

Fall 2021

Greetings to you and your family. We trust you are well and staying safe! While fall has passed and the leaves have left, it seems many of us thought that both the brilliance of the leaf colors and the amount of time they stayed on the trees this year was unusually long! Oh well, that was then and now is now. Winter is looming, but then again it looms every year at this time of year!

WILDFIRES

The wildfire season is basically over and was quite active with one large event, the Morgan Creek fire, and several smaller events. We are not aware of any loss of property improvements due to wildfires and for that we are all thankful. For future reference (you should have it bookmarked) the best source of current information regarding wildfires is <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/maps/#>.

Relative to wildfires, we are pleased to learn that the USFS will be acting on the Fuel Reduction Plan for the Hahns Peak Steamboat Lake areas as early as this fall, weather permitting, but more likely, spring of 2022. The program was originally defined by the USFS as follows: *“The proposed North Routt Fuels Reduction Project would use mechanical and prescribed fire treatments to create shaded and unshaded fuel breaks around the wildland urban interface in the Steamboat Lake/Hahn’s Peak area.”* Exactly where the project will start is unknown but we expect to be hearing from the USFS once it starts clearing activities. If you are interested information may be found at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=56980>

OPEN BURNING

Fall is an excellent time to inventory, cut down and remove standing and fallen dead trees. These trees are fuel for wildfires and their removal enhances the perimeter protection of your home. If you are governed by an HOA, the Covenants may require dead and fallen trees must be removed. Consistent with past practices, open burning of slash piles may only occur between the months of November and April and with a minimum of 6” of snow on the ground. The NRPFD, in cooperation with Routt County Department of Environmental Health, and the State Air Pollution Control Division, continues to follow the Routt County Open Burn Plan and can issue you a burn permit at **no cost!** Call us to set up an inspection or obtain additional information.

WOOD BURNING FIREPLACE SAFETY

In preparation for the winter season, we encourage you to ensure that your heating system, fireplace and wood burning chimneys, CO2 monitors, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and alarm systems are all in good working order and functional. One of the more common fire calls we receive is chimney fires; we suggest you keep a Chimfex near your wood burning fireplace or stove. This chimney fire extinguishing device resembles a flare in size and shape and is available at several local hardware suppliers. Also, please make sure that the street number of your property is clearly marked and visible from your road to our firefighters and EMS volunteers. This also means keep your street address sign/number from being buried in snow!

Like us on Facebook

<https://northrouttfire.colorado.gov/>

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EVENTS

With great pleasure and excitement, we will return to having our annual Fund Raising Dinner. The dinner will be hosted and served this year at the Vista Verde Ranch on Thursday, December 9th and Friday, December 10th. As in the past, sign-up sheets for reservations and payment will be available at the Clark Store. This will be our 36th fundraising dinner after two years! The event provides financial support to the NRFPD but equally as important, it is an opportunity and venue for members of our community to gather on a social basis!

EMERGENCY CALLS FOR SERVICE

Below are the historical number and types of calls including the 1st 10 months of 2021.

Yearly Call Volume by Incident Type									
DESCRIPTION	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Structure Fires	4	3	8	2	5	3	3	1	2
EMS	39	29	34	45	43	45	30	56	39
MVA	16	17	18	12	11	10	9	13	13
Illegal Burn								15	7
Wildland Fires	13	5	6	8	15	15	1	8	11
Service Call	7	50	35	32	29	29	44	36	26
Rescues	6	9	6	8	2	7	5	4	3
False Alarms	<u>32</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>27</u>
Totals	117	139	128	153	132	143	120	172	128

• Through October

VOLUNTEERS AND PERSONNEL

As evidenced by the above table and the calls for the first ten months of this year, we have been quite busy! Our active volunteer roster currently stands at 11 and consists of 3 EMT/FF's and 8 FF. Three of our Volunteers are enrolled in CMC's EMT-B Class this fall which requires a considerable amount of their time to complete the class in town three to four nights a week. We anticipate all 3 graduating in December and getting their NREMT & Colorado EMT-B certifications. This summer our roster has been impacted by health issues limiting our staffing ability on most of the calls to date. In an effort to bolster the volunteer's roster, particularly during the past summer and early fall months, we were able to have former volunteer Greg Murray, who moved out of the District in 2018, and was able to return to the District during this peak time as a part time paid FF/EMT. We are grateful to Greg for helping us out as we are truly shorthanded!

To put our staffing levels in perspective and to illustrate our need for volunteers, ten years ago we had between 16 and 18 volunteers. As described earlier with 11 active volunteers, it becomes obvious that our calls for service are increasing and the number of volunteers is decreasing. The District is desperately in need of volunteers and if you or someone you know may have an interest in serving the community as a volunteer fire fighter or EMT, please call Chief Mike Swinsick at the office at 970-879-6064 or his cell at 970-846-4311. Also, the next time you see one of our volunteers, remember to thank them for their service and how much you appreciate their service to our community!

Specific to the Board of Directors, Dave Peregoy stepped down as a Director. Dave, a former front range EMT/Firefighter, served as Director from June of 2015 through June of 2021, the majority of which he further served as Vice President. We will truly miss Dave's contributions to the District's leadership and management and thank him for his service to the NRFPD and the community!

We are fortunate that stepping up to fill Dave's vacancy is Larry Williams. Larry, whom many of you know, served on the Board from 2009 to 2016 and additionally, served as President of the Board from 2013 to 2016. Thank you, Larry we truly appreciate your previous contributions to the operations and success of the NRFPD and agreeing to serve again!

BUDGET and FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Board of Directors and Chief Swinsick, led by Director Standish, have commenced the process of developing the 2022 Budget earlier this fall. We have received a Preliminary Notice of Assessed Valuation from the Routt County Assessor which gives us the total assessed value of all properties in the NRFPD taxing district. This total, multiplied by the mill levy, provides the initial estimate of tax revenues we will receive in 2022. This amount is key to our budget and the principal source of income. You may be aware that in 2020, the CO legislature fixed the Residential Assessment Rate (RAR) at 7.15% . By establishing a fixed RAR, the tax revenue impacts caused by the Gallagher Amendment (at NRFPD we were continued to receive less tax revenue) were halted. Subsequently, on the November 2, 2021 ballot, Proposition 120 proposed to reverse the fixed RAR. The Proposition failed to be approved by the voters and the RAR will remain at 7.15% and the District mill levy will return to \$9.25.

A priority of the 2022 budget will be to provide funding for paid fire fighters/EMTs. As explained earlier it has become exceedingly difficult to find volunteers. We hope to be successful in adding paid staff and additionally bolstering our existing volunteer staff. Please, if you are interested in volunteering or know of someone who may have an interest in volunteering, we are in **DIRE** need of **YOU**. If you have the time to commit and are in good physical condition, we would really love to hear from you! Stop in and see the Chief or contact our office about becoming a volunteer firefighter/EMT and the opportunity to serve your community!

EQUIPMENT STATUS

While several units in our fleet are older, our fleet remains in good working order due to a few extremely talented volunteers and our paid staff who possess mechanical skills and abilities. These folks give of their time and talent to ensure the equipment is always available for use. We thank them for their efforts and hard work! The Board, in addition to preparing the 2022 budget is reviewing and updating the District's Capital Budget. It is expected that this project will be completed in the 1st quarter of 2022 and will outline and describe the expected capital expenses for the coming years.

Our Facebook page (North Routt Fire Protection District) has important information and is updated continuously. Also, if you have not signed up for the Routt County weather/special warning system, please take some time and view the site for details on how to sign up and what notifications are available at:

<https://member.everbridge.net/index/892807736727602#/login>

Have a great fall and winter in North Routt County and please stay safe!

NORTH ROUTT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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