



NORTH ROUTT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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Spring – Summer 2024

Greetings and Happy Spring. We trust you and your family are well and enjoying the advent of spring and summer in North Routt County. We are providing this newsletter to keep you informed of the activities and other matters of importance to the North Routt Fire Protection District.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Fall – Winter 2023 newsletter contained preliminary information regarding the district's budget and potential reduction of the real estate tax Mill Levy. We offer several follow-up comments to those made in the newsletter.

The budget for 2024 was adopted at the December 2023 Board meeting and the budget highlights are:

1. The Budget is balanced: expenses do not exceed income.
2. Income is budgeted at \$891,870
3. Expenses are budgeted at \$891,642; the larger expenses are:
 - a. Payroll, insurance and related costs for full time and volunteer personnel of \$591,386
 - i. The budget provides for 7 full time paid EMT/FF
 - b. Building Maintenance and Supplies, which include a new roof for Station 2 and the painting/staining all exterior trim and siding at Station 2 totaling approximately \$117,000. The roof is original, and it's been 15 years since the last exterior painting.
 - c. Bond principal and interest payment of \$73,440
 - d. Administrative and insurance of \$61,241

Based upon the 2024 budget the district was able to reduce the Mill Levy for taxes collected in 2024. Previously in 2023, the NRFPD General Tax Levy on your tax bill was \$9.30 per \$1000 of assessed valuation; for 2024 the levy was reduced to \$8.356. Similarly, the Bond Tax Levy was reduced from \$1.634 per \$1000 of assessed valuation to \$1.050.

GRANTS and WILDFIRE MITIGATION

In the fall of 2023 Chief Mathisen and Kent Foster, consultant to the NRFPD, applied to the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) for a Forest Restoration and Wildfire Mitigation Risk Grant (FRWRM). We are pleased to announce that on April 1, we were awarded \$517,000 by the CSFS. The grant will provide funding on a 50/50 matching basis over a four-year period to reduce the risk of wildfire to people, property and infrastructure and promote forest health and restoration. The work is to be performed on private lands, and expenses eligible for matching may be in the form of in-kind labor, contracted expenses, supplies, equipment etc. incurred in the mitigation of wildfire hazards and fuel sources. The NRFPD is responsible for processing grant applications and administering the grant funds. More information regarding the application process and expenses eligible to satisfy the 50/50 grant may be found on the districts' website: <https://northrouttfire.colorado.gov/frwrm-grant>.

Related to the FRWRM grant, the Routt County Fire Mitigation Council hosted a Wildfire Gathering for North Routt residents on May 15th at which Chief Mathisen and Kent Foster jointly provided a summary of the FRWRM to the attendees and provided handouts and direction on the application process. Also discussed was the ability of the Council to provide risk assessments to homeowners and additional details on this activity may be found on the Council's website: <https://routtwildfire.org/about/>.

In addition to FRWRM we also received a Colorado Firefighter Safety and Disease Prevention Grant (FFSDP) which enabled us to replace 20 sets of 20-year-old wildland fire gear for our volunteers and employees. The district has a number of additional grant applications filed or in process which will assist in replacing out dated radios and funding to assist in the administration of the FRWRM program. The grant application process is time-consuming and, in some cases, onerous; we are fortunate to have our consultant Kent Foster available for direction and assistance. Thank you, Kent.

VOLUNTEERS AND PERSONNEL

The mission of converting from an all-volunteer department to full-time paid staff at the NRFPD is ongoing. As of this writing we are pleased to report that we have returned to the staffing level of 6. Kevin Fischer Firefighter/EMT-B returned to work at the end of the ski season and will be on C-Shift with Gavin Telles. Chris Kelly EMT-B/Wild-land Firefighter started his first shift on April 18th and is assigned to A-Shift with Paul Rose. New EMT-B/Wildland Firefighter Estelle Crimmins started her new career at NRFPD on May 20th. Estelle will be assigned to B-shift and work with Vladan Chase. We welcome Estelle to the district and thank all our staff for their dedication to the NRFPD.

As we continue the conversion to paid EMTs and firefighters, a significant obstacle in attracting and retaining personnel is housing. We are not immune to the lack of affordable housing, which is further impacted by the rural character of our District. If you have any knowledge of reasonable cost housing that we could use to attract additional staff, please contact Chief Mathisen or any of the Directors.

While we continue to move toward full-time paid staff we still need, want and encourage volunteers to join us in serving our community and the fire districts' needs. Earlier this year, the Board discussed incentives that may encourage volunteers to join the department and continue to serve as volunteers. At its April meeting, the Board approved a per call stipend. Effective May 1st, \$150 will be paid to volunteers who arrive for and work a call for service. As always, if you or you are aware of someone who may be interested in serving our community as a volunteer, please contact Chief Mathisen, any of our volunteers or paid staff or any of the Directors.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

As they did in 2023, the Three Forks Ranch most graciously hosted our annual Fundraising Dinner on January 31st. The residents of the North Routt community look forward to this event, and as expected, it was well attended. Three Forks' owner David Pratt was kind enough to provide the cost of the event on a complimentary basis and all of the ticket receipts were donated to the NRFPD. We appreciate his generosity and the efforts of the Three Forks staff for a wonderful evening of fine dining and entertainment. Thank you.

On May 17th, the Vista Verde Guest Ranch reintroduced the "BBQ and Barn Dance" fundraising event after a COVID pause. The evening consisted of a social hour, barbeque dinner with all the "fixings" followed by an old-fashioned barn dance in the barn with line dancing, square dancing and country western dancing. Lessons were provided by Vista Verde's own Nate Margason! Vista Verde owner, Chris Jones welcomed guests throughout the evening and generously absorbed the costs of the event thereby providing a wonderful donation to the district. We cannot express enough appreciation to Mr. Jones and the staff of Vista Verde for their efforts in providing a great event! Thank you.

DRY HYDRANTS

Dry hydrants can be a great source of firefighting 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.

Our plans are to refurbish these sites when 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 installed 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 guide. Also, information may be viewed at:

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs143_026061.pdf

EMERGENCY CALLS FOR SERVICE

Below are the historical number and types of calls including the first 4 months of 2024.

Yearly Call Volume by Incident Type									
DESCRIPTION	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Structure Fires	2	5	3	3	1	2	3	1	2
EMS	45	43	45	30	56	46	39	53	8
MVA	12	11	10	9	13	15	15	12	5
Illegal Burn					15	11	3	8	
Wildland Fires	8	15	15	1	8	11	0	3	
Service Call	32	29	29	44	36	30	14	20	7
Rescues	8	2	7	5	4	8	14	8	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>19</u>	<u>8</u>
Totals	153	132	143	120	172	148	119	124	32

* Through May 20, 2024

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

WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

While it may be difficult to imagine given the slow move into summer, wildfire season will soon be upon us. Remember to clear undergrowth around and near your home and structures and to have a clear defensible space. 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://northrouthfire.colorado.gov/>) under the **Wildland Fire Safety** tab, as well as at the newly formed Routt County Mitigation Council website at <http://routtwildfire.org> Another great source is <https://csfs.colostate.edu/csfspublications/>. 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.

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://northrouthfire.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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