



NORTH ROUTT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

P.O. Box 758 Clark, CO 80428

970.879.6064 • 970.879.6726 fax

Spring 2023

Greetings to you and your family; we trust you are well and staying safe. It's been a long winter for those of us living in the "Clarktic Circle" and the sooner spring arrives the better! The North Routt Fire Protection District has been busy and the purpose of this newsletter is to bring you current with our activities!

VOLUNTEERS AND PERSONNEL

Mike Swinsick, a resident of North Routt County for 30 years, a NRFPD volunteer for 8 years and Chief of the District for the previous 10 years, his wife Barb, and their 5 dogs have relocated to Utah. Mike has taken a position as Wildlife Urban Interface Coordinator for the Wasatch Front Area which includes six counties in and around Salt Lake City. Mike and Barb have settled into a new home in Alpine, Utah which is between Salt Lake City and Provo. A reception for Mike was held at Station 2 in early March to permit friends, neighbors and colleagues to extend best wishes and a thank you to Mike for his service to the District. We will miss Mike and his devotion and leadership at the District and wish he and Barb well in their new adventure!

The Board of Directors asked Deputy Chief Matt Mathisen to assume the responsibilities of NRFPD Chief and he enthusiastically accepted. Matt served for 23 years at Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue, 4 years as a volunteer at NRFPD and was appointed by Mike Swinsick to serve as the Deputy Chief for the past 3 years. He is well certified as both a fire fighter and EMT and brings extensive experience in both disciplines to the District. Matt, with his wife Alex and their daughter Jade have been residents of North Routt for 10 years. We are fortunate to have Matt, his education and his experience and we ask that you join us in congratulating him and supporting him as the District moves forward.

We will be actively seeking to hire 3 firefighters/EMTs to join our existing paid staff of 2 and will be actively recruiting these positions this spring. We continue to need additional volunteers! **Recently, we have received notice from 2 of our EMT volunteers that they no longer have the time to give to the District due to personal changes. Their departures create a serious shortage of our EMT staff.** If you or someone you know may have an interest in serving the community as a volunteer fire fighter or EMT, or applying for one of the paid positions, please call Chief Mathisen at the office at 970-879-6064. Also, the next time you see one of our volunteers, remember to thank them for their service and tell them how much you appreciate their dedication to our community!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Directors Paul Slivon, Larry Williams and Todd Zvorak's terms of office were due to expire April 30th of this year; fortunately, they all have graciously and generously agreed to serve another term of 4 years each. Thank you, gentlemen! Jim Standish and Steve Warnke's terms will expire April 30th of 2025. We are genuinely appreciative of the knowledge, experience and expertise the Directors provide and for the overall management of the District. They too deserve that "thank you for all you do" next time you see them!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Our 21st annual fundraising dinner held in January this year, was a tremendous success and enjoyed by all who attended. 3 Forks Ranch most graciously hosted the event, provided transportation to their guest lodge from Columbine, conducted tours of their facility, served an excellent dinner, all of which were provided on a completely complimentary basis. We are truly grateful to them and most appreciative of their generosity. After two evenings, we were informed by 3 Forks that we may plan on repeating the event next year!

The possibility exists that we may be having a second fund raising event this summer but haven't confirmed it as yet. When we know for sure, look for postings at the Clark Store, on our Website and on our Facebook page!

Chief Mathisen has indicated to the Board that he wishes to increase the visibility of the NRFPD in the North Routt community. He has suggested a number of events and occasions to help inform and educate our residents about the duties, services the District provides and the facilities and equipment the District has available to support them. Watch for announcements on posters at the Clark Store, and on the NRFPD website and Facebook page!

BUDGET and FINANCIAL MATTERS

In December of 2022 the Board of Directors approved and adopted the 2023 budget. The budget, as required by TABOR is balanced. The most noteworthy change is that expenses were increased over 2022 levels to reflect the hiring of 2 additional, paid, EMT/Firefighters at approximately \$60,000 per year each. While revenues from property taxes are up slightly from last year, much of the increase in expenses will be offset by transfer from our savings. As it was a post budget event, the 2023 budget did not account for operating without a Deputy Chief for some period of time in 2023. As discussed earlier in comments about volunteers and personnel, the district struggles to find and retain volunteers; this is NOT a problem unique to our District as volunteerism in general and across all volunteer based businesses is declining. As a result, and in an effort to maintain service levels, we find it necessary to bolster our staff with paid personnel. As always, if you or someone you know has an interest in becoming a volunteer firefighter or EMT or would like to pursue paid employment with the NRFPD, please contact Chief Mathisen at 970-879-6064.

In late 2022, the NRFPD was awarded a grant from the State of Colorado for approximately \$125,000. The grant was directed to and used exclusively for the acquisition of firefighter Personal Protective Equipment i.e. helmets, boots, coats, pants, gloves, self-contained breathing apparatus etc. This is the first time in as long as anyone can remember that the department has had new, complete sets of PPE for its staff; it was sorely needed! The majority of the new PPE has been received and assigned.

EMERGENCY CALLS FOR SERVICE

Below are the historical number and types of calls including the first 3 months of 2023.

DESCRIPTION	Yearly Call Volume by Incident Type							
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
Structure Fires	2	5	3	3	1	2	3	1
EMS	45	43	45	30	56	46	39	16
MVA	12	11	10	9	13	15	15	4
Illegal Burn					15	11	3	0
Wildland Fires	8	15	15	1	8	11	0	0
Service Call	32	29	29	44	36	30	14	1
Rescues	8	2	7	5	4	8	14	2
False Alarms	<u>46</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	153	132	143	120	172	148	119	25

through
March*

EMS – Emergency Medical Service MVA – Motor Vehicle Accidents
Service Call – Inspections, citizen assistance, carbon monoxide alarms, etc.

WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Given the amount of snow we've received this winter it's difficult to imagine it will ever completely melt! Nevertheless, we cannot disregard the importance of being prepared for the wildfire season. Remember to clear under growth around

and near your structures and to have a clear defensible space around it. Additionally, have a "go kit" ready in case of a mandated evacuation from a wildfire near you. There is information and recommendations located on the NRFPD website (<https://northrouttfire.colorado.gov/>) under the **Wildland Fire Safety** tab, as well as at the newly formed Routt County Mitigation Council website at <http://routtwildfire.org> and lastly another great source is <https://csfs.colostate.edu/csfspublications/>. Further, during wildfire season, an excellent source for tracking the locations and statuses of wildfires in our State is: <https://inciweb.nwccg.gov/> and www.facebook.com/RouttCountyOEM/.

Open burning in Routt County is an activity that requires a permit, and recall that in addition to burning slash piles, outdoor fire rings and fireplaces at residences also fall under the permitting process. The NRFPD 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 the office (970-879-6064) to set up an inspection or to obtain additional information. Specific to slash burning, the burning season is from November 1st – April 15th.

One last comment on wildfires and wildfire mitigation; are you aware the State of Colorado offers a tax credit for some expenses incurred in mitigating potential wildfire sites. The program ends in 2024. For further information refer to: <https://tax.colorado.gov/sites/tax/files/Income65.pdf>.

DRY HYDRANTS

Dry hydrants can be a great source of water in the rural areas of our district. Water from ponds, lakes, streams or buried tanks that can be accessed by our tank trucks, and located near a fire incident, is a valuable resource in fighting fires. Insurance companies may offer better premiums if a landowner has developed an accessible water source for fire suppression. We currently have an inventory of 16 Dry Hydrant locations throughout the district which isn't a lot, and unfortunately several of them are not functional due to age or locations in waterways that have changed course. Included in our plans is to refurbish these sites (if possible) and add new locations that are viable and accessible for fire apparatus. Efforts are also ongoing with the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife to have a dry hydrant constructed at Steamboat Lake.

If you have a year-round water source and are interested in developing a dry hydrant on your property, please contact our office and we can provide a design requirement guide. Also information may be viewed at: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs143_026061.pdf

For additional information about the District and our activities we post regularly on our Facebook page, "North Routt Fire Protection District" and we update our website <https://northrouttfire.colorado.gov/> 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 spring and summer in North Routt and please stay safe!

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