

PINOS ALTOS VOLUNTEER FIRE RESCUE

VOLUNTEER NEWS



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Friends of the Fire and Rescue Volunteers

Annual Meeting—Saturday, January 26, 2013

2:00 PM at the Pinos Altos Fire Station

The Friends of the Fire and Rescue Volunteers will hold their annual meeting at the Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Station on Highway 15 in Pinos Altos. The primary purpose of the organization is to promote fire safety and fire prevention education in Grant County. Anyone who is interested in the mission of the organization may attend the meeting and become a member.

Members may participate in a variety of activities that help support Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue. Volunteers in the organization work on record keeping, radio dispatch of emergency calls, station maintenance, vehicle maintenance and coordinating food services at department trainings. Volunteers may also assist with the annual fund raising event, October Fiesta. Being involved in the organization is a great way to support public safety in our community.

Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue Works to Improve the Fire Safety Environment

If you need help with burning brush or a structure requiring demolition that can be burned you can contact Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue Chief, Lucy Whitmarsh at 575-574-8394 for an evaluation of the project. If the brush or structure can be safely burned in a controlled fire, Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue can conduct the exercise. The controlled burn experience is beneficial to the fire department volunteers because we become more familiar with fire behavior and operations at the fire scene. The controlled burn is beneficial to the property owner because fuel that could contribute to an uncontrolled fire event is removed from the property.

Members of the fire department participate in numerous live burn practices during the year to improve their fire fighting skills. One exercise is a propane burn during which the fire fighters approach the burning propane and turn off the source of the propane so that the fire goes out. Department members also participate in live burn exercises at the training facility operated by the Silver City Fire Department. Silver City Fire Fighters instruct members of the department on operations in a burning building under controlled fire conditions. While learning fire fighting skills the members of both departments also learn how to work together.

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PO Box 4012 Silver City, NM 88062

Pinos Altos Volunteer

Fire Rescue Officers

Lucy Whitmarsh -Chief

Ernie Booth - Battalion Chief

Frank Ferrara -Battalion Chief

Marc Levesque -Battalion Chief

Harvey Bates -1st Lieutenant

Ryan Coleman —1st Lieutenant

Bruce Fahlender -1st Lieutenant

Mike Moorman - 1st Lieutenant

Susan Austin - 2nd Lieutenant

David Montz - 2nd Lieutenant

Steve White - 2nd Lieutenant

Tami Bates -Secretary

Ellen Cline -Treasurer

Newsletter Editor, Lucy Whitmarsh



Training Burn Exercise

HOME PROTECTION FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Our area is fortunate to have very well trained and well equipped fire fighters who respond to all fire emergencies. But there may be a situation when you have to rely on your own resources due to extreme weather conditions that could make it impossible for fire fighters to get equipment to your property. Even in the best of weather conditions you may be located in a remote area where travel time for emergency vehicles is extensive.

To keep you and your family safe it is important to properly maintain the home heating system. Have the chimney inspected and cleaned annually. Chimneys should be insulated and there should be a spark arrester covering the top of the chimney. The chimney should extend at least three feet above the roof. Branches hanging above or around the chimney should be removed.

If you use wood or charcoal, properly dispose of the ashes in a metal, covered container. Even after the ashes have completely cooled, do not dispose of the ashes in any area where the ashes can come in contact with combustible materials.

Smoke detectors save lives. Install smoke detectors on every level of the house including every bedroom. Test the smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries twice a year. Develop an evacuation plan and hold practice fire drills in your home. Locate appropriate fire extinguishers in the kitchen, garage and workshop. Teach everyone in the household how to correctly use the fire extinguishers.

So that emergency vehicles can locate your property, mark the entrance to the property with signs that are clearly visible. Know what emergency services are available and post the numbers. In the Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue District call 9-1-1 for any emergency situation including fire. Provide emergency vehicle access with driveways at least twelve feet wide and provide adequate turnaround space. Access should also not have overhangs or branches that are lower than sixteen feet.

When you are purchasing, building or remodeling your home consider some of the following fire resistant enhancements. Use fire-resistant and protective roofing and building materials such as stone, stucco, brick or metal. Avoid using wood, which offers the least fire protection, on the exterior of the house.

Install multipane windows, tempered safety glass or fireproof shutters to protect large windows from radiant heat during a wildfire. Fireproof drapes, when closed also help to keep a fire from igniting in your home due to radiant heat from a wildfire.

As part of routine home maintenance, keep the roof and eaves clear of debris. Cover all exterior vents, attics and eaves with metal mesh screens no larger than six millimeters.

Keep tools for fire protection such as a garden hose, shovel, rake, ladder and buckets in an easily accessible location. Make sure that water sources, such as hydrants, ponds and water tanks are accessible to the fire department.

To make your home a safety zone for sheltering in place during a wildfire, if you are trapped and unable to evacuate, create defensible space around your home. If you have grass, keep it trimmed around your house. Create defensible space by thinning trees and brush within thirty feet of your house. If your property extends beyond thirty feet, remove dead wood, debris and low tree branches. Landscape your property with fire resistant plants and vegetation to prevent fire from spreading quickly. Stack firewood at least thirty feet away from your home and other structures. Store flammable materials, liquids and solvents in metal containers outside the home at least thirty feet away from structures and wooden fences.

The Use of Fire Extinguishers in Home Fire Protection

Having the appropriate fire extinguisher available is essential to fire prevention in and around the home. Especially if you are working on anything that generates sparks such as welding, grinding or operating equipment it is essential that you have a fire extinguisher on hand. Fire extinguishers are intended to be used on small fires that have just ignited and are in their early stage.

Fire extinguishers use one or more of the following mechanisms to extinguish the fire: smothering or oxygen exclusion, cooling which reduces the burning material to a temperature below its ignition point or chain breaking which interrupts a chemical chain reaction.

Operation of the fire extinguisher is explained on the fire extinguisher. To properly use a fire extinguisher, pull the pin while holding the unit upright. Point the nozzle away from yourself and anyone else in the area. Stand back about six feet from the fire and aim the extinguisher at the base of the fire. Then press and hold down the lever while sweeping from side to side. Most fire extinguishers have an indicator that shows if it is properly charged. If the extinguisher does not have charge indicator, the extinguisher should be marked with the date at the time of purchase and disposed of three years after the purchase date. The extinguisher should be checked periodically to determine that it is in correct working order.

The most common household fire extinguishers are marked with the letters "A" for ordinary combustibles, "B" for flammable liquids, and "C" for Electrical Equipment. The extinguisher can be used for all three types of fires.

It is extremely important to use the correct type of extinguisher. The fire extinguisher will be marked with letters that indicate which type of fire the extinguisher can be used on. To determine which type of extinguisher to use, you need to know what is burning. Combustibles such as textiles, paper, plastic, rubber and wood can be extinguished with a dry chemical extinguisher. The chemicals interrupt the chemical chain reaction and remove the oxygen from the fire and the fire is extinguished. The chemicals used are sodium bicarbonate, potassium bicarbonate, ammonium phosphate and potassium bicarbonate. During manufacture, these agents are mixed with small amounts of additives that make the agents moisture-resistant and prevent them from caking. This process keeps the agents ready for use even after being stored for long periods, and it makes them free flowing. The dry chemical agents are nontoxic and generally considered quite safe to use. However, the cloud of chemicals may reduce visibility and create respiratory problems as would any airborne particulate. The designation on a dry chemical fire extinguisher is B & C.

Fires involving flammable and combustible liquids such as alcohol, cooking oil, gasoline, lubricating oil, and liquefied petroleum gas can be extinguished with a carbon dioxide or dry chemical extinguisher. The carbon dioxide in the extinguisher is stored under its own pressure as a liquefied gas ready for release at anytime. When released the carbon dioxide gas displaces available oxygen and smothers the fire. An advantage of the carbon dioxide extinguisher is that in addition depleting the oxygen the extinguisher also cools the fire. Both types of extinguisher are labeled B & C. In addition, if the fuel source such as a gas burner can be safely shut down, the fuel source should be eliminated prior to operating the fire extinguisher.

Electrical fires can not be extinguished using water because water is an electrical conductor. Once the source of electrical current has been removed water can be used on a fire that was ignited by electrical current. It is recommended that the source of electricity be removed and then the fire extinguisher appropriate for the material that is burning be used.

ALL FIRE FIGHTERS ARE PROFESSIONAL—BOTH PAID AND VOLUNTEER

Volunteer fire fighters are professional fire fighters. A fire does not differentiate between paid and volunteer fire fighters. Professional means being able to handle emergency calls proficiently and adequately. All fire departments, paid or volunteer, have similar standards for training, safety, equipment and incident reporting. Being professional means that fire department members have a good attitude, a good appearance and the commitment and dedication needed to get the job done safely.

In the Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Department, as in all fire departments, the safety of the fire fighter is the first concern. All training has a safety component. Equipment is compliant with all regulations and is tested regularly if specified. Volunteers work beside paid fire fighters and also participate in training exercises together. If you are not already a member and the idea of being a member of a professional fire fighting department appeals to you, please contact Chief, Lucy Whitmarsh at 575-574-8394 or lmwk@dishmail.net

The department training drills are well organized, well prepared, pertinent and lead to good fire-ground performance during an emergency response. With the appropriate training and experience emergency calls can be handled safely, calmly and efficiently. Apparatus roles and responsibilities must be clearly identified and effectively communicated to the members. Tools and equipments must be clean and in good working order. Especially in a volunteer department, new members are coming in periodically so it is important that expectations be reviewed on a regular basis.

Members of Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue operate under specific guidelines. Members are to: Act safely in all circumstances; Follow all department Standard Operating Guidelines, written and verbal; Respond to all emergency calls if available; Attend a minimum of six of the regularly scheduled monthly meetings.

When a member joins the department they are required to take a Basic Wild Land Fire Fighting Class and an introductory class with instruction on the Incident Command System. Additionally the new member is trained on how to use the equipment and operate the vehicles at the station where they are assigned.

The department also has annual training requirements. The training can be obtained through formal classes or monthly training meetings. The annual wild land fire training requirement is for twelve hours of training comprised of the following: At least six hours of an annual refresher on wild land fire fighting and at least six hours of in-house wild land fire training and drills that include wild land equipment training and training burns.

The Structure Fire component of the annual training requirement is for twenty-four hours of training comprised of the following: Six hours of hands on training that can include using the self contained breathing apparatus, live burn exercises in the burn building, structure burn exercises and ground ladder use. The remaining eighteen hours of structure fire fighting training can be comprised of a combination of vehicle checks and servicing as well as hose and pump testing.
