

2012 Community Newsletter

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1 SEPTEMBER 2012

MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

First, I would like to thank all our patrons for their support of our volunteer fire department. Next, all of our volunteers deserve a big thank you for their dedication to continually train, maintain our equipment and respond to calls for help we receive to assist our neighbors and community whenever the need arises.

I am pleased to announce that your fire department has improved its' Insurance Services Office (ISO) fire protection classification from a 6/9 rating to a 5/6 rating. Many insurance companies use this classification system to determine rates for homeowners insurance premiums. Those whose insurance company uses the ISO rating system will have the new rate that takes effect on October 1st of this year. There is a related article included in this newsletter on page 14 that has more information about this change.



Your volunteer firefighters, EMTs and medical first responders have worked long and hard this summer in very hot conditions putting out fires, attending to those hurt in accidents and taking care of those with emergency medical ailments. All four of our fire stations continue to need donations of bottled water to keep our crews hydrated. We use bottled water all year long, but in the summer months we use bottled water faster than we can purchase it. Central Arkansas Water (CAW) used to donate toward our supply, but has now discontinued this service. A donation of a case here and a case there would be greatly appreciated. Please let me know if you can help or feel free to drop off a case or two of bottled water at any of our WPFD stations.

Finally, our department normally gathers as a group once a year for a holiday event that doesn't involve training or work. This is rare for us. We have a department Christmas party to eat, so-cialize and relax. We try to provide small door prizes for our volunteers as a thank you for their service. These men and women volunteers receive no pay for the services they provide, so I want to show them how much they are appreciated whenever and however possible. If you have a business or a business contact that would like to contribute toward our door prize gifts for our volunteers at our annual Christmas party please contact me at (501) 821-9320 or email at wpfd@sbcglobal.net. Without our volunteers we would not have one of the best volunteer fire departments in Arkansas.

Again, thank you for your support. It is an honor to serve as your Fire Chief.

Ronnie Wheeler, Fire Chief

Annual "<u>All You Can Eat</u>" Chicken and Catfish Dinner—Sept 22, 2012

Join us for our annual fundraiser dinner at the Martindale Baptist Church gymnasium.

Great food and fun begins at 5 p.m. with the food serving line open until 7 p.m.

Bring the whole family and your appetites. Adults \$12/Children 5-12 \$6/ Kids 4 and under eat free!

MEET SOME OF WEST PULASKI FIRE DEPARTMENT'S VOLUNTEERS



Fire Chief/EMT Ronnie Wheeler

FIRE CHIEF—-RONNIE WHEELER, CFF/EMT

How long have you been a volunteer firefighter? I joined the fire department in 1999. That would be about 13 1/2 years ago.

<u>What motivated you to join the volunteer fire department</u>? I heard of a need for volunteer firefighters, especially those to assist with medical calls.

<u>What type of training or specialties do you enjoy that you have ac-</u> <u>quired as a volunteer firefighter?</u> I am a certified firefighter. I have advanced training in medical response as an Emergency Medical Technician and also respond with the Pulaski County Hazardous Materials (Haz-Mat) team.

What do you like most about being a volunteer firefighter? I really enjoy the ability to help my community and neighbors in their time of need. What is your current profession/job when you are not a volunteer?

recently retired from the Arkansas Health Department with 31 1/2 years of service.

How do you spend your free time when not working/volunteering with WPFD? I am very busy as Fire Chief, but enjoy spending time with my family and playing golf when I can.



Firefighter Rene Freret (Station #2)

FIREFIGHTER—RENE FRERET, CFF/FR

How long have you been a volunteer firefighter? I joined the fire department in January of 1998....that makes 14 1/2 years on the department.

<u>What motivated you to join the volunteer fire department</u>? I wanted to join because I had firefighting experience with the U.S. Navy and thought I could help in the community.

What type of training or specialties do you enjoy that you have acquired as <u>a volunteer firefighter?</u> I prefer the fire and rescue aspect of our department. I try to leave the medical responses to the more qualified, medically trained members of our department.

What do you like most about being a volunteer firefighter? I mostly enjoy the fact I now have enough experience to operate our firefighting equipment properly and can effectively support the firefighters on the fire/incident scene.

<u>What is your current profession/job when you are not a volunteer</u> I retired after 30 years with the U.S. Geological Survey's Water Resources Division as a Hydrologic Technician installing satellite transmitting equipment that monitored water related data...river levels, discharge, water quality, etc.

How do you spend your free time when not working/volunteering with <u>WPFD?</u> On household projects that I could never complete while working full time....or in my hammock reading a good book.

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1



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SAFETY NOTICE PLEASE SLOW DOWN & PULL OVER FOR ANY EMERGENCY VEHICLE

When any emergency vehicle (fire truck or firefighter in a personal vehicle) is approaching with emergency lights and/or sirens....

PLEASE SLOW DOWN, PULL TO THE RIGHT, STOP IN A SAFE LOCATION AND ALLOW THEM TO PASS YOU SAFELY.



This will allow the emergency vehicle adequate room to safely get around you using visibly clear passing lanes to continue its emergency response.

Never stop on a blind curve or hill where the fire vehicle cannot see oncoming traffic to pass you safely





18900 Congo Ferndale Road Little Rock AR 72210-5508

Baptist Church THANK YOU CRBC FOR SUPPORTING

YOUR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT!

WPFD INVESTING IN RADIO UPGRADES

For any fire department, radio communications can be as valuable a tool for responding in an emergency situation as a big red truck, water and a fire hose. Our volunteer staff are not normally standing by at their stations waiting for the next call. We are often at our homes or somewhere in the community when we are notified about the need for an emergency response. Volunteers, like us, carry voice pagers and radios to coordinate our resources in an instant when an emergency arises. We have to change our plans, redirect our energy and switch direction FAST so we can respond to the emergency needs of our community. Without our pagers and radios, coordinating our people and equipment just would not happen too swiftly.

The radio frequencies that WPFD uses are licensed to us by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Emergency responders across the country are facing a looming deadline of January 1, 2013, to meet a new federal requirement called 'frequency narrow-banding'. The channels we use to call and coordinate our volunteers are 'shrinking' in size to make room for more dedicated radio channels in the same radio spectrum. Essentially, we keep the same channels to communicate, but the new ordinance tightens the space around our channels. This small change isn't so small.

What this means to our fire department is we are facing challenges on how we will perform communications in our fire district area. Many of our older, but very functional radios, cannot be reprogrammed to use the new narrow frequencies as required. Quality radios for our type of jobs are not cheap, whether portable (handheld) or mobile (truck mounted) our radios must meet professional grade standards for durability and reliability. For our other modern radios that can be reprogrammed, we still expect to have issues with how our frequencies will perform in the narrow-banded world. We are expecting the plain physics of radio frequency operation could reduced the effectiveness of our broadcast range because of the frequency change. We won't loose signal strength; however, these "narrowed" frequency channels could cause us to have 25% less effectiveness coverage in our fire district. This is a pretty big deal when we already struggle connect effectively in areas with tough geographic obstacles (mountains, valleys, etc.) in our 160 square mile fire district. Radios work great in line-of-sight. Obstacles and distance can greatly reduce performance.

So, how do we get better with communications and meet the requirement for narrow-banding? Well, WPFD has been working very hard this past year to be ready for this mandatory change that will impact our communications life-line quite a bit. Investment has already begun to improve the signal strength in our outlying areas by adding relay stations (satellite repeaters) to extend our radio range and help our radio signals reach our main radio tower located in the east central area of our district on Shinall Mountain. This will be done by upgrading our backup repeater at Station #1 (Col. Glenn) to improve service in the southern part of our district. In the west-central part of our district a new satellite repeater is being planned for the Brush Mountain area. These changes will work well with a previous upgrade we made a few years ago to place a similar satellite repeater in the Wye mountain area around Station #4 that covers the north side of our fire district.

We also have started acquisition of newer portable and mobile radio units that support the narrow-banding capability to replace the radio equipment that cannot be upgraded. These investments will not come cheap but will provide quality communications for our responders for many years to come. The hope is that we will communicate better than ever in 2013. Look for updates next year.



FERNCLIFF CAMP & CONFERENCE CTR.

1720 FERNCLIFF RD LITTLE ROCK, AR 72223

WWW.FERNCLIFF.ORG

THANK YOU FERNCLIFF CAMP FOR SUPPORTING

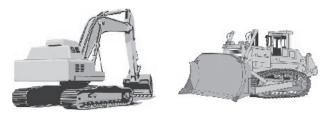
YOUR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT!

WPFD Performing Pre-Incident Planning For Local Businesses Now Underway

Beginning in September, West Pulaski Fire Department will be conducting fire and emergency planning activities on business and commercial structures in our area to create a more detailed emergency response plan for all local businesses. If you own or operate a business within our fire district area, please look for WPFD to contact you in the near future regarding our preincident planning. Gathering this planning information in advance of an incident can helps us be more prepared for any emergency situations at your business location.

Advance planning like this can also help improve the Insurance Service Office (ISO) fire ratings for our area property owners and businesses. Lower ISO fire ratings can lead to better insurance rates for everyone where fire insurance costs are calculated based on our fire suppression capabilities. We would like to let everyone know that our planning is not a "fire inspection". Our evaluation is only designed to obtain information to help our response abilities to local businesses. A formal "fire inspection", like what you would need to fulfill the State Fire Marshall's office or insurance company requirement is a completely different process and will NOT be conducted while we are on-site for planning activities.

We hope to make our pre-incident evaluation quick and non-disruptive as possible. If you would like to reach us to make an appointment for a preincident planning evaluation, please send an email to <u>wpfd@sbcglobal.net</u> and we will have your nearest fire station contact you to schedule a time to meet with you.



GREG BREWER EXCAVATING

2610 Betty Drive Little Rock, Arkansas Phone 501-821-3777

FERNDALE EXTENSION CLUB

27021 KANIS ROAD

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

Thank you to the Ferndale Extension Club For Supporting Your Volunteer Firefighters

DALE WHITE- 25 YEAR VOLUNTEER RETIRES FROM WPFD

Firefighter Dale White retired this year from West Pulaski Fire Department after 25 years of volunteer service to his community. Dale has seen much growth and many changes in the department since he joined up in 1987. He probably has a lot more response runs than he can recall. Dale served the length of his time with us at Station #2, in the Ferndale area, as a firefighter and in various officer positions, including Assistant Chief. He responded frequently to other station areas to since he works in Ferndale as a custom cabinet builder. He was usually around to respond in the daytime when other volunteers worked out the area. We want to say thank you to Dale for the many years of service to our department and the community. If you see Dale around with "too much free time", please tell him "Thank You" answering so many calls for help.

Dale White

CHARLIE AMATO- 17 YEAR VOLUNTEER RETIRES FROM WPFD

Firefighter Charlie Amato retired this year from West Pulaski Fire Department after 17 years of volunteer service to his community. Charlie has seen a lot of growth and development at WPFD since he joined in 1995. When Charlie joined us he was often working on an oil rig out of state or out of the country for a month at a time. When he returned home every other month he was able to respond day and night to our bedroom community. This proved to be very beneficial when we had fewer volunteers available in the Ferndale area during the daytime hours. Charlie eventually was able to work in Arkansas full time and most recently in officer positions in the last decade. He retired most recently at the rank of Battalion Chief. We want to say thank you to Charlie for his many years of service to our department. Station #2 and the many communities in WPFD's service area. If you see Charlie when he isn't spending time with his kids, grandkids, on the lake or enjoying his new found free-time, please tell him "Thank You" for answering so many calls for help.



Charlie Amato

YOU KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE BUT WE MAY NOT. **HELP US FIND YOU WHEN SECONDS COUNT.**

WPFD would like to remind everyone that properly marking your mailing address on your mailbox, driveway, gate or shared access road is more important than ever. You may not realize first responders need large and easy-to-read address numbers to find you quickly. Even if your address is not the place we are looking for, having easily readable address numbers will help us in locating the correct location. We continually have major issues with poor address markings in our fire district, often addresses are difficult to locate

in an emergency situation. Since WPFD responds to medical and trauma calls 75% of the time, we cant just look for smoke or fire to lead us closer to our dispatched address. We continue to respond at all hours of the day and in any kinds of weather. Having your address properly displayed in several locations with LARGE and contrasting numbers will save minutes when every seconds counts. Please check your address markings against this list below to determine if yours needs improvements.

Address Check List

Are your address numbers:

- Visible from ANY approaching direction, at ANY time of day or night and in ANY type of weather?
- Posted with LARGE Numerals located on BOTH sides and on the FRONT of the mailbox?
- At least 3-4 inches tall, reflective and/or highly contrasting?
- Blocked or obscured by mailbox flag or surrounding weeds / vegetation?
- Blocked by a neighbors mailbox?
- Posted at your driveway with LARGE, reflective and/or contrasting numbers?
- Posted on a sign or post that leads us to your house?
- Displayed with LARGE address numbers on your home?

FINDING YOU QUICKLY IS THE BEST WAY TO HELP YOU QUICKLY.





Improving WPFD's Service Fleet

Newer Tanker #4 Under Construction For Wye Mountain (Station #4):

WPFD recently acquired a 1993 Freightliner semi-tractor chassis from the Arkansas Forestry Commission's Rural Fire Program. This vehicle chassis was donated from retired military surplus with low miles and lots of life. The truck has been readied by WPFD for transport to the Tucker Prison Bus/Vehicle Fabrication shop for refurbishing of the entire truck and construction of a 2,500 gallon water tank, storage racks, paint, trim and accommodations to hold a portable drop-tank.

This truck will be in great working order when we get it back in a few months. The Arkansas Rural Fire Program and Tucker's fabrication shop is a great way to acquire and affordably refurbish and construct fire apparatus that will boost our water carrying needs in areas that do not have pressurized fire hydrants or adequate water flow in local hydrants. We have been very pleased with our continued upgrades of water capacity using tanker trucks like these and plan to do more where needed to ensure we get reliable and easy-to-maintain vehicles that serve our communities.

We look forward to letting you know the progress on this truck as it is reborn as a fire apparatus. We will be posting updates on our website at <u>www.wpfirescue.org</u>.



Thanks to our Sponsors one and all.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED- LET US KNOW IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP

Would you like to help your local volunteer fire department, but you don't know where to begin? Would you like to help out, but don't know how? If you bring the effort and a positive attitude, we will provide the equipment, the training and know-how to become a volunteer member of the West Pulaski Fire Department.

If you would like to help out, but don't want to be a firefighter, we can always use help with building/grounds maintenance, office/ administration, medical personnel and more. No prior experience needed. Please give us a call at (501)821-9320, send an email to wpfd@sbcglobal.net or just stop by any of our WPFD Stations.

ARKANSAS GETS ENHANCED 911 SYSTEM



WWW.SMART911.COM

SMART911 is a free enhanced 911 emergency calling program brought to you from the State of Arkansas that is being launched incrementally over the next few months. If you have an emergency, you will still need to dial 911 to reach an emergency operator; however, you now have the opportunity safely store helpful information like driving directions to your home, description of your house, medical conditions, and other special circumstances that can be delivered automatically to responders if you need to call for help. So don't delay in learning about how this new program will work to protect you and your family. Building your enhanced 911 profile will help emergency responders, like West Pulaski Fire Department, ambulance services and sheriff deputies find you guicker in an emergency and serve you better. Begin creating your free user profile at www.smart911.com so your critical information can be associated with the home and wireless phone numbers your family uses. WPFD will update you on our website at wpfirerescue org and our facebook page as the services are rolled out to our fire district areas in the coming months. You can begin to benefit right now with a Smart911 profile should you have to dial 911 while in an area that has already launched their SMART911 Systems, like Searcy, Benton, North Little Rock. All of the information used for this program is stored in a safe and secure manner where it is only visible to emergency personnel for a very short time when you make an 911 call. Please do not wait to create your safety profile. Help first responders help you faster in an emergency situation. Visit www.smart911.com now to learn more. It might safe your life or the life of a love one. Please don't delay. Learn more today at www.smart911.com



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FIND WPFD ON THE INTERNET AND FACEBOOK ANYTIME:

West Pulaski Fire Department's website has tons of information, news and events you can view at **<u>www.wpfirerescue.org.</u>** This is a great way to stay informed about your volunteer fire department.

- o Fire department news and information
- o Get fire and safety preparedness tips
- o Find links to weather, maps, state agencies and more
- o Learn from our FAQs section on fire dept. related topics

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2012 Community Newsletter



- o West Pulaski Fire Dept. is now on Facebook!
- Visit us on FACEBOOK and become a "LIKE" is today!
- Search: West Pulaski Fire Department (Little Rock, Arkansas)





WPFD ISO PUBLIC PROTECTION CLASSIFICATION 5/6

West Pulaski Fire Department has spent the past several years working to improve the current fire protection classification assigned by the Insurance Services Office. This fire protection 'rating' can affect the insurance rates for property owners that buy insurance from companies that utilize the ISO classification. Strong improvements we have made to our response vehicles, equipment, training, and best utilization of water resources in our area have definitely helped us improve the overall fire protection classification of our fire district.

Fire pumpers, tools and improved water tankers have really helped ensure we have needed equipment to manage fire suppression. We are also pleased to have gained ISO points during the recent evaluation to help improve our fire protection rating. Recently expanded water districts have also improved available water supply for firefighting by bringing fire hydrants to areas that were almost entirely dependent on water from tanker vehicles.

This new rating came very close to the next lower score, which we will continue to strive to obtain. WPFD is always working to improve our capabilities and gain credit for the water upgrades made to our service area. Even though we have made great strides to improve our capabilities, the Insurance Services Office that does the fire classification ratings for the insurance industry, has also made their standards for fire suppression capabilities more difficult. The means the ISO evaluation reinforced the importance placed on a property location and its proximity to its nearest fire station AND to an adequate water source, whether it is a pressurized hydrant or a dry hydrant that can siphon from a nearby pond. Because of the increased ISO standards, some residents will notice your rating will change from a Class 9 to a Class 10 if you are further than 5 road miles from a fire station, regardless of a close water supply.

New Fire Public Protection Class 5/6 (Effective Oct. 1, 2012)

WPFD will now be associated with a Fire Protection Class 5/6. This split rating is dependent on the location of your property and criteria that applies based on Insurance Service Office requirements.

<u>Class 5</u> - For property owners that live within 5 road miles of a WPFD fire station AND are located within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant (pressurized or non-pressurized/dry hydrant)

<u>Class 6</u> - For property owners that live within 5 road miles of a WPFD fire station AND are located greater than 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant (pressurized or non-pressurized/dry hydrant)

<u>**Class 10**</u> – For property owners that live greater than 5 road miles of a WPFD fire station the ISO assigns a fire protection class of 10.

WPFD encourages you to contact your insurance provider or the Insurance Services Office about how this rating change affects you. To learn more about the ISO PPC program, visit their website at http://www.iso.com/faq/ISO-FAQ/The-Public-Protection-Classification-PPC-Program.html





Board of Commissioners:

Comm/Chairman: Greg Brewer Commissioner: Ronnie Wheeler (Fire Chief)

Commissioner: Chris Smith Comm/Treasurer: Clay Gilliland Commissioner: Steve Brown

CONTACT INFO:

Send mail correspondence to: West Pulaski Fire Department 2810 Whispering Pines Rd Little Rock, AR. 72210

Non-Emergency Business Phone: (501) 821-9320

Email us anytime at: wpfd@sbcglobal.net

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.WPFIRERESCUE.ORG

IN AN EMERGENCY, DIAL 911 IMMEDIATELY TO GET US STARTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. DON'T WASTE VALUABLE TIME WHEN SECONDS COUNT THE MOST! West Pulaski Fire Department is a public department whose members are dedicated volunteers (unpaid) with fire, rescue and medical response training.

WPFD is classified as a public charity under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Our fire department, WPFD, is also eligible to receive tax-deductible donations, bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to the department are tax deductible.

Do You Know Where Your Local Fire Station Is Located?

Station 1 – 2810 Whispering Pines Road (Near Col. Glenn)

Station 2 – 25911 Kanis Road in the Ferndale area

Station 3 – 22624 Hwy 10 and Ferndale Cut-off.

Station 4— 35921 Hwy 300 in Little Italy.

Feel free to come by any of our stations to meet our volunteers, tour our station, look at our fire equipment (bring the kids!) or find out how you can join our department.

Our stations are not staffed at all times, however, we conduct weekly maintenance on most Tuesday nights between 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. We look forward to you dropping by!

WEST PULASKI<

Invites YOU to our <u>All-U-Can-Eat</u> Annual Catfish and Chicken Dinner

Saturday, September 22, 2012

Martindale Baptist Church 18900 Colonel Glenn Road

Serving line open from 5:00 PM until 7:00 PM

\$12.00 for Adults - \$6.00 for Children (5-12 Years)

Kids 4 years and under EAT FREE!

Directions to our dinner: 6 miles west of I-430 on Col. Glenn Rd. (Located between the intersections of Marsh Road and Burlingame Road on Col. Glenn Road)