



Foothills Fire Protection District

THE FIREFLY

A Publication for the Community by Foothills Fire & Rescue

Winter 2008

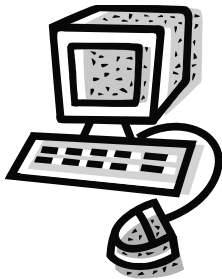
What's Going On In

Your Fire District?

Find out more than what you learn from this quarterly newsletter. Residents are WELCOME every month at Foothills Fire Protection District Board Meetings. They are held at the Mt. Vernon Country Club every 3rd Tuesday. Here are the upcoming sessions for this quarter:

- Tuesday, 01/15 at 6:30pm
- Tuesday, 02/19 at 6:30pm
- Tuesday, 03/18 at 6:30pm

ATTENTION RESIDENTS!



Do you run a home? If you business out of your do, Foothills Fire Protection District (FFPD) would like to hear from you. At FFPD we are always striving to improve the safety of our residents. FFPD has constructed a "Home Business Inspection List" to help keep your home safe. So please contact us so we can get you on our list.

- By Paul M. Berens, Fire Inspector

Introducing the 2008 Fire Chief...

My name is Brian Zoril. I am a life long resident of Lookout Mountain and a third generation firefighter. My father and grandfather both served on the Lookout Mountain Fire Department. I began my fire career with Foothills Fire in August of 1997. It is amazing how quickly ten years passes.

As we move in to 2008, there is much work to be done. We have secured a limited gaming grant for a new rescue truck. We are nearing the completion of the Lookout Station remodel, and have the opportunity to expand our facilities at Rainbow Hills.

It is an honor to represent Foothills Fire and Rescue. We have an amazing group of professionals that are dedicated to protecting and helping our community. Please feel free to stop in and visit, or contact me with questions or concerns regarding the Fire Department.

Sincerely, Brian J. Zoril, Fire Chief

2007 MEMBER AWARDS

Congratulations to Paramedic Firefighter Don Koogle. He was awarded firefighter of the year for 2007. He is entering his fifth year as a volunteer with Foothills Fire & Rescue. Don has joined the officer team as the Medical and Hazardous Materials Lieutenant for 2008. Way to go Don!!

Congratulations to Paramedic Firefighter Noah Harkless. He was awarded officer of the year for 2007. He showed outstanding leadership, mentoring and participation as an officer. He is entering his fifth year as a volunteer with Foothills Fire & Rescue. Noah is an officer again this year. He is the Training Captain for 2008. Way to go Noah!!

Winter Driving is Here. Are you Prepared & Being Safe??

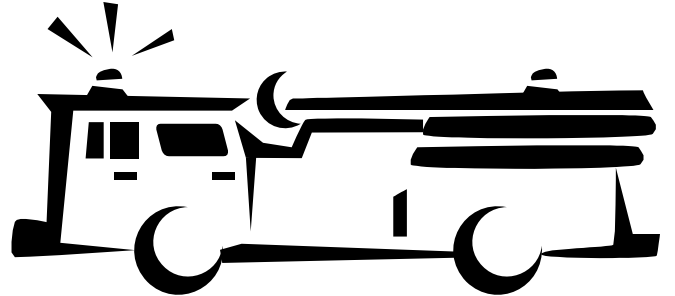
Regular vehicle maintenance is important. If you haven't already, be sure your vehicle is ready for winter driving. Here are few reminders: switch to winter wiper fluid, check the condition of your wiper blades, make sure your heater and defroster work, have a mechanic check the battery, cooling system and other fluid levels, and lastly inspect tires and replace with snow tires if needed. Tire tread which provides traction is SO important during winter driving conditions!

Remember to give yourself extra room between you and the car in front of you. Leave early to get to your destinations on time. In winter driving conditions it will take longer and you don't want to rush in bad weather. Please reduce your speed. It really is okay and recommended to go less than the speed limit in bad weather. Make sure you keep enough gas in your vehicle in case you end up stuck in traffic, slide off the road, or become involved in a crash. Lastly, know how your vehicle operates in snow and ice. Take it to an empty parking lot and practice slipping, sliding and stopping in the snow and ice.

Also, for the safety of emergency personnel on the highway during winter crashes, please, please move a lane over and slow down. Too often emergency personnel are injured because of impatient drivers. Know that Foothills Fire & Rescue works as quickly as possible to get the highway re-opened as soon as it safe to do so.

- By Jen Sliemers, Personnel Lieutenant

Your Role When Approaching Emergency Vehicles



Lights and sirens can be confusing. Here are some reminders of what to do when you approach, are being approached by an emergency vehicle, or you are nearing an emergency scene on the road. No matter the situation, please SLOW DOWN and if possible move over a lane. You never know when an emergency vehicle needs to suddenly stop, switch lanes, or use an emergency turnaround to go the other direction on the highway. You should see our lights and sirens as a sign that danger is ahead! If an emergency vehicle is not on scene yet, you have the chance of running into the crash yourself if you try to pass the emergency vehicle. Please hang back and do not pass emergency vehicles.

Practice being a good driver by scanning ahead when you drive your vehicle. Often times you will have plenty of time to SLOW DOWN and move over a lane if you scan ahead about a 1/4 mile. Reduce your distractions. Yes, this means get off that cell phone, turn down your radio and pay extra attention as soon as you see emergency lights and hear sirens. Don't become involved in a secondary crash. Keep your eyes on the road instead of "rubber necking" as you drive by the scene. Drive for road conditions by SLOWING DOWN. Thanks!!!

Can you easily see the hydrant or cistern closest to your home?

This is a friendly reminder that it is a community responsibility to keep hydrants clear. Clear from vehicles, clear from overgrown vegetation and yes, even clear from snow. Did you know that most fire departments do not clear hydrants unless a resident is elderly or physically unable to do the work? So, get to know your neighbors throughout the winter months by working together on clearing hydrants or cistern access on or near your property. Foothills Fire & Rescue is willing to assist those residents who need help in clearing hydrants. Also, anytime during the year, if you see a damaged hydrant please contact us right away. Call the office at 303-526-0707.



The Time It Takes

A neighbor recently asked me how much time it takes to be a volunteer firefighter. She noticed that we (my husband and I) are frequently gone for fire department trainings, emergency calls and fire department meetings. She thanked me for all that we do and encouraged me to write an article in the "Firefly" to share with others the amount of time it takes to be a volunteer. I hesitated in writing this article because I don't want to scare away potential applicants with how much time is involved in being a volunteer firefighter. On the other hand, I think it is important for residents to know more about the fire department that provides them with emergency services.

"Firefighting requires a high sense of personal dedication, a genuine desire to help people, and a high level of skill" (Essentials of Firefighting, IV Ed., Pg. 5). Both volunteer and career firefighters share this desire and passion for what they do. Unfortunately, there tends to be a gross misconception that volunteers are less important and less prepared than career firefighters. Foothills Fire & Rescue firefighters **are** professionals who serve and protect the community, we just don't get paid to do it.

Since we live in a unique environment known as urban interface, we have to be ready for anything. We train in a wide variety of areas. These areas include, but are not limited to: rope rescue, hazardous materials, vehicle extrication, wildland fires, structure fires, medical emergencies, and highway crashes. In general, each firefighter with Foothills Fire & Rescue volunteers more than 200 hours a year. They participate in a *minimum* of about 55 hours of skills training, spend about 24-48 hours in department meetings, and put in 12 plus hours of station and apparatus upkeep. As a department, we respond on 500-600 emergency calls on an annual basis and these calls can last anywhere from 10 minutes to 4 hours at a time. Many of our members go above and beyond the *minimum* training requirements, putting in 80-100 hours. In addition, hours are volunteered at community events throughout the year.

So, what do these training hours consist of? All active firefighters with Foothills Fire & Rescue work under the national standards set by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association). There is a certain number of continuing education hours required in order to maintain Fire I Certification. This includes a minimum of 36 training hours each year. Some of our members have gone on to earn their Fire II Certification, the next level of training. In addition to obtaining and maintaining Fire I, firefighters must also become Hazardous Material Operations certified. The continuing education for this involves 18 hours every three years. Firefighters must also earn their Wildland Firefighting Certification called S130/190.

Once this certification is obtained, there is an eight-hour refresher course each year. In addition, several of our members have participated in advanced wildland courses.

The Fire I, Haz Mat Ops and Wildland certifications are achieved by going through a five-month Fire Academy. This academy is an intense training program that prepares individuals to become firefighters. Foothills Fire & Rescue provides this academy jointly with Genesee Fire and sometimes Evergreen Fire. All firefighters must pass both written and practical exams. Their certification is then placed on file with the Colorado Division of Fire Safety.

In addition to the already mentioned training areas, Foothills Fire & Rescue has medical training requirements. All active members must at least be certified at the First Responder level. This level requires 36 hours of continuing education every three years. A majority of members have gone on to advanced medical training to become an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician). EMT Basics and Intermediates require 36 hours of continuing education every three years. We do have a few Paramedics who participate in 45 hours of training every three years, with an increase to 50 hours starting in July 2008.

I'm also proud to share that Foothills Fire & Rescue has developed a solid training for highway safety and severe weather situations. Our training has been regionally taught to neighboring fire districts, CDOT (Colorado Dept. of Transportation), Jefferson County Sheriff's Office and the Colorado State Patrol, to name a few. This safety course was created in order to protect emergency responders rendering aid to patients, block for law enforcement personnel and protect tow truck operations on the highway. A special section is included to provide extra training during severe weather incidents making an already dangerous situation even more dangerous.

Sadly, the national trend shows a drop in volunteer firefighters. Foothills Fire & Rescue has lost volunteers over the years. Some reasons include retirement, members being hired elsewhere, and members not being able to devote the time anymore. This can also make it difficult to recruit new members. In fact, little by little, the national standards continue to increase meaning more of a time commitment. This being said, I'd like to thank my fellow volunteer firefighters for their time and energy. I'm proud to serve with you as we do our best to protect the residents in the Foothills Fire Protection District. And just as important, I thank the residents who support and appreciate our efforts.

- By Jen Sliemers, Personnel Lieutenant

Some Brief History

Behind I-70

Many residents wonder how Foothills Fire and Rescue gained responsibility for the I-70 corridor. The responsibility to cover I-70 is hardly a new development. The following will help provide some historical perspective on our coverage of I-70.

The former Idledale Fire Protection District initially assumed responsibility for the section of I-70 from present day milepost 259 (Morrison Road/ County Road 93) to milepost 251 (Evergreen Parkway/ CO-74) as it physically fell within their long established district boundaries. Idledale provided service for I-70 from 1970 until 1985. Beginning in 1985, the former Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District began responding jointly with Idledale Fire Department. In August of 1988, an agreement was signed that gave Lookout Mountain Fire Department jurisdiction over I-70. Lookout Mountain Fire Department maintained responsibility for I-70 until 1997 when Idledale, Lookout Mountain and Mount Vernon Fire Departments merged to

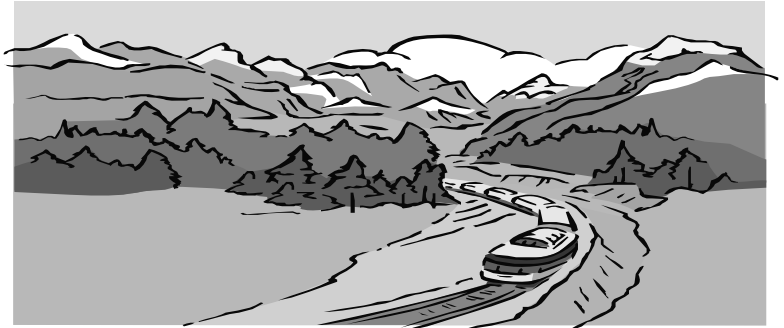
form the present day Foothills Fire and Rescue.

Today, we provide some of the highest quality emergency service available to those who travel I-70. We are well known for our abilities in vehicle extrication and stabilization and traffic hazard mitigation. The experience our members gain from I-70 responses helps to increase skill level, and allows us to be better prepared for all types of emergencies. That is something of which we can all be proud.

- By Brian Zoril, Chief

Sources:

Salcedo, Tracy. "Lookout Fire wins right to cover I-70." Canyon Courier [Evergreen] 14 Sep. 1988: 16-17



Special Thanks to K.E.M. Printing at 16250 S. Golden Road in Golden, (303) 277-1127 for donating their time and printing of this publication. "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 Fire Protection District, we apologize and encourage you to contact your local fire district for further information or needs on any of the topics presented in this issue.



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Mill Levy History for FFPD

Recently there has been some questions and concerns expressed about how the Foothills Fire Protection District raised it's Mill Levy assessment from 8.0 Mills to 9.196 Mills. This document serves to help explain how the raise came about, the legal basis for the raise, and how the figure of 9.196 mills was reached.

For those of you who were around during the vote in 1996 to consolidate the three predecessor districts into the current Foothills Fire Protection District, you may recall that part of the verbiage of the ballot question #1 stated:

“...shall the consolidated District incur a multiple-fiscal year financial obligation to impose a general property tax levy of not more nor less than 8 mills (which mill levy shall be adjusted in the event there is a change in the statutory methodology or percentage used in calculating assessed valuation of real or personal property and may be reduced below 8 mills in 2008 and thereafter)...”

The purpose of the language was to offset the detrimental effects that the Colorado Gallagher Amendment was having statewide on residential heavy (and hence, commercial property poor) Special Districts trying to continue to provide the same level of service.

The Gallagher Amendment was passed in 1982 to try and shift the burden for financing government projects away from the residential property owner to other taxpaying property classes. Since 1982 the Residential Assessment Valuation Rate has dropped from 30% to the current assessment rate of 7.96%. The adjustments (evaluated every two years for adjustment) assume a fixed assessment rate of 29% for all tax-paying property types other than residential and are adjusted to maintain a fixed proportion of 45% of taxes statewide being paid from residential property and the remaining 55% of all taxes statewide being paid by other property tax classes. The problem in small residential heavy districts (such as Foothills) is that they have so few “other” property classes which would offset this adjustment that any reduction in the residential assessment rate amounts to a reduction in the taxes generated to pay for the operations of the District. Foothills certainly falls into this category, with less than 0.8% (0.0079) of it's total area consisting of taxable property other than residential property it had the potential of being catastrophically effected by a continuing trend towards lowering the residential assessment rate in Colorado. The verbiage in the consolidation ballot initiative and the consolidation order executed by the District Court was put in to ensure the District had the resources to both retire its General Obligation Bonds and to continue to provide a high level of service to the community it served. The intent to provide this flexibility was confirmed in 2004 by the District's Attorney with the Attorneys who drafted the original consolidation ballot question and consolidation order in 1996.

The Residential Assessment Rate has been re-evaluated 5 times since the 1996 consolidation election with the following results:

1996 (Baseline)	-	10.36% of Actual Market Value
1997-1998	-	9.74% of Actual Market Value
1999-2000	-	9.74% of Actual Market Value
2001-2002	-	9.15% of Actual Market Value
2003-2004	-	7.96% of Actual Market Value
2005-2006	-	7.96% of Actual Market Value

As you can see the rate has lowered three times during the ten years the District has been consolidated. Only once (in 2004) has the District actually adjusted the rate to offset this reduction in assessed valuation. The other two times (in 1998 and 2002) the District Board decided to forgo the adjustment of the Mill Levy to offset the loss of tax revenues due to a reduced residential assessment rate. The adjustment in 2004 was calculated to only offset the lost tax revenues which would be realized by the District due to the reduction in the Residential Assessed Valuation Rate (RAVR) being lowered from 9.15% to 7.96%. The calculation was performed by the District's Accountant to figure out how many tax dollars would have been generated for the District in 2004 if the RAVR had stayed at 9.15% and then to calculate how much of an adjustment was needed to the District's Mill Levy to obtain that same level of tax dollars. This is how the accountant reached the District's current Mill Levy level of 9.196 Mills.

The topic of Mill Levies, the Gallagher Amendment, and other tax laws here in the State of Colorado can, at times, be somewhat confusing. For a rather thorough examination of the impacts of the various tax amendments and laws please consult the State of Colorado's Department of Local Affairs website at: <http://www.dola.state.co.us/dlg>.

A particularly helpful publication to understand the intricacies of the State's Constitutional Amendments affecting taxes can be found at: http://www.dola.state.co.us/dlg/resources/docs/tabor_gallagher_mill_levies.pdf.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the District offices at (303) 526-0707 Ext 2# and we will do our best to answer them.

“Quarterly Call Summary”

By Rob Sontag, District Administrator

There is a significant event coming up in the District that residents should be especially apprised of and that is the start of our Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan (CWPP).

We will be starting our preparation of the Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan (CWPP) this winter. This document will help the District to identify where to focus wildfire preparedness and protection efforts (including future grant request) in the next few years. The process depends on community involvement and you will be seeing a mailing in the next few weeks announcing the meeting dates, times, and locations where we will be soliciting this much needed community input. This is a joint effort with nearly every fire department in the county developing these plans through a coordinated contract the Jefferson County Office of Emergency Management has let. If you have questions about the plan feel free to contact the District Offices. Stay tuned and watch for our announcements of the meetings...

Finally, in a continuing effort to let our constituents know a little more about the emergency services provided by the District we are providing a year 2007 round-up of the calls to which Foothills Fire & Rescue responded. We are also providing a summary of 2006 calls for comparison.

In the 2007 we ran 629 calls for service compared with 552 calls for service in 2006.

Our average response time for this half of the year was 6.99 minutes. Our average response time for 2006 was 7.34 minutes.

For 2006 the composition of the types of calls we ran were:

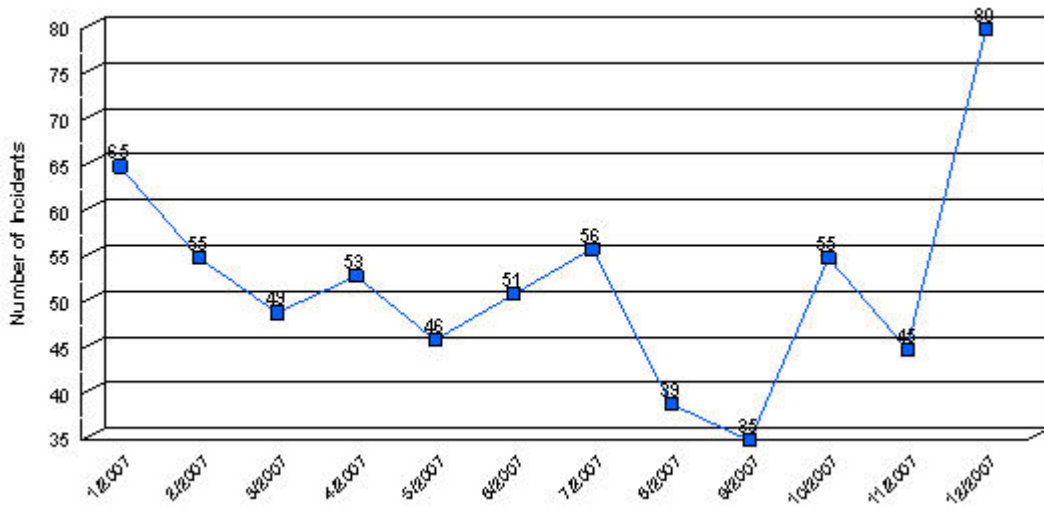
Type Of Incident	Total Of Incidents:	Percentage Value:
100 Series-Fire	36	6.52%
200 Series-Explosion	9	1.63%
300 Series-Rescue & EMS	271	49.09%
400 Series-Hazardous Conditions(No fire)	17	3.08%
500 Series-Service Call	20	3.62%
600 Series-Good Intent Call	177	32.07%
700 Series-False Alarm & False Call	21	3.80%
800 Series-Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	1	0.18%

Grand Total: 552

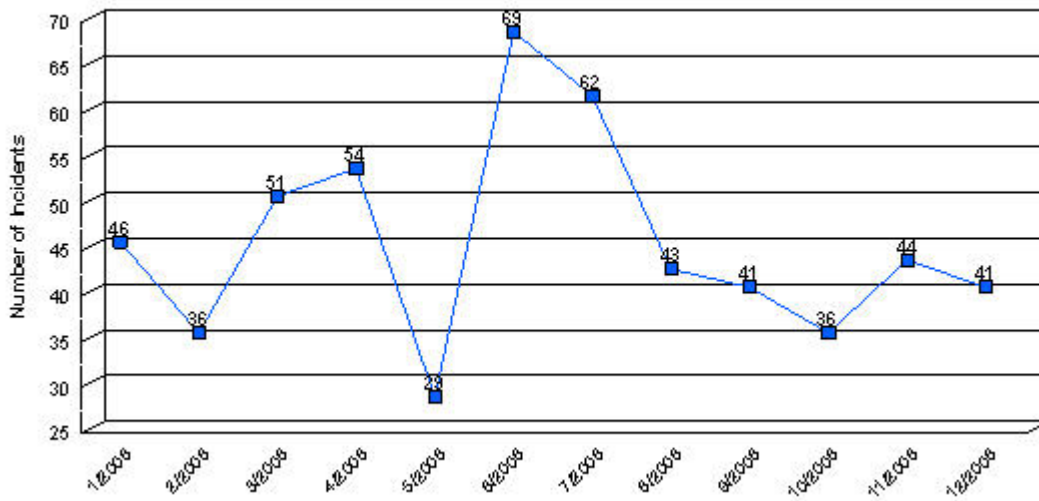
For 2007 the composition of the types of calls we ran were:

Incident Type	Total Incidents:
100 Fire, other	3
111 Building fire	2
131 Passenger vehicle fire	13
132 Road freight or transport vehicle fire	1
136 Self-propelled motor home or recreational vehicle	1
137 Camper or recreational vehicle (RV) fire	1
143 Grass fire	6
151 Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire	2
200 Overpressure rupture, explosion, overheat other	2
210 Overpressure rupture from steam, other	1
221 Overpressure rupture of air or gas pipe/pipeline	1
242 Blasting agent explosion (no fire)	1
251 Excessive heat, scorch burns with no ignition	9
300 Rescue, emergency medical call (EMS) call, other	16
311 Medical assist, assist EMS crew	76
321 EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	46
322 Vehicle accident with injuries	178
323 Motor vehicle/pedestrian accident (MV Ped)	2
331 Lock-in (if lock out , use 511)	1
341 Search for person on land	1
356 High angle rescue	2
360 Water & ice related rescue, other	1
381 Rescue or EMS standby	4
400 Hazardous condition, other	1
410 Flammable gas or liquid condition, other	1
411 Gasoline or other flammable liquid spill	1
412 Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	1
413 Oil or other combustible liquid spill	1
424 Carbon monoxide incident	1
441 Heat from short circuit (wiring), defective/worn	1
442 Overheated motor	1
444 Power line down	2
445 Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	1
500 Service Call, other	1
510 Person in distress, other	4
512 Ring or jewelry removal	1
520 Water problem, other	1
522 Water or steam leak	3
531 Smoke or odor removal	4
550 Public service assistance, other	2
551 Assist police or other governmental agency	6
553 Public service	1
561 Unauthorized burning	1
571 Cover assignment, standby, moveup	13
600 Good intent call, other	88
611 Dispatched & canceled en route	45
621 Wrong location	3
631 Authorized controlled burning	3
641 Vicinity alarm (incident in other location)	4
650 Steam, other gas mistaken for smoke, other	2
651 Smoke scare, odor of smoke	14
652 Steam, vapor, fog or dust thought to be smoke	3
653 Barbecue, tar kettle	1
661 EMS call, party transported by non-fire agency	3
710 Malicious, mischievous false call, other	1
733 Smoke detector activation due to malfunction	3
735 Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	3
740 Unintentional transmission of alarm, other	2
743 Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional	14
744 Detector activation, no fire - unintentional	1
745 Alarm system sounded, no fire - unintentional	11
800 Severe weather or natural disaster, other	8
814 Lightning strike (no fire)	2
Total Number of Incidents:	629

Broken down by month our call volume for the year looked like this:



And for comparison 2006 looked like this:



We hope this helps everyone have a little better understanding of what we do and what is expected of the volunteers and staff who help protect your homes and businesses. If you have questions about any of the above calls or statistics feel free to contact the District Offices and we will do our best to answer your questions.

