection District are responsible for evaluating on an ongoing basis. I will point out a few of the advantages of volunteers. One thing is sure; a fully staffed career department here in the foothills would be expensive. The Foothills Fire Protection District has a mill levy of 8.000. Genesee's mill levy is 5.175. Highland is a non-taxing nonprofit organization that is funded by ambulance billing, donations and contributions from the Genesee and Foothills Fire Districts. They have no taxing authority.

How much would career emergency responders cost our District? No one has ever done a comprehensive analysis, but West Metro's mill levy is 11.382, and their district includes quite a bit of commercial property and high-density residential housing. It is likely that a fully paid staff in the Foothills District, given our low density and entirely residential development, would require a mill levy quite a bit higher than West Metro's. Our volunteer staff of responders are equipped with a variety of skills, experiences and backgrounds. We have an Open Space Ranger, two CPAs, two water district operators, two social work counselors, several nurses and medical personnel, a physician, two machine tool business owners, a company president, an engineer, a retail store owner, an airline executive, a windshield repair business owner, a brokerage firm executive, several people working on becoming career firefighters and EMS professionals, a career firefighter, several retirees, a UPS driver, many moms and dads, and many students. All of these diverse skills and backgrounds go into making your volunteer fire department a very responsive and flexible organization able to respond to many different kinds of emergency situations. Your volunteers are able to relate on a personal level with your real-life worries and concerns. Career fire departments are skilled, trained and available, but no career department could boast such a diverse response force with such varied life experiences. The good news is that all of these neighbors are willing to devote so much time and energy to respond, at a moment's notice, to your emergency. No one knows whether the Foothills Fire Protection District will eventually move to a fully-paid career department, remain entirely volunteer, or migrate to a mix of paid and volunteer responders. For now, let's recognize our current volunteers for their dedication, experience and for their diversity.

Ed Daniels

Fire Chief
Foothills Fire and Rescue

Remember...

Now is the time to clean and inspect your chimneys. It's the best preventative way to deter a chimney fire from starting!

Y2K Compliant

January 1, 2000 will be the beginning of a new millennium. Well, actually the millennium doesn't start until 2001, but January 1st will be a really big day anyway. What will you be doing? Are you headed to greet the New Year in Fiji, throwing a really big party here in Colorado, or just planning to snuggle up at home with your spouse and/or dog? Guess what your volunteer fire department will be doing? Well be standing by in case you need us.

Some expect a near disaster as the year rolls from 99 to 00. That's because many computer systems and embedded computer chips were never designed with that year change in mind. Some engines won't work. Some medical devices won't work. Some problems will occur. How many of these problems will arise is unknown. However, companies and government agencies have been spending billions of dollars and thousands of staff hours to assess and minimize these "Y2K" problems.

Foothills Fire & Rescue and the Foothills Fire Protection District have also been identifying any potential problems and planning for the year 2000. We have checked our trucks for Y2K problems, and checked our medical equipment. We have also collected information from our vendors and suppliers, Jefferson County, the State of Colorado and the Federal Government. As best we can tell, the impact of Y2K should be no worse than a Colorado snowstorm. However, it is our job to be prepared for the worst, so we are working with the County to make contingency plans in case of utility outages and fuel, water and food shortages as well as civil unrest. We suggest that you, too, take some reasonable precautions to prepare for some mild inconveniences. For example, we suggest you prepare a 72-Hour family emergency kit with drinking water, food and first aid supplies. Also, if anyone in your family requires regular medication, make sure you have an adequate supply on hand. Other tips can be obtained from the 72-Hour Family Emergency Kit pamphlet which is available from the Colorado Office of Emergency Management (303)273-1622 or from the Foothills Fire & Rescue office at (303)526-0707. Also, there are many web sites dealing with Y2K issues, including the Federal Governments <http://www.fema.gov/y2k/>.

One of your Fire Departments biggest fears is that some citizens will panic and take irrational action. When your neighbor knocks on your door to share a little New Years cheer, we don't want you to blast him with your 12 gauge because you just heard on TV that all of Denver is "heading for the hills" to avoid Y2K problems. Lets be careful, and approach this exciting event with joy, enthusiasm and a reasonable dose of problem prevention.

If you have any questions or suggestions about how your Fire Department should be preparing for the big date change, just give us a call or drop me an e-mail at danielse@rmii.com.

First 500 Free

By Joan Schwarz

At a recent meeting, the Foothills Wildfire Preparedness Committee discussed the importance of address signs which should be plainly visible and legible from the street or road fronting the property. Numbers should contrast with their background. The committee decided to make house address signs available at no cost to the first 500 homeowners that request them.

Address signs are of the utmost importance for firefighters and emergency crews to be able to respond promptly. The style of sign being made available can be seen by driving through the Mount Vernon Country Club area.

The signs are 12" X 6" and have black numbers on a white background. The signs reflect light at night making it easier to see.

If you have an interest in receiving a sign, please call Joan Schwarz with your address at 303-526-0017.

Special Thanks to the following for the time and effort to produce this edition of the Foothills Fire and Rescue Firefly newsletter:

K.E.M. Printing at 16250 S. Golden Road in Golden (303) 277-1127 for donating their time and printing.

"The Firefly" is distributed to every address in the Foothills Fire Protection District. Sometimes issues are mistakenly delivered to addresses in the Genesee, Golden, Evergreen or West Metro fire districts. If you are not located in the Foothills District, we apologize and encourage you to contact your fire district if you need further information on any of the topics presented in this issue.

Give Your Life New Meaning



Join a progressive, professional, organization that provides training and skills development in all aspects of emergency services to your community. Join our team as a volunteer Firefighter, EMT or Paramedic. No previous firefighting or emergency service experience necessary. You need only the willingness to learn.

Make A Difference In Your Community.

Contact: us today!

Foothills Fire & Rescue
67 South Lookout Mountain Rd.
Golden, Colorado 80401
303-526-0707
foothillsfirerescue@juno.com



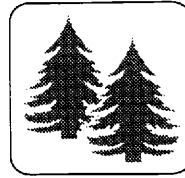
New Residents

The Foothills Wildfire Preparedness Committee (FWPC) would like to welcome new residents to the Foothills Fire District. Since the inception of the FWPC they have endeavored to deliver a Wildfire Packet to new residents. The packet contains information about defensible space and suggestions for landscaping as well as other important firewise suggestions. The FWPC meets monthly on the third Thursday at 7:30 PM at the Foothills Fire Station on Lookout Mountain Road. To receive a packet or for further information, contact the FWPC Communications Chairperson, Joan Schwarz at 526-0017.

Chipper Shredder Day

By Joan Schwarz

The Chipper Shredder Program is a property clean-up project sponsored by Jefferson County and participating fire districts, to encourage residents in the county's mountain areas to clean up and reduce fuels on their private property.



The slash was brought to the slash site (Ralston School), shredded and removed from the school by Jefferson County. This project is an alternative to the Rooney Road Site, Ralston being more convenient. Over 80 pickup trucks loads bring in slash and we serviced 510 acres. Many area residents that used the site on July 10 expressed appreciation to the Wildfire Preparedness Committee which made all the arrangement for the day's event. The Committee in turn would like to thank Floyd Ditmore, Dick Kiefer and Steve Arndt for their help trucking to various sites to assist people who had no means of getting their slash to Ralston. The committee also thanks two boys, Jason and Scott, who live with the Kunters. Thanks to the Custers, for the use of their truck. Last but not least thanks to Jennifer Schwarz who volunteered much of her time.

Join the Auxiliary!

By Nancy Burke



You can help the Foothills Fire and Rescue *without becoming a firefighter*. Sure we need new firefighters too, but for those of you who would like to volunteer in another way, now you can!

The Auxiliary is designed to assist the volunteer fire fighters of the Foothills Fire and Rescue before, during and after calls, through a variety of ways from babysitting for children of firefighters (during a call), supplying refreshments including baking cookies or making a pot of chili to leave at the fire house after a lengthy day of calls, organizing social events and fund-raisers, and assisting with other related duties as they arise.

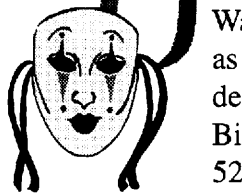
If you are interested in helping the Foothills Fire and Rescue volunteer team in this unique way, give us a call! Contact Joanna Braun of Idledale at (303) 697-0950 or Nancy Burke of Golden at (303) 526-7590.

It's a great way to get involved have some fun, and show your support of the Foothills Fire and Rescue Team.

2nd Annual Costume Ball and Silent Auction

to benefit the Highland Rescue Team

The Pines in Genesee October 29, 1999



Watch for your invitation in the mail and RSVP as soon as possible as space is limited. All donations are tax deductible! For more information on this event contact Bill Easterling at the Highland Rescue Office at (303) 526-9571 or Joan Solano at (303) 526-9343.

Welcome New Auxiliary Members

By Joanna Braun

The Foothills Fire and Rescue Auxiliary had their first organizational meeting on July 22, 1999.

Joanna Braun, Idledale was elected President, **Nancy Burke**, Shingle Creek Rd. (Golden) was elected Vice President, and **Marilyn Edwards** of Lookout Mountain was elected Treasurer. Others in attendance included Julie Weihapt, Carole Lomond, Barb Homerding, Becky Fuller, and Liz Golderey.

The position of secretary remains open. If you are interested in being a part of the auxiliary, please refer to the article on page 3 of this newsletter.

Call to Action

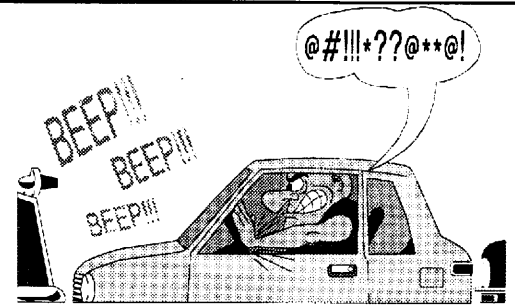
The auxiliary responded to its first call of action during last Friday's fatal accident on I-70 followed by the wildland fire between Genesee and Chief Hosa. The auxiliary provided substantial refreshments for those volunteers who had been working for several hours that day.

Target of Rage

By Ken Spencer

It's amazing how often we put our lives in the hands of strangers. It happens every day when we take to I-70 in our car either driving to or from work. The level of trust, almost unconscious at times, can be scary when we realize that a driver in an opposing lane can lose control for a split second. and cause a head on collision. This often results in physical contact with the front end of our vehicle at a closing speed in excess of 130 m.p.h. At more than 2 miles per minute a split second response would be required to avoid the inevitable.

Road rage has been increasing at an alarming rate. The Colorado State Patrol, over a 6 month period in 1998, responded to 19,915 calls involving aggressive drivers. Unsafe lane changes were the number one violation and 1,823 were determined to have been the direct cause of an accident. Although we lack statistics on the number of



accidents caused by aggressive drivers within our Fire District, we can tell you that for the first six months of this year, we have responded to a substantial increase over last year's automobile accidents on I-70.

The behavior of an aggressive driver is often observed by a number of actions. They're seen driving well above the posted speed limit, following too close, weaving in and out of traffic, passing on the shoulder, flashing lights, honking horns, yelling and using unprofessional finger gestures. When confronted by an aggressive driver, the Colorado State Patrol recommends that you ignore the driver, be courteous and patient, and if you have a cell phone, dial *CSP and report the incident.

Foothills Fire and Rescue
67 South Lookout Mountain Road
Golden, CO 80401

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