

DWFPD (cont. from page 1)

wrote, "After executive session, the board reconvened into a regular board meeting at 10:33 p.m. (Director) William McAllister made a motion to proceed ahead with the necessary actions and steps to increase the mill levy from 7 to 11 mills. (Director) Joyce Hartung seconded the motion. After several months of strategizing, there was a final discussion regarding raising the mill levy. A vote was taken and the motion passed. The Board directed Fire Chief (Vinny Burns) to "begin the necessary actions with the county to present this on the next ballot issue."

Since a possible consolidation or merger with the

Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District is being discussed, the two fire districts would like to have equal mill levy rates to simplify voters' decisions in a possible public vote on a merger.

Black Forest Fire synopsis and chief's report

Some of the comments Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District Chief Bob Harvey made during public comments:

- I want to tell the board and all the members of the district what an exceptional performance that the Wescott members did on Tuesday and Wednesday (June 11 and 12), especially when we held the fire at High Forest Ranch. It was absolutely remarkable.
We all drew together... I saw cohesiveness. I saw intelligent decisions. I saw determination.
The Wescott crews really came out shining on top.
It was the best collaborative effort I've seen in a long, long time. You have some officers to be extremely proud of.
Chief (Vinny) Burns, (Assistant Chief Scott) Ridings, and Capt. (Sean) Pearson will be receiving a medal of commendation from Black Forest.

Some of the highlights Burns shared were:

- There is no comparison (with the Waldo Canyon Fire). At Waldo, they had three days to figure this out, make decisions, pre-position equipment. We had literally 10 minutes to figure this out. (Black Forest) had more vegetation to carry (the fire); nothing would stop it. Like an avalanche of fire. It was a firestorm, a crown fire.
We tried to make a quick attack on it.... The wind



Above: Sean Leonhardt was sworn in as a full-member volunteer firefighter June 18 by board Chairman Scott Campbell. Photo by Lisa Hatfield.

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- took it, and it was gone.
What carried this fire was the trees. The trees are stressed. There's 12 years worth of drought in those trees. And that's why that fire took off. The trees are dying.
On Wednesday at High Forest Ranch, the big players were Tri-Lakes Monument FPD, Black Forest FRPD, Donald Wescott FPD, and Colorado Springs FPD.
The strategy was 'Not one more damn house. It's not going to get out of this neighborhood. Because if it does, if it crosses 83, we're screwed.' That count would have gone to 1,500 homes or more.... It's thicker trees, denser housing. I was terrified.
Some houses had needles and duff right up to the walls of the house. Ridiculous.
They must have done some mitigation right behind that house (where the crown fire stopped in High Forest Ranch); there were big enough gaps in the trees that they couldn't continue to carry the fire. The house was stucco, thank God, and asphalt roof. The deck melted, and the back of the house was scorched.
We didn't want it to go up (north) because the next stop is it gets in the back side of Woodmoor. That's going to be as equally bad a disaster.
I can't say enough about how hard everyone worked.
We had no water (hydrants). Just a couple of tenders (water trucks) from Black Forest.
Incident Commander Rich Harvey is an absolute joy to work with. I can't say enough good about that guy.... It was seamless between the feds and our operation.
Some of the lessons that were put out at Waldo were

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