

Inspiration Points

A Newsletter of the Inspiration Point Rural Fire Protection District

IPRFPD Mission: to prevent and suppress fires, educate and rescue citizens, provide emergency medical services, promote public safety and foster community relations

"It was a Dark and Foggy Night . . ."



Even Snoopy would have had difficulty seeing on December 4th. IPFD worked two traffic accidents, both caused, at least in part, by the weather. It had been foggy, rainy and cold all day and the darkness only made conditions worse. It was just too much for two travelers.

Around 6:00 p.m., a car traveling east on Hwy 62 skidded on a very slick patch just west of Inspiration Point, hit the cliff face and overturned, landing in the ditch of the west bound lane. IPFD responded and department EMTs cared for the slightly injured driver until the ambulance arrival. Traffic controllers handled traffic using just the eastbound lane until a wrecker could get there and right the overturned car and remove it.

An hour later, IPFD was toned out again to another traffic accident, another rollover, just west of the Benton County line. IPFD is sometimes toned to accidents in the far eastern portion of Ben-

ton County. Many times after an accident, drivers are unsure of exactly where they are along Hwy 62, so are unable to tell the 911 operator. Also, due to distance, IPFD can get to a scene and render aid before NEBCO is able to. This was the case for this accident.



Again, there were no serious injuries, but the vehicle definitely could not be driven away. Thank goodness for wrecker services! The highway was closed down while the wrecker worked to turn the truck right side up and tow it away.

You can be assured that all IPFD members drove home very carefully after clearing the scene!

Coming In May!

4th Annual

FireHouse Barbecue

At Station 1

Budget Approved at Regular Board meeting.

Board members met at their regular meeting (2nd Tuesday of every month at 4:00 p.m. at Station 1 – all district members welcome!). The budget for 2015 was up for discussion. In addition to regular expenses – insurance, payments on our new rescue pumper, utilities and upkeep of the stations, fuel, repair, and maintenance for our vehicles etc. - funds were allocated for the department to buy much needed equipment, such as wild-land gear for the firefighters, lighter weight cylinders for our SCBAs, supply hose for both engines, tires for our Freightliner Tanker (it takes 10), as well as other needed fire and rescue gear.

We are also trying to build a reserve of funds for future major purchases. One of our goals in the next few years is to acquire a 4 wheel drive, quick attack, mini pumper, which would be used primarily as a brush truck, but could also function as an engine that will allow us to get to some of the more difficult locations in our district in the event of a structure fire. Another goal is to add much needed garage and training space to Station 1.

Obstacle Course Fun - or, How to Get Out of a Smoke Filled Building While Bypassing Barriers

IPFD firefighters got a workout at the December training meeting. Captain Austin Kennedy set up an obstacle course in the cleared bays at Station 1. In the scenario, the firefighters are to find



their way out of a smoke filled building, using the fire hose as a guide. 6 of our firefighters geared up, complete with air

masks and breathing apparatus and made it through the course.

The first pic shows firefighter George Coffey climbing under a “collapsed wall” after having removed his air pack in order to do so, pushing it ahead of him. The firefighters were then required to crawl through another obstacle and put the air pack back on without removing mask or gloves.



Above, firefighter Lynn McKenzie crawls on hands and knees on a ladder across an “unsafe floor”, pausing to test the “floor” with a firefighting tool. He will finish by climbing up another ladder to “exit the building”.

It was a very challenging training, but interesting, effective and definitely worthwhile.

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A Letter from the Chairman of the Board

Many of you may know Bob Howle, who has served in the past as a Commissioner on our Board. He has agreed to complete the term of Jim Simmons, and will act as President of the Board till the end of the term in November, 2015.

Mutual Aid – Digging deeper.

Mutual aid is an operational tactic that has been used by fire departments and other emergency services since memory began. In short, when a mutual aid agreement is in place, one department can call on another to provide equipment and personnel when its own resources are expended or near their limit. In large events it's good to know that a nearby department 'has your back' should resources run short. It is also a cost saving measure as a department isn't required to maintain the staff and equipment for a peak event.

This year Inspiration Point will be integrating the mutual aid concept deeper into our district by forming an auxiliary organization to back up our first line responders. Often we have found ourselves committing response resources to fund raisers and other events which would diminish our ability to respond to an emergency.

When the call goes out for auxiliary members we will be asking you for a bit of your time and energy to provide a core support group for the department. We promise not to call you at 2 AM to respond to a house fire, but you can rest well and assured that the department is far more capable because of the mutual aid you have provided.

On another note: I'm sure everybody has enjoyed the last several days of warmer weather, but I suspect winter isn't done with us yet. Don't let your guard down. Keep enough food and water on hand and be prepared to be off of the road and stuck at home for several days at a stretch. This summer I acquired a 22 year old 4x4 truck that I'd like to test in the snow. If the weather gets bad you can blame me.

Live Safe !

Bob Howle / Chairman

2nd Annual Chili Cook-off and Cornbread Contest



These chefs are standing ready to deliver their creations to the volunteers to serve to the judges in the next room. From left are cooks Joy Kennedy, Pat Scharff, Crystal Ursin, Suzanne Norman, Shannon Magee, Jim Wallace, Ilene Powell and volunteers Margo Thompson (hidden) and Larry Kitchell.

Our event in November was a wonderful success, raising over \$1,100 for the department. First Place Chili was won by Ilene Powell, 2nd Place went to Pat Scharff and 3rd place to Joy Kennedy. In the Cornbread contest, Crystal Ursin took first place for the 2nd year in a row and Suzanne Norman and Darlene Simmons tied for 2nd place. We hope everyone enjoyed themselves, they certainly looked like they were!

FireWise Tips for Building Construction

- Use Double-Paned or Tempered Glass.

Double-paned glass can help reduce the risk of fracture or collapse during an extreme wildfire. Tempered glass is the most effective. For skylights, glass is a better choice than plastic or fiberglass.

- Enclose Eaves, Fascias, Soffits and Vents.

Box eaves, fascias, soffits and vents, or enclose them with metal screens. Vent openings should be covered with 1/8" metal screen.

From The Chief Ed Thompson

2015 is here! Seems like 2014 started only a few months ago. Nevertheless a new year has arrived, and with it comes the normal looking ahead and looking back processes that we all go through. The Fire Department is no exception.

Before getting in to the retrospectives and plans for the future, I would like to issue a plea to our district members. ***We need your help.*** We are very proud of and thankful for the 22 active members that the department now has. On average every time a call comes in, 9 of our responders show up to help someone in need. That's an average of 41%. Nationally, an average of 25% of volunteer responders show up on any given call. So we are doing quite well.

However, we must pay attention to two important facts. First, a number of our responders are - there's no delicate way to put it - getting on in years. They are now in their fifth year of responding since our department's near collapse in 2010. Soon they will be finding the need, or having the desire, to step down. Secondly, we are very fortunate to have a number of enthusiastic younger members. However, as with most young folks, and middle aged folks as well, they have jobs and kids and other obligations that call on their time such that they cannot always be available when needed. Both of these facts are common to all volunteer fire departments across the nation.

Now, to get back to my plea. Please, Please consider volunteering your time to serve on the department in some capacity. We especially need traffic responders and firefighters, but could also always use medical responders. On average, once initial training is complete, a volunteer is expected to spend 40 hours training each year, and, on our department, about 45 hours on calls. That's 85 hours per year, which sounds like a lot. But it is, in fact, less than 1% of the total hours in a year. So please consider giving some share of your time to help your fire department. Be there for your neighbors in their time of need and they will be there for you. Contact me at chief@ip-fire.org.

2014 was quite an active year for IPFD. Members of your department responded to 109 calls for help last year. That was a 25% increase in activity over the previous two years. Of those calls, 39 were for traffic accidents, an impressive 88% increase over the last two year's average of 21 accidents, and an astounding 160% increase over last year's 15 accidents. Four of those accidents required us to deploy our low angle rope rescue equipment to haul 5 patients up from down the slopes. We're not sure what the reason is for such a dramatic increase in accidents, but we are pleased to report that there were no fatalities. Other activities were in the normal range with 34 medical calls, 19 fire calls, 6 traffic hazard calls, and 11 service calls. Of the 19 fire calls, two were mutual aid responses to fully involved structure fires in the Grassy Knob area, one was a mutual aid response to a substantial apartment building fire in Holiday Island, and one was a mutual aid response to a brush fire in eastern Benton County.

In addition to responding to calls, members also spent 86 hours training, including 16 hours for Auto Extrication training and 16 hours of Ground Ladder training. IPFD hosted a mass casualty drill, which simulated a school bus colliding with a minivan. The event was staged at Houseman Access Parking lot, and members of Grassy Knob, Holiday Island, and Eureka Springs Rural Fire Departments participated. Air-Evac and Med-Flight air ambulances also participated.

Looking forward to 2015, we will continue our active training activities. As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter we have plans to do a much needed upgrade to some of our equipment, especially our personal protective equipment, which keeps our members safe when fighting fires. We are also in need of fire hose, nozzles, and other firefighting and rescue equipment.

That's about all the space I have for this edition. Please stay safe. Check your smoke detectors. Be very careful with fires and especially fireplace ashes this time of year. Drive safely on our curvy roads. Call us if you need help. Any time of the day or night, we'll be there.