

THE DISTRICT 6 DISPATCH

A public service newsletter from Okanogan County Fire District 6
“Serving the upper Methow Valley from Gold Creek to Lost River”

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Vacancy Filled

Former Twisp Fire and Rescue volunteer fire chief Keith Comstock is OCFD6’s newest Division Chief. Comstock was recently selected to fill the vacancy left when Division Chief Ottis Buzzard resigned to accept a position with the Okanogan County Sheriff’s Office.

Comstock has lived in the Valley since 1991 and began volunteering for OCFD6’s Carlton station in 1994. In 2007 he moved to Twisp and became chief later that year. Most recently he worked as the Maintenance Supervisor for Wesola Polana in Mazama. Prior to that he owned Mountain Interiors in Twisp.

“Keith is a good fit,”

commented Chief Don Waller, “he knows our personnel, our tactics, and our community.”

“This is something that I’ve hoped for for quite a while. After 18 years as a volunteer I’m excited to turn my passion into a career,” proclaimed Comstock.

Keith has already hit the ground running. He has recently certified as an Emergency Vehicle Incident Prevention instructor. This allows him



Comstock pictured in October modifying his helmet for training.

to teach District personnel how to safely operate a vehicle with lights and sirens.

Congratulations Keith! You’re a welcome addition to OCFD6’s paid staff.

Volunteers Needed

OCFD6 is looking for firefighters. We need volunteers for our Carlton, Winthrop, and Mazama stations.

If you or someone you know:

- Is over 18 and lives in

our community

- Is willing to submit to our background check
- Has a desire to help others
- Enjoys hard work and having fun

- Is looking for a challenge

Please contact Division Chief Brian McAuliffe by phone– 996-2227 ext 3 or by email— bmcauliffe@okanogancountyfd6.com

The New Tender is Here

Just prior to the new year, the Fire District took delivery of a brand new tender.

The newly minted Tender 631 was purchased with the help of a \$261,000 FEMA grant and will now call the Twisp fire station home.

Tender 631 boasts a 3,000 gallon water tank, a 750 gallon per minute PTO pump, and a front bumper mounted monitor (water cannon) with an adjustable nozzle that is controlled by a joystick from inside the cab. Although the monitor may seem like a luxury, when combined with the PTO pump, they turn this truck into a rolling water source

with some amazing water delivery options.

Tender 631 doesn't carry all the equipment needed to fight a structure fire, but because of its pump it can, should the need arise.

This apparatus was "purpose built", meaning it was designed and



OCFD #6's New Tender

built to be used for fire service. The tender it replaced was purchased used, converted to fire service use, and no longer met the current standards or the needs of our community.

This new tender is a valuable asset to our fleet and its versatility is ex-

pected to prove itself time and again during the course of its career in the Methow Valley.

We Need Volunteers

Your community needs your help. OCFD6 is a volunteer based organization. There are 4 paid staff who provide leadership at emergency scenes, facilitate training, and support the volunteers by taking care of the day to day needs of the District. However, without volunteers OCFD6 could not exist.

Currently your fire district is

Low Numbers

experiencing a shortage of volunteers. The Carlton and Mazama stations have the greatest need, but overall the District needs committed volunteers.

"The volunteers we have are good, we just need more of them," says Chief Don Waller. He continued to say "truly we should have about 50 volunteers and as of now

Help Needed

we're down to 32."

Learn more about being a volunteer firefighter at our website, www.okanogancountyfd6.com

If you have questions about becoming a volunteer firefighter for OCFD6, please contact Division Chief Brian McAuliffe at 996-2227 ext 3.

Daylight Savings Time

Yes, it's that time of year again. March 11th marked the beginning of Daylight Savings time. **Don't forget to change the battery in your smoke detectors.**

Nationally, the common denominator in most deadly structure fires is the absence of a working smoke detector.

Smoke detectors should be cleaned and tested at least once a month. They can be gently vacuumed or blown out with a can of compressed air (what you would use on your computer, not your air compressor set at 100 + psi). To test your smoke detector, simply push and hold the "test" button for 10 sec-

onds while wearing ear plugs. Purposely burning something is not recommended. Smoke detectors over ten years old should be replaced.

Mark your calendar for **November 4th**. This will be the next time you should **change the battery in your smoke detectors.**

Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Bill McAdow (Mac-Adow). Bill is 37 and has volunteered for OCFD6's Winthrop station since September of 2009. He also volunteered for the Carlton station during high school in the early 1990s.

Bill moved to the Valley at the age of 9, when his parents Bill Sr. and Dianna bought the Carlton Store. He left the Methow after graduating high school to attend college and pursue a career.

Bill moved back to



Firefighter Bill McAdow

the Valley in 2008 when he purchased Harmony House Interiors from Carolyn Schmekel.

When asked how the District has changed in the 20 years since he last volunteered, McAdow re-

sponded "the equipment has vastly improved and the paid staff have made the training more organized and standardized."

When asked why he volunteers, Bill replied "I enjoy helping out the community and the comradery with the

other firefighters."

Last year Bill participated in the Scott's Firefighter Stair Climb with two other OCFD6 volunteers. He plans on punishing himself again this year. Entrants climb 69 flights of stairs in downtown Seattle's Columbia Center while wearing full bunker gear and a self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). This annual event raises money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The funds are used for blood cancer research and patient services.

If you see Bill in his store or out on an install, thank him for his service to our community.

You've Called 9-1-1, Can Help Get There?

Most driveways in the Fire District are not designed with 33 foot long 50,000 lb fire engines in mind. The large fire engines and tenders have specific needs in order to navigate your driveway safely.

The number one problem that OCFD6 responders confront is clearances. Driveways that are too narrow or have overhanging ob-

structions can prevent an engine from gaining access to your home. Access issues are often compounded by winter snow.

A close second are turns and switchbacks with too tight of a radius. Ideally, all turns should have at least a 28 ft inside radius.

Last but certainly not least, is the lack of a visible address. Make

sure that your address is reflective and clearly marked from at least 2 directions.

For more information on making your driveway accessible to fire response apparatus log on to: www.okanogancountyfd6.com

To have OCFD6 personnel come and assess your accessibility, call Chief Don Waller at 997-3981.

Free Smoke Detector Batteries for Seniors

OCFD6 has received 100 9 volt batteries from the Energizer Corporation. They are to be distributed for **free to seniors** as replacement batteries for smoke detectors.

In the U.S., Seniors 65 and older are 2.6 times more likely to die in a house fire than the general popula-

tion. When a senior reaches 85, the danger increases to 4.4 times. The number one cause of senior deaths due to fire is smoking in bed. The primary cause of senior injury due to fire is cooking related accidents.

Having at least one working smoke detector in your home is the

cheapest and easiest way to protect the members of your household from fire.

If you are over 65, live within the Fire District, and would like to receive up to two free 9 volt replacement batteries; contact Division Chief Brian McAuliffe at 996-2227 ext 3.

**A PUBLIC SERVICE NEWSLETTER FROM
OKANOGAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 6**

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Protecting Your Home From Wildfire

It's not too early to start thinking about wildfire and the likelihood of your home surviving one.

The term Defensible Space refers to the area around a structure where ground (horizontal) and ladder (vertical) fuels have been reduced to decrease the threat of wildfire. The two most important factors in determining a structure's survivability are: the type of roofing material and the quality of its defensible space.

One of the most common practices concerning defensible space is the 3 Zone approach.

Zone 1 extends from the drip line of the roof or any attached structure (deck, etc.) out 15 feet. All flammable vegetation should be removed and kept clear of this area.

Zone 2 is a reduced fuel transition area between Zones 1 and 3 that extends out at least 100 feet from the structure. Stressed, diseased, dead, or dying trees and shrubs should be removed. Any remaining trees should be thinned with at least 10 feet between the crowns and pruned to a height of 10 feet above the ground or 1/2 their height (whichever is less). Weeds and grasses should be kept to a maximum height of 6 inches.

Zone 3 extends from the boundary of Zone 2 to the property line. Fuels reduction is not necessary in this area, but will definitely enhance your home's survivability.

Keeping roofs clear of flammable debris and ensuring all vents and openings are screened will also in-

crease your home's chance of survival. Most structures that burn down during a wildfire are ignited by the ember shower, not the flame front. The burning embers not only ignite vegetation and other flammables on the exterior of the structure, but they are drawn into ventilation openings igniting from the inside as well.

By creating a defensible space around your home, you are giving firefighters room to work.

For site specific advice on how to make your space defensible, please contact Division Chief Brian McAuliffe by phone at 996-2227 ext 3 or through email at bmcauliffe@okanogancountyfd6.com