



NORTH ROUTT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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Spring, 2017

Dear Resident,

We trust this letter finds you well and you're beginning to enjoy the end to our North Routt winter and looking forward to spring and summer. We promised that we would make an effort to keep you abreast of events and important information relative to the fire district and therein lies the purpose of this letter.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

In the newsletter, last fall, we described in some detail the sources of revenues of the NRFPD and noted that the clear majority of revenues are derived from real estate property taxes. Many of you are aware that in the State of Colorado, the amount of total real estate taxes that can be generated from the residential properties is limited to 45% of the total State property tax revenues. The ratio of real estate taxes collected from residential properties to taxes collected from commercial and industrial properties i.e. the 45%/55% ratio was established by an amendment to the Colorado constitution in 1982 and is known as the Gallagher Amendment.

To maintain the ratio, the percentage of market value which is used to calculate assessed valuations of residential property and commercial/industrial properties are adjusted periodically. When the math is completed, and based upon information that we have received from the Routt County Assessor, we are projecting a decrease in our property tax revenues of approximately 5%.

Since 2012 the NRFPD has been experiencing a steady decline in tax revenue, for 2017's budget it is at **\$195,000.00** in tax revenue **down** from 2012's tax revenue of **\$268,000.00!** This decrease in revenue cannot be made up, and with another 5% decrease in revenue looming for 2018 it will have serious impacts to the Operational Budget for the District.

We have written our State Representative Diane Mitch Bush and our State Senator Randy Baumgartner explaining in detail the impact that the Gallagher Amendment and asking their assistance in correcting this problem.

POLICY CHANGE – FALSE ALARM CALL OUTS

The NRFPD responds to numerous fire alarms, many of which end up being a “false call” for service. Often, these calls, which require the assembly and mobilizing of our volunteers, turn out to be a system malfunction, which is fortunate, but incurs time and expense to the District. This occurred 42 times in 2016. Effective June 1st 2017, the NRFPD has adopted a policy regarding multiple alarm calls originating from a single address.

False/Nuisance alarm calls:

The first 2 calls will be allowed with no charge (annually Jan-Dec)

3rd call the property owner will be charged \$150

4th call the property owner will be charged \$250

5th call the property owner will be charged \$350

6th and all additional calls, will be charged \$450 (each event beyond 6)

BURN PERMITS

Through a joint effort of the Fire District, Routt County Environmental Health, and the State Air Pollution Control Division, we can now be in compliance with the Routt County Open Burn Plan and issue you a permit at **no cost!** In an effort to make all pile burning safer, piles will be burned with snow on the ground and only.

Due to fire danger concerns, we will no longer be burning piles throughout the summer and fall months just because we received a little bit of rain. Once the snow leaves the ground, we can issue you residential campfire permits. Feel free to give us a call and we can go over all of the details.

WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Remember to clear under growth around and near your structures to have a good clear defensible space around it. Additionally, have a “go kit” ready in the case of a mandated evacuation in the event of a wildfire near you.

More information can be found at <http://firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/be-firewise/home-and-landscape.aspx?sso=0>

We are predicted to have a normal season through August this year so far, but as we all know Mother Nature can change things rather quickly, so always being prepared is the best course of action we all can take.

PERSONNEL

Scott Andre who has served as NRFPD Assistant Chief for the past 8 years has stepped down from the position for personal reasons. Scott joined NRFPD in 2001 and has served in many positions such as Fire Chief, Assistant Chief and many other positions within the department, as well as being Volunteer of the Year 8 times during his tenure! His knowledge and dedication has been and continues to be invaluable! Fortunately, for all of us, Scott will continue as a FF I/EMT-B, just at a reduced level.

PERSONNEL, cont'd

Matt Mathisen has graciously accepted the role of Assistant Fire Chief and we are all pleased that he has stepped forward to accept the responsibilities. Matt is a Firefighter with Steamboat Springs Fire who has recently made his family's home in the Willow Creek Subdv. Matt has served with SSFD since 1998 as a volunteer then later became a full-time FF for SSFD. Matt is a Volunteer FF II and EMT – B/IV for North Routt since 2015. We are very confident in Matt's abilities and look forward to working with him.

We reported to you last fall that our volunteers totaled 12. Currently, 3 new volunteers are in Probationary status and upon completion of training our total volunteer staff could be up to 15 members. For you to better understand the time commitment, that our volunteers make, the following is a summary of the training that it takes to become an effective member:

A new recruit spends about 6 months (or more) in the Probationary Period getting an introduction to the District and its members, application process's, basic firefighting functions as well as basic first aid functions and responsibilities. The probationary member has a long list of skills to learn, classes to take, calls to attend and relationships to forge. For an individual to become a member in a short time is unusual. Vacations, work schedules and family obligations usually stretch this period out.

National certifications are difficult to complete, for example to become a Wildland firefighter a 50-hour initial class is required, with 8 hours annually for a refresher, or a Structural firefighter a 230-hour initial class, and 10 hours for annual refreshers are required, completing these takes a year at least. Classes are not always offered annually and often must be taken out of district, or out of county. Becoming an EMT is even more time consuming, it takes 200 hours for the initial class, and 72 hours of continuing education annually which for the same reasons as FF1 and FFT2 take at least a year. Because of our low call volume and time commitment to education, achieving all ratings require many evenings, weekends, and whole weeks out-of-district, experience comes slowly and can add another year to the time it takes to make a member truly effective in their rated skill. In all it can take years to become an effective member.

Please, as you run into Scott, Matt, and any of the other members of NRFPD, remember to thank them for their invaluable service to the District.

If you have an interest in becoming a North Routt Fire volunteer, please contact Chief Mike Swinsick
Office - 970-879-9094 Cell - 970-846-4311 mike.swinsick@northrouttfire.org

As we move forward we will do our best to keep you abreast of our efforts and accomplishments.

Sincerely,

NORTH ROUTT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT