

July 18, 2017

Curry Fire Season: Need for volunteers.

Dear Editor;

As we approach the remainder of our summer, all should be reminded of wise awareness and how exposed we often are to fire. Our forests produce some of the highest quality, fastest growing trees in the world, providing clear water, clean air and tremendous fish and wildlife habitat.

Add the recreational and timber harvest value to our rural Oregon and local economy—and all combined—it's a large part of the reason we live here. Most of us feel pretty fortunate to reside in such a great place and want to do our part to protect it.

As I write, there are presently 37 wild fires in the Western United States. The Fire Prevention meeting I called in Gold Beach on July 6 is a good example of the level of preparedness we need to maintain. I would like to thank all of the fire personnel and citizens who took their time to share information and take part in that important discussion. We all need to take personal responsibility by maintaining our properties in a fire safe manner. I attended the Whales Head Neighborhood meeting Monday night and happy to report that those folks are well on their way to improved planning, organizing, and preparation.

People need to ensure their defensible space around buildings through mowing, brushing, cutting overhanging branches, and keeping roofs free of debris. Maintain roads to allow for unobstructed access for incoming fire resources, using fire resistant vegetation and even considering an emergency water source for fire suppression.

An important part of the wise management formula here remains the need to assist all service groups, but especially our small Rural Volunteer Fire Departments. Many simply do not have enough people, and needless to say, operate on very limited budgets.

In all of our circles, we should each reach out to find those who could be a part of our RVFD'S, share the need and encourage them to join. While the work is hard, the benefits of community service and the training received are rewarding. And for those who aren't able to do this work, there are numerous ways to support those who do. For more information, please contact my office and I can get you in touch with your local Fire Department.

We've already had small fires county wide, and we're only one errant spark, accident or lightning storm away from more. Please be safe, prepared and help where you can.

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