

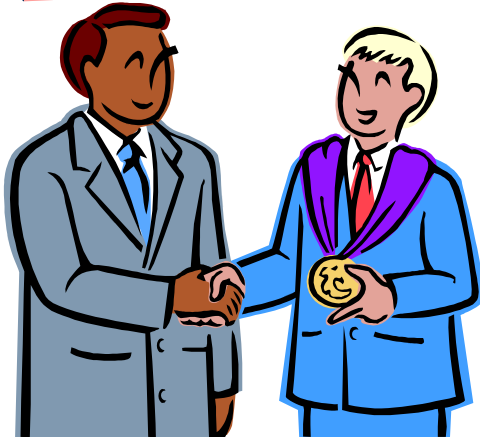
# Smokescreen

February 2011

A Newsletter Publication of Missoula Rural Fire District

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## MRFD Awards Banquet!



We are excited to  
honor our 2010  
Award Recipients!

**Sat, 2/5/2011**

Missoula Rural Fire District  
2521 South Ave. W.  
Missoula, MT 59804  
[www.mrfdfire.org](http://www.mrfdfire.org)



# SMOKESCREEN

February 2011



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

By District Fire Chief Bill Colwell

Fifty years ago this month, the Missoula Rural Fire District came into formal existence and took up residence in a garage at Dr. Earl Pruyne's Veterinary Hospital at 2501 Russell Street.

The true beginning of MRFD started in 1938. The Men's Group of the Orchard Homes Country Life Club worked and formed a volunteer fire department. They started raising funds and in 1940 the group bought a chassis from H.O. Bell Ford in Missoula for \$200. They mounted a pump and two cattle stock tanks on the chassis for water supply and purchased used hose for \$100. The engine/tanker was housed in a garage at Garden City Floral Company (Caras Nursery). The Orchard Homes Fire Company responded to many fires including the huge Missoula County Fairgrounds Grandstand fire, August 12, 1941. In 1943, after fighting a fire at Swain-



berg Lumber Company, the fire-fighters returned the truck to the station at Garden City Floral. As they were driving away, they turned to see the building on fire! An ember from the Swain-berg fire had been carried back to the station and ignited the truck and the fire station. The fire station and the fire truck

burned and were destroyed. The truck sold for scrap for \$143 and the hose that was off the truck drying, and not damaged, sold for \$80 in 1943.

In 1959, members of the Orchard Homes Country Life Club again worked to build a fire department. An employee of Caras Nursery, Lois Colvill, organized members who knocked on doors and gathered signatures. On February 28, 1961 the Missoula County Commissioners appointed Earl M. Pruyne, Bill Walterskishen, John Pomajevich Jr., Lois Colvill, and Kenneth Richardson as the first Board of Trustees of Missoula Rural Fire District and MRFD was officially established.

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## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- Feb 1 Brian LaForest
- Feb 2 Kirt George
- Feb 4 Nathan Boucher
- Feb 4 Jake VanNoppen
- Feb 12 Matt Schuler
- Feb 14 Bill Colwell
- Feb 18 Toby Ballard
- Feb 22 Ralph Pebbles
- Feb 26 John Fidler
- Feb 27 Janelle Davenport
- Feb 29 Mel Moon

## Happy Birthday!

### ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS!

Each Volunteer and Resident must have their completed report turned in by the 10th of each month, to ensure that they have no lapse in their worker's compensation coverage.

**The primary purpose for the time record is to record your shift time.**

Please note that the section for "training" hours refers to the training activities hosted by the training division.

If you respond to an incident in addition to your normal volunteer shift, please also record that on your time record.

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MRFD has always been a combination Department. Red Cotrell, Don Anderson and Mathew Pomajevich were the first three firefighters hired at MRFD and Mathew Pomajevich was named the first District Fire Chief. The Career Firefighters worked 24 hours on and 48 hours off and supported the volunteer firefighting force. MRFD's Board of Trustees collected revenue and ordered two fire apparatus from a dealer in Great Falls in 1961.

The first fire responded to by the new fire district was a refrigeration compressor fire at Buttery's. The firefighter on duty responded from the garage at Pruyn's Veterinary Hospital in his pickup truck. When the firefighter arrived on scene, he suppressed the fire with a gallon or two of milk taken from the shelf in the store. Engine No.1, a 1961 International, arrived at MRFD and was put into service shortly after the "milk fire." MRFD rented a building at 2135 South Third Street West to house the new apparatus. In 1962, MRFD received Engine No. 2, a 1962 GMC tanker with a pump and 1,000 gallon water tank. MRFD's first Resident Firefighter, Doug Chase lived at the Third Street Station.

- ◇ In October 1963, MRFD opened the current Station #1 at 2521 South Ave. Station #1 was constructed at a cost of \$39,000.
- ◇ Station #2 at 6550 Highway 10 W. became part of MRFD in January of 1968.
- ◇ Station #3 at 2306 Gilbert Avenue opened in June of 1968 and then closed in June of 1995.
- ◇ Station #4 at 9480 Highway 10 E. became part of MRFD in March of 1971.
- ◇ Station #5 at 12221 Highway 93 S. joined MRFD in September 1973.
- ◇ Station #6 at 8455 Mullan Road was built and opened in April of 1982.

Missoula Rural Fire District is a full service fire organization delivering service to a 95 square mile area and serving 35,000 citizens of Missoula County. We respond to approximately 2100 calls for service a year and provide EMS, rescue, structure and wildland fire suppression, hazmat, and fire and injury prevention services to our customers. Our service is provided by a combination of dedicated career and volunteer firefighter consisting of 39 career personnel, 12 resident volunteer personnel, and approximately 40 community based volunteer personnel.

I quote words written by Henry David Thoreau that reflect thoughts on success:

*To laugh often and much;  
To win the respect of intelligent people  
And the affection of children;  
To earn appreciation of honest critics  
And endure the betrayal of false friends;  
To appreciate beauty;  
To find the best in others;  
To leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child,  
A garden patch or a redeemed social condition;  
To know even one life has breathed easier  
Because you lived.  
This is to have succeeded.*



We celebrate 50 years of service to the Missoula Community. I thank the men and women who worked to develop Missoula Rural Fire District and those who continue to work to provide emergency and injury prevention services.

*Information gathered from MRFD Charter Members: Otto Benson, George Geesey and Lois Gagermier.*

# OPERATIONS REPORT

By Assistant Chief Brent Christopherson

Chief Colwell most recently set forth the goals of Missoula Rural Fire District for this next year. This is ideal as everyone knows what he has in mind as our leader for the near future. People often speak about organizational "culture." A working definition of culture might be: shared values and acceptable norms of behavior. It is the way we as individuals—collectively comprising the organization—think, feel, and act. Culture is about how we treat each other, respond to each other, and support each other.

Please take a good look at the goals the chief has put forth and take the approach on what **YOU** can do to contribute to help make our organization a success within this next year and beyond. Personal accountability is a cultural core value and should be embraced as an idea or principle that we utilize to shape our behavior and thinking. People working together as a team individually ask questions like, "What can I do to contribute?" and "How can I make a difference?" When we each choose to ask questions like the two above---over time---we create a culture where personal accountability is valued, honored and practiced. Let's all try and continue to make a positive difference in our organization and partner with Chief Colwell in the goals that he has set forth to make our organization what it is today and even better in the months and years ahead! We do have a great deal to be thankful for, and I for one appreciate all of you that strive to make a positive difference as we serve our citizens.



## Goals:

- ◇ Continue to be a full service fire organization and respond in a safe and efficient manner
- ◇ Support training and skill development to promote safe and efficient service and career development
- ◇ Promote development of candidates for succession in leadership roles
- ◇ Empower the Safety Committee to review and implement the 16 Safety Initiatives.
- ◇ Broaden our community involvement and improve fire and EMS service across jurisdictional lines
- ◇ Work with the Staffing Committee to update the Manning Committee report and build a five year plan



## 2011 Goals (continued):

- ◇ Update our Administrative Manual, Operations Manuals, and SOGs and negotiate contract changes to gain consistency across the multiple documents
- ◇ Improve community communications with broadened involvement and interaction with neighborhood councils
- ◇ Focus our efforts to improve our ISO reporting and rating
- ◇ Implement the Mobile Eyes inspection and preplan programs
- ◇ Improve documentation and reporting of station coverage by personnel
- ◇ Increase the shift coverage at Stations 2, 4, 5, and 6 and accommodations at Stations 2 and 6 to facilitate additional coverage.
- ◇ Continue efforts to implement and improve our new Volunteer Membership SOG
- ◇ Cooperate and support the U of M campus of the Helena College of Technology
- ◇ Put a quint (328) into service at Station 2 and move a type 1 (361) to Station 6
- ◇ Modifying the response compliment as the quint (328) is put in service
- ◇ Put a new tow vehicle into service for the State Hazmat Trailer (New 348)
- ◇ Implement the budgeting process to purchase a new type I engine in late 2011 or 2012
- ◇ Facilitate the budgeting process to purchase a type II water tender and increase our water tender fleet to five units in late 2011 or 2012.
- ◇ Update response protocols to support a fifth water tender in our response compliment
- ◇ Evaluate and develop a confined space capability appropriate to our primary exposures
- ◇ Install broadcast and communications equipment in each station to allow interactive training facilitated by a central instructor.
- ◇ Continue to implement and facilitate fuels reduction and Wild Land Urban Interface awareness and community safety



## 2011 MRFD Phone Directories Are Here!

### Stop by Station 1 to pick up your copy!

### Did you know...

During the Middle Ages, young men and women drew names from a bowl to see who their valentines would be. They would wear these names on their sleeves for one week. To wear your heart on your sleeve now means that it is easy for other people to know how you are feeling.

<http://bentleyvanguard.com/>

Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not  
 envy; love does not parade itself, is not  
 puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not  
 seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;  
<sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in  
 the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all  
 things, hopes all things, endures all things.  
<sup>8</sup> Love never fails.  
*After reading these verses it reminds me that  
 firefighters have a giving, selfless, expect-  
 nothing-in-return kind of love. Keep it  
 up! Thank you for your service and willing-  
 ness to do what you do.*  
*Praying for your protection daily!*  
*Chaplain Luanne Parker*

### **BOT MEETINGS**

*The following is not a complete record. Contact Heidi at Station 1 if you would like a complete copy of meeting minutes.*

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETING, DEC 15, 2010**

**VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION:** *Treasurer Jason Rose reported:* Treasurer Rose met with Chief Colwell about writing some new bylaws. With the Board's permission, the Volunteers are looking to have a similar system to the Union. The Volunteers would like to set up their officers to have a 2-year term, instead of just a 1-year term in which they have to vote in all four officers in every year. They would like to model after the Union, where the President and Treasurer could be voted in this year for a two-year term, then starting next year vote for the Vice-President and Secretary for a two-year term. This would allow some more consistency for the officers. In addition, the Volunteers are looking to establish a "Resident Advocate." Residents are essentially volunteers who can come to the meetings and voice their opinions. But under the current bylaws, when it comes time to vote on any item, a Resident's vote does not count. By establishing a Resident Advocate, they could have at least one vote to represent our 12 Residents. Also, when the Association's officers meet with the Chiefs, the Resident Advocate would be invited as well, because that position would become part of the E-Board for the Volunteers.

**OLD BUSINESS:** *Joint Board of Trustees Meeting:* Vice Chair Corti and Chief Colwell have been exploring the possibility of having Mr. Jeff Dyar return to Missoula for a new presentation and workshop in February. We were contacted by a couple of members from Clinton Fire. Due to the retirement of their current chief, they discussed their ideas about the future of their fire district and asked for our input regarding the feasibility of hiring a part-time chief. We visited with them at length about this and about things that have worked for MRFD in the past. In this conversation, we broached the concept of contracting for service between us and them, such as for administration and/or training. They will visit with their board about it to get their thoughts and ideas, but we are not expecting any immediate action on their part. Vice Chair Corti added that they also talked about the possibility of having Jeff Dyar talk about a Fire Authority. The impression from Clinton Fire is that they might be interested in spending a little time on the subject, but not something that they would like to focus on for the whole day. Chief Colwell noted that the IAFF conference this year brought in speakers from Washington who addressed the Fire Authority concept and actually support it very strongly, as a way of preserving Career Firefighter positions during this funding crunch. The IAFF encouraged the Montana Career Firefighters to support this concept. With this backdrop, it is a possibility that if a couple of fire districts were interested in this consideration, there would be support at the state level.



# Heating Safety Talking Points

## Priority Messages

- Keep or maintain a three-foot (one-meter) clearance between all heating equipment and anything that can burn.
- Do not use your oven to heat your home.
- Inspect and maintain heating equipment regularly for safety.
- Portable space heaters should be turned off every time you leave the room and before going to bed.
- When buying a new space heater, make sure it has the label showing it is listed by a recognized testing laboratory. Be sure to have fixed space heaters installed by a qualified technician, according to manufacturer's instructions or applicable codes. Or make sure a qualified technician checks to see that the unit has been properly installed.
- Make sure your fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room. Allow fireplace and woodstove ashes to cool before disposing in a metal container.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys inspected and cleaned every year.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound. Test smoke alarms monthly.
- Install and maintain carbon monoxide alarms to avoid risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

## Additional Safety Tips

### Heating

- Make sure your choice of heating equipment is permitted by law in your community. For example, kerosene heaters, chimineas and firepits are not allowed in all communities.
- Make sure your heating equipment has the label showing that it is listed by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
  - If possible, have a qualified professional install the equipment.
  - Make sure all fuel-burning equipment is vented to the outside. Make sure the venting for exhaust is kept clear and unobstructed. This includes removal of snow around the outlet to the outside.

- Supervise children when open fires and space heaters are being used and install a non-combustible screen around the appliance to prevent burns which are even more common than fire injuries.
- For fuel assistance, contact the National Fuel Funds Network at 1-202-824-0660. Contact local officials to find out if local weatherization programs are available in the community.

### Portable Space Heaters

- Plug power cords only into outlets with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.
- Inspect for cracked, frayed, or broken plugs or loose connections. Replace before using.

### Open-air Burning

- Call the local fire department or municipality before outdoor or open-air burning. This includes campfires, brush fires, firepits, chimneys and outdoor fireplaces.
- Closely attend all outdoor fires.
- Use chimineas, outdoor fireplaces and firepits outdoors only and at least 10 feet away from the home or anything that can burn.

### Fuel Burning Space Heaters

- Always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer.
- When refueling, allow the appliance to cool and refuel outside or in a well-ventilated area.
- When using the heater, open a window to ensure adequate venting.

### Wood-burning Stoves and Fireplaces

- Burn only dry, well-seasoned wood.
- Use artificial logs according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- Use only newspaper and kindling wood to start a fire. Never use flammable liquids, such as lighter fluid, kerosene or gasoline to start a fire.

