

Elsie Vinemaple Fire District

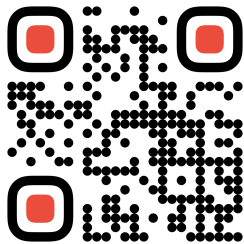
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SUMMER FIRE REPORT

More than 1.4 million acres have burned so far in Oregon this year, setting a new state record. And while recent rains have helped get them under control, we aren't out of danger yet. "We're definitely doing better than we were... but we're still in the middle of fire season," says National Weather Service meteorologist Hannah Chandler-Cooley. In Oregon, wildfire season generally lasts into October, and with sunnier skies returning, "We could revert back into higher fire danger," Chandler-Cooley warned.

Your Elsie firefighters successfully battled several local blazes this summer - most of them caused by illegal burns of debris and slash piles. "Debris burning is the leading reason for human-caused fires" says Justin Gibbs, Clatsop Co. Emergency Management Director. Neither burn barrel nor residential campfires are allowed when fire danger is high.



Elsie Fire on scene at the Music Road Fire in July

Q: How do I dispose of my yard debris during a burn ban?

A: Composting & chipping are a couple of options. Or, you can haul your yard debris to the recycling area at the Astoria dump. If you'd rather wait until it's safe to burn, be sure to cover your pile to keep it dry, and then burn after the ban is lifted.

Q: How long does the burn ban last?

A: The burn ban is generally lifted in fall after we have received enough rain to burn safely. Look for announcements on Elsie Fire's website and Facebook page, and on the reader boards in front of all 3 stations.

IMPROVEMENTS AT STATIONS 1 AND 3



Station 1, before and during cleaning



Station 1 after volunteers scrubbed it down, hauled away debris, and added planters.



MANY THANKS TO OUR AWESOME COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS FOR ALL THEIR HARD WORK!



Station 3 had been in disrepair for several years, with rats nesting inside in the apparatus and the insulation, and safety hazards throughout.



Volunteers, wearing masks and gloves, tore out all the rotted and destroyed portions of the inside, hauled away numerous truckloads of debris, scrubbed it inside and out, painted the door, and added a new sign and a flag.

LETTER FROM THE CHIEF



These last 6 months have been nothing short of amazing, exhausting, frustrating, and exhilarating. I am happy to have this opportunity to share some of the highlights of what's been happening here at your Elsie-Vinemaple Fire District.

In February, the Board of Directors authorized the hiring of an interim Fire Chief to oversee the district in the midst of chaos. Stepping into this position, I knew there would be extreme challenges in trying to move ahead, rebuild what was lost, and start restoring confidence among the district residents. First and foremost was the district's ability to continue responding. We were short on people.... very short. For the most part, only a couple of volunteers were responding to all the calls, in addition to doing everything else around the stations. And though we had 17 apparatus, only 8 were functioning, and only a few of those were stocked with the full complement of tools we use on fire scenes. I heard many complaints about me, volunteers, board members, stations, apparatus, and finances - but we were all determined to fix the problems and serve the District well.

As we dedicated time and energy to ensure we had functioning and stocked apparatus at both Stations 1 and 2, applications for new volunteers started coming in, and people were getting excited to be in the fire house! Volunteers from the community and beyond offered up their skill sets to help the district rebuild, repair apparatus, and tactically position ourselves to serve you at the highest level possible with the resources we have. Thanks to those volunteers, we repaired numerous pieces of equipment and apparatus very quickly, while still responding to all calls in a timely manner.

Right now, my priority is on continuing to build a response force that is knowledgeable, professional, well trained, and aggressive in their craft. We have 14 individuals on the roster, with varying levels of skills and certifications, and we ADDED 3 new volunteers in July! We have 7 members of the department currently enrolled in an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) course that will be complete in the coming weeks. We have 5 members starting a Firefighter 1 academy, 2 members completing Firefighter 2 certification, two members working through Instructor 1 training, and we're developing and rolling out a new driver/operator program to ensure that everyone who gets behind the wheel of an apparatus meets the certification standards we have set forth. *(continued on page 4)*

(Letter From the Chief, continued from page 3)

Currently, our apparatus is positioned between Station 1 and Station 2, to serve the vast majority of our community effectively. We are working hard to clean up and repair Station 3, with a priority on getting that station into service quickly! Our long-term vision is as follows: Station 1 will house a fire engine, water tender, and brush/wildland engine. Station 2 will house a pumper/tender, a brush/wildland engine, and a rescue. Station 3 will house an engine and a water tender. Maintaining your Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating remains a top priority for district leadership, and we need 3 functional fire stations with the appropriate apparatus to do that. Placing apparatus in these locations will ensure that we can maintain ISO points for apparatus, as well as be positioned to respond to the community needs effectively.

Speaking of apparatus: You may have noticed the Fire District declaring surplus for some equipment, and wondered why. The equipment we are selling has been long out of service, is in need of high-cost repair, or is simply far outdated. Our district, on its very small budget, cannot afford to maintain and insure 17 pieces of equipment - the maintenance cost alone would consume much of the operating budget. So, in lieu of spending tax dollars on repairs, we have developed a plan to reduce our fleet, work extremely hard on purchasing apparatus that are fit and ready to serve, and strategically locate them to serve the community best.

Our volunteers continue to go above and beyond in their dedication to service, and I can not thank them enough for the countless hours they put in around the fire stations completing projects and training. They train an average of 6 hours a week which, in my experience, is far more than most volunteer fire departments. These folks are giving up their Sunday mornings and Monday nights to hone their skills, as well as their days, nights, and weekends responding to calls.

To close, I just want to say thank you to everyone who is currently supporting the fire district. This year has been quite a challenge! We have overcome some major hurdles, and there are always more ahead that we will navigate as we reach them. My hope, moving forward, is that we can recognize that there are a lot of good things happening in this district! I remain steadfast in my commitment to serving this community alongside all of the hard working volunteers of the Elsie-Vinemaple Rural Fire Protection District.



Matt from Washington is the proud new owner of the 1978 Crown Engine, purchased from EVRFPD in a sealed bid auction for surplus apparatus in July. NFPA requires engines more than 25 years old to be retired.

Rob Davis, Chief

Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Fire Lieutenant Ryan Dietrich!



Ryan joined Elsie Fire in March of this year, bringing with him 15 years of firefighting experience. Starting as a cadet at Gearhart Fire on his 17th birthday, he earned multiple certifications as he worked his way up through the ranks to become a lieutenant. "I can't think of a better job than being a firefighter," says Dietrich. "I love how it keeps you thinking on your feet. No two calls are ever alike. Gearhart Fire is volunteer, though, and I was working construction jobs to pay the bills. I eventually had to hang up my firefighter's hat for a while to focus on building a career that could support my family, so I joined the Carpenters' Union as an apprentice."

Now a Construction Superintendent for Hoffman Construction, Ryan has supervised a variety of interesting construction projects. Specializing in structural concrete, he spent a year working in Israel building a semiconductor plant for Intel, and is currently supervising the major renovation at PDX. "Being in construction has taught me some skills that really come in handy as a firefighter," he notes. "Dealing with different kinds of people, learning to communicate effectively... and then of course learning about the structural integrity of buildings, knowing which part of a building will be strongest in fire conditions. General construction knowledge is really helpful to have as a firefighter."

"I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF SPARE TIME, BUT WHAT I DO HAVE, I WANT TO GIVE TO MY COMMUNITY." ~ Lt. Ryan Dietrich

Dietrich says he felt called to join Elsie Fire earlier this year, when he learned that almost all the former district firefighters had quit. Despite being a single dad of two young children, and working so many hours at PDX, he knew his 15 years of experience was needed. "I don't have a lot of spare time, but what I do have, I want to give to my community," he says earnestly. "When you call 911, you need people there, and that doesn't happen if people don't step up."

To those thinking of joining in to help, Dietrich says, "Don't hesitate! We have a place for everyone, and not just with fighting fires. Reach out, and get on our volunteer roster. If you're willing to help with sweeping floors, clerical work, making sandwiches, or can give any time at all, we have a spot for you, and we'll put you on in a heartbeat. This department is moving in a very positive direction right now, and it's really good to see."

YOUR RESPONDERS IN ACTION

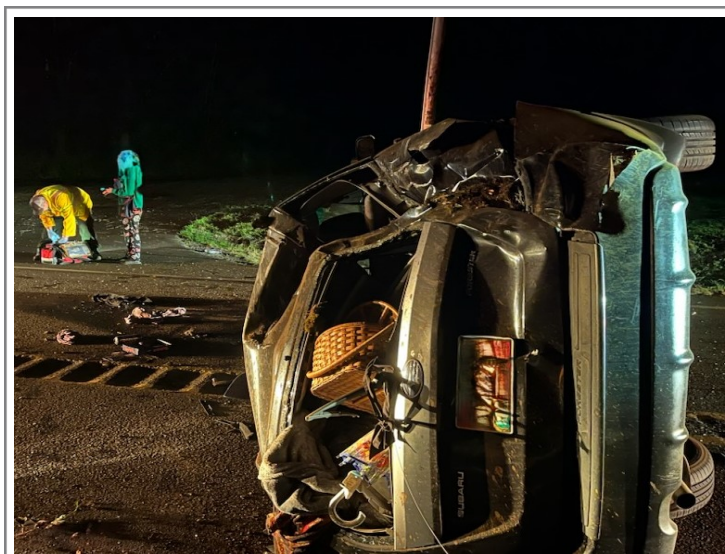
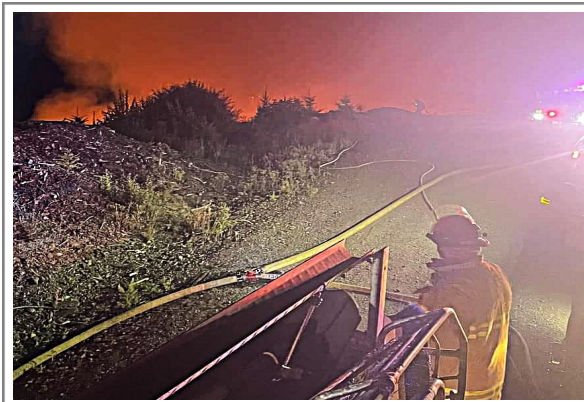


Above, Chief Davis and Lt. Hensinger training new recruits Hecox and Gitts on Vehicle Extrication tools. Firefighter Mockley observes.



Elsie crews using Jewell School to LifeFlight a patient

Pictured (right) is Elsie Fire on scene at the Music Road Fire



Single Vehicle MVA on Highway 26

**CALL LOG SUMMARY
MAY 1 - JULY 31, 2024**

Elsie-Vinemaple RFPD was toned out to 61 calls, and responded to all of them with an average response time better than the National average!

- 24 Medical Calls (EMS)
- 25 Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVAs)
- 3 Public Assist Requests
- 4 Fire Investigations
- 3 Grass/Brush Fires
- 2 Vehicle Fires



Pictured (left) is new Elsie recruit Kerry Walsh at the Lee Falls Fire in Gaston. EVRFPD deployed Chief Davis as a Task Force Leader for that fire, at the request of the Oregon State Fire Marshal. For 3 days, Elsie crews supported operations through a request from the Oregon Department of Forestry, by supplying a Water Tender with an operator to assist in mop up of that fire.

Pictured (right) is Lt. Shawn Hensinger, who was first on scene at the Tweedle Road Fire. Thanks to quick action and our mutual aid partners, this fire was contained to just a couple of acres amidst dry, windy conditions.



Pictured (left) A group of your Elsie Firefighters after a training session. From left to right: TJ Hecox, Lt. Shawn Hensinger, Chief Rob Davis, Asst. Chief Dave Senz, Dave Walton, Brittany Gitts, Lt. Ryan Dietrich, and Joe Mockley.



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What's Inside



Elsie-Vinemapple RFPD
 42644 Loyd Lane
 Seaside, OR 97138

PRSRT STD
 ECRWSS
 U.S.POSTAGE
PAID
 EDDM Retail

**FIRE DEPARTMENT
NEWS INSIDE!!**

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