

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Jan. 15

# Calls up 29 percent in 2012

By Lisa Hatfield

On Jan. 15, the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board discussed its busy year for calls, which were up 29 percent compared to 2011. The board reviewed the financial report for 2012 that included a surplus due to profits from sending crews to wildfire deployments around the country.

Chief Vinny Burns and Assistant Chief Scott Ridings reported on the success of the new 48/96 shift schedule as well as continuing fire mitigation progress and community-building events. Pleasant View Estates is now designated a national Firewise Community. Wells Fargo will be the new unified financial institution for the district.

Board Secretary Greg Gent chaired the meeting in the absence of Chairman Scott Campbell, who was excused.

## Year-end financial report

Some of the figures Administrative Assistant Cheryl Marshall reported regarding the district's 2012 profit and loss performance were:

- Budgeted expenses—\$1.9 million
  - Total actual expenses—\$1.8 million
  - Budgeted income—\$1.9 million
  - Total actual income—\$2 million
  - 2013 estimated beginning fund balance—\$1.5 million
- These totals will be adjusted slightly when the 2012 audit is completed.

The district's expenses were about 95 percent of what was budgeted, and income was about 106 percent of the 2012 budget predictions. Mentioning this in his report, Chief Vinny Burns said, "Thanks to our staff, we've come in under budget (once again)... We actually made some profit."

Some profits came from eight wildfire deployments for which the district volunteered when it had enough manpower "to backfill our stations properly and not sacrifice any service to our residents," Marshall said. The district has been reimbursed for all its 2012 wildfire deployments except for the Hewlett Fire in Fort Collins, which will add about \$10,000 to the 2012 income total, Marshall said. The district saves these profits to purchase new equipment as needed in the future.

Board Secretary Greg Gent asked Marshall about "a few line items" that were over budget. Marshall said they will have to prepare an amended budget just as they did last fall. All 2013 budget items were filed Dec. 15 with the county and the state in accordance with the law, she said.

Balances as of Dec. 31, 2012:

- People's National Bank—\$607,000
- Colorado Peak Fund—\$179,000
- ColoTrust Fund—\$439,000
- Total—\$1.2 million
- District 6 calls—606
- District 5 calls—416
- AMR calls—614
- Mutual aid calls—370
- Training hours completed—1,013 (average 2.77 hours per day)
- Fire loss total \$162,300 (pre-incident value \$1,927,000)

The special district transparency notice required by law has been posted on the Wescott website [www.wescottfire.org](http://www.wescottfire.org), Marshall said. It lists financial information and the date for the next election, which will be May 6, 2014.

The 2012 year-end financial statements were unanimously accepted as presented.

## Chief's report

Chief Burns said December was very busy. Santa made several visits to the district, including the kids party at Station 2 and the Santa Patrol Dec. 22, where Santa rode a fire truck and greeted families. Burns commended Assistant Chief Scott Ridings for organizing the events, which help create good community relations.

Burns said that Fire Marshal Margo Humes and Assistant Chief Ridings had established Pleasant View Estates as a nationally recognized Firewise community. Ridings said, "Being a Firewise community means you've completed a certain amount of work and will continue on. ... It's not 100 percent complete, but (Pleasant View) is making that commitment." Work includes preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, doing mitigation around the houses, creating shaded fuel breaks, and giving the firefighters a safe place to enter their neighborhood, said Ridings.

"The firefighter shift guys are on the 48/96 work schedule as of Jan. 1," Chief Burns said. "Everyone in the north group is on that schedule now," including:

- Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District
- Donald Wescott Fire Protection District
- Falcon Fire Protection District
- Larkspur Fire Protection District
- Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District
- American Medical Response Ambulance

The benefit of being on the same shift schedule as surrounding fire districts is that it "builds some integrity, familiarity. You're always working with the same people" when answering mutual aid calls, Burns said.

Some of the figures Assistant Chief Scott Ridings reported during his presentation of the district's 2012 year-end run report were:

- 2011 total calls—1,559—19 percent increase from 2010
- 2012 total calls—2,006—29 percent increase from 2011, average of four responders per call

Ridings said December was the busiest month of the year as usual, adding, "This is the first time we've hit 2,000 calls since we closed the Vincent station." Overall response time has been cut 5 percent in every category, excluding AMR's numbers, since they go on runs out of district, he said.

## Accounts moved to Wells Fargo

The board voted unanimously to move Wescott's banking accounts to Wells Fargo bank. Previously, Wescott had two accounts with People's National Bank and used a private company to do payroll. Since Wells Fargo can process payroll in-house, the move will save the district about \$2,700 a year in payroll expenses.

Administrative Assistant Marshall said the difference in checking and savings account interest rates between People's and Wells Fargo was "a wash. Our real savings is in the payroll and streamlining so it we can process the payroll in two days instead of three days." Wells Fargo will also handle all the state and federal taxes and W-2s, "so we don't have to get involved in that," Marshall said.

After a short discussion, the board decided to continue to include all five board members and both chiefs on the signature card for the new accounts to be sure there's always someone available to sign checks as needed. Chief Burns said he hopes to move to more online banking in the future, and this will be easier with the Wells Fargo setup.

The district will still have a

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Palmer Lake Elementary School 2:30-3:30 p.m. & 6-7:30 p.m.  
Prairie Winds Elementary School 2-3 p.m. & 5-6:30 p.m.  
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Registration packets will be available at preschool and elementary schools, the district website and the administration office

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