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Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, March 16
Chairman receives recognition; wildland fire preparations on track

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on March 16, the board chairman received recognition for his service and the board received multiple updates that included the May board director election, the wildland firefighting preparations, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The board held an executive session to discuss the specialized details of security arrangements.

Chairman thanked for service

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid thanked Chairman Rick "Gator" Nearhoof for his eight years of dedicated service to the citizens of Black Forest as a board member, and he presented Nearhoof with a plaque.

Board member election

Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn said the district received four self-nominations for the May board election but only three were eligible, and the election will be cancelled. Dunn announced the three board member positions will be filled in May by:

- Chad Behnken
- Nate Dowden (incumbent vice chair)
- Kierstan Tarvainen

Wildland fire preparation

Langmaid said interviews with four temporary full-time wildland technicians had taken place and the district will bring on two in March and two in May for district mitigation work and wildland fire deployments.

Deputy Chief of Opera-

tions Chris Piepenburg said the following:

- The wildland fire pre-plan maps are moving along nicely, and all 91 tactical maps are plotted out.
- The drop and "Bambi Bucket" dip sites, the number of homes, and the resources required during a wildland fire are being added.
- The maps are being developed by Dave Reid at South Metro Fire Rescue Authority, Denver and could be completed by late May. See www.ocn.me/v21n9.htm#bffrpd and www.ocn.me/v21n10.htm#bffrpd.

Note: After the meeting, upon OCN's request, Langmaid confirmed that Piepenburg had been promoted to deputy chief of operations at the second BFFRPD Annual Awards and Recognition Banquet on March 2.

Fire restrictions—public notification

Langmaid said the district had moved back to Stage 1 fire restrictions, but during a "Red Flag" warning day, the district will implement Stage 2 fire restrictions for the hours the warning is in place. The Manitou Springs Fire Department implemented the same strategy in early March and the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) is considering the same, said Langmaid.

Treasurer Jack Hinton asked how the public would be informed when a Red Flag warning is in place.

Langmaid said the station signs would be updated

along with the district website and other social media sites. See www.bffire.org.

Recreational firepit concern—update

Director Jim Abendschan asked if the district had been compiling a list of vacation rental properties in Black Forest. See www.ocn.me/v22n3.htm#bffrpd.

Langmaid said the only way to compile a list of vacation rental properties is to visit each rental property site to determine how many exist in Black Forest, and then a visit to each property would be necessary to provide education on burn permits, but there is no governing body to provide such a list.

Abendschan said it is amazing how an unknown barrier could exist and potentially create a problematic area of concern for the district in the future.

Marshall Fire thank you

Nearhoof read a thank-you note from the Mountain View Fire Protection District, Boulder County, board of directors, thanking the district for a quick response and a job well done on Dec. 30 during the Marshall Fire.

Engine Boss John Dillon said that he and a crew deployed with an engine on Dec. 30 and spent five days supporting the draw-down of the Marshall Fire, primarily patrolling, helping out, and ensuring a firefighter presence if anything more were to happen.

Public comment

Resident Linda Smith requested information on six recent grass fires along Black Forest Road and asked if they had been determined intentional.

Langmaid said the following:

- The cause is undetermined and there are a number of possibilities, but there is no reason to believe they were intentional.
- The response highlighted the problem with the regional communications system operating on three different channels, but fortunately the shift commander and myself were able to get everyone aligned through the El Paso County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Communications Center and a good regional response was achieved.
- Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) did a great job taking the initiative to drive south on Hodgen Road, ensuring no

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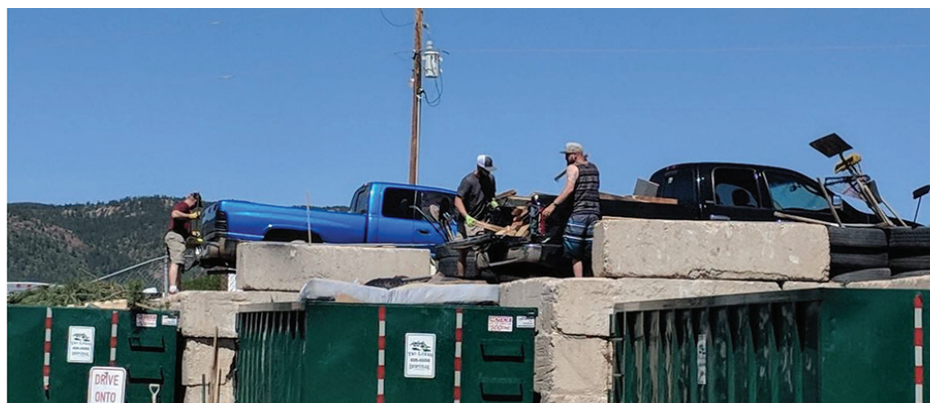
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