

Rock Creek Volunteer

Fire Department

Needs Assessment



October 2009

INTRODUCTION

On Saturday December 7, 2008 the communities of McCoy, Bond and Burns had a rebirth of their fire department. The previously defunct Bond/McCoy Volunteer Fire department was renamed Rock Creek Volunteer Fire Department (RCVFD) due to the local political turmoil. With 9 volunteers, 4 summer seasonal volunteers, 4 board members and countless donations from the public the department has been successful in re-establishing service to their communities. With few funds available, they still have an enormous amount of passion for wanting to make a difference in their communities.

In 1999 there were four board members and one operational member who formed the department. Training sessions were held on an informal basis. Local funding was secured and the donations began to come in. As funds were swelling, the discussions on how to spend them started to heat up. A fire department on the I-70 corridor pushed for a locally voted ballot issue for an inclusion, which failed. After months of fiery meetings and debate, the original department members quit and discontinued service.

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METHODOLOGY

Fire Chief's from Eagle and Gypsum thought it would be in the best interest of the new department to take advantage of opportunities that the Colorado Fire Chiefs Association has implemented. A report called a "Needs Assessment" that evaluates the current status of the department was included in the planning process to help improve the department. This process included the mentoring assistance of a Fire Chief from another county.

Chief Ron Thompson of the Pagosa Fire Protection District offered to assist newly elected Chief Brita Horn in the. The "Needs Assessment" includes a look at the geographical area, facilities, equipment and a listing of the current and future needs of the department from many voices of the community. Chief Thompson met with the Eagle County Fire Chiefs, Rock Creek Fire Board of Directors and department volunteers. These meetings were attended to help gain insight and perspectives of the Rock Creek Department and possible avenues for success.

FINDINGS

Currently the 244 square miles in north Eagle County has no mill levy for fire/first responder EMS services. The Rock Creek Volunteer Fire Department (RCVFD) is a non-profit 501c3 organization. The majority of the department's service area has Eagle County Ambulance District (ECAD) ALS medical response. The remainder is in the Western Eagle Ambulance District (WECAD). The boundaries generally are the Colorado River Water Shed Area. Detailed boundaries are from the Routt County line on the north to mile marker 7 on Highway 131 on the south, joining the Greater Eagle Fire Protection District boundary. The western boundary begins at Catamount Creek and the Gypsum Fire Protection District boundary and east to the Grand County line.

RCVFD responds to fires, rescue, and related emergency services including medical calls. Response times for both ECAD and GEFPD are approximately 30 minutes. In the early 1980's Avon Fire Department would head up to Highway 131 to respond to MVA's, fires and medical calls. More recently, GEFPD responded to the area: both departments responded without collecting a mill levy. Currently, ECAD responds while Eagle Fire stages at Wolcott to see if RCVFD needs additional resources. While Gypsum Fire has a mutual aid agreement with Rock Creek, RCVFD is working on securing mutual aid agreements with Yampa Fire and Kremmling Fire. All neighboring fire departments respond to calls with RCVFD and coordinate on scene.

HISTORY

The early inhabitants of the area were Ute Indians. Ute Chief Yarmonite was a very gentle man in his fifties. He only sought peace and harmony between the early settlers and the Indians. The first pioneers started to homestead in the 1880-1890's in Burns. Pioneers settled here because "a principle feature which attracted homesteaders was the accessibility of both low lands of the Grand River and the high grassy parks around the Flat Tops range" per *Early McCoy, Clark Ewing*. The High Desert of McCoy, Bond, Burns, State Bridge, Copper Spur (Coppertown), Rancho Del Rio, Sheephorn and Catamount brought many new start settlers to the area.

Also known as the "stockman's paradise" with cedar breaks, the attraction was to ranch, graze, mine, timber, hunt, fish and seek a better life. The stagecoach would travel through the towns from Wolcott

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(Russell) and Steamboat Springs. McCoy was considered “a hitching post” and welcomed the travelers to stretch their legs and get a good dinner at the McCoy Hotel. In *McCoy Memoirs*, John Ambos stated that when the town of McCoy was appointed a post office in 1891 it was the distribution point for Burns and Sheephorn. The *Rocky Mountain News* was quoted as calling McCoy “the liveliest town in Colorado”.

Farming also had a boom and bust with alfalfa, grains, and potatoes. Ranching and the timber business are still profitable in the area. With the railroad building thru the towns, it offered transportation for cattle to get to Denver in the fall. The railroad still is a life line snaking through the red rocks and dry high desert lands of the area. Many long trains carrying coal and freight at all hours of the day and night with a smattering of Amtrak trains filled with tourists. Logging trucks are also in constant motion on Highway 131; 24 trucks per day taking all the cut beetle kill logs to southern Colorado saw mills. In the days past, the timer business was booming by making ties and bridge material for the railroad.

Fast forwarding to the locals today, most of the residents travel to the I-70 corridor for work. They are in good company with many Routt County/Steamboat residents that also travel to the Eagle Valley for employment. There are a few cattle ranches left, some with a new breed of livestock: elk and alpacas. Bands of sheep are starting to show a revival in the region.

All-season recreation activities, including rafting, fishing, hiking, hunting and snowmobiling lure many visitors to the area on weekends.

The Rock Creek Academy (old McCoy School) has reopened in 2008 with 7 children and more on a waiting list for next year. School events are the heart of the community while senior citizens continue to meet once a month for fellowship and friendship. Church is well attended every Sunday and more and more community members are watching the Rock Creek Fire volunteers and their activities.

Some things have not changed; two of the four of the Fire Board of Directors are direct descendants of area pioneers. The volunteers live in the community and consist of teachers, administrators, plumbers, accountants, raft guides, carpenters and ranchers. The majority of fire, both wildland and structural, and EMS training and direction of the department are provided by local/regional professional EMT's and firefighters.

The spirit of the community is very traditional in nature, independent and deeply committed to a peaceful existence similar that of the area's historic past.

List of Donations:

ECAD (Eagle County Ambi District): Supplies, Mobile Radios, EMS Equipment, 2001 Expedition, and Training

WECAD (Western Eagle County Ambi District): Supplies, Training, 10 First Responder bags for firefighter personal vehicles

ECSO (Eagle County Sheriffs Office): Background Checks, Support

Vail Dispatch: Support, free service.

Vail Police Department: 10 XTS 3000 Radios, support

Eagle County Emergency Management: Radio support

Eagle County GIS: Maps

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Eagle County Community Development: Support, Wildland Training

Greater Eagle Fire Protection District: Supplies, Training, Mutual Aid, 1978 Ford Fire Engine, ladders, ropes, pike pole, shovels, hose, nozzles, appliances, generator, pump, compressor and salvage cover

Gypsum Fire Protection District: Supplies, bunker gear, radio support, and earplugs

Vail Fire: Training, Extrication Equipment Hydraulic, Air Chisel, Stokes Basket and box of appliances

Active Communications: Free Web Site

Century Tel: Free Static IP Address

Colorado Fire Chiefs Association: Sponsored Membership 2008

Colorado State Joint Training Officers Association: Sponsored Membership 2009 and 2010

Wilan Hopkins (Ernie & Myra Cock Family): 18 x 22 Building

Richard "Old Dog" Galloway: Meeting/Training space, supplies, truck parts

Bob Ford, John and Josh Ford: Lumber, labor, and equipment

Rick Karrow: Wood Sign

Sarah Glass: Artwork for sign

Sign Design: Truck signs

CDOT: New ANSI 107 Traffic Vests, 12 Tall Traffic Cones and 4 Boxes of Flares

Carl Horn: Fuel pump and labor on Rescue 25 and Brush 25

Union Pacific Railroad: 20X40 building

Vail Resorts Sign Shop: Tuck Signs and fire decals

Big Steve's Towing: 4 brooms and 4 shovels

Dillon Schickli: Funding for building foundation.

Burning Mountains Fire Department (Silt): 1984 F9000 Roughneck Engine and equipment

List of Training:

Currently over 1024 hours to include: First Responder, General Topics EMS, Fire and Incident Command, Wildland S-130/190 Class with Red Cards, On-Scene Safety and traffic Control with Eagle Fire, Vehicle Extrication with Vail Fire, ICS-100 and 200, and starting NFPA 1403 structural firefighting in the fall.

Area: 244 Square Miles. Bordering Routt and Grand Counties

Population: Approximately 304 residents and 108 homes

Assessed Value: Land \$7,661,400 Improvements \$4,241,980 Total: \$12,000,000

Number of volunteers and board: 9 active volunteers, 4 seasonal summers only. 4 Board members

Current Equipment: Inventory up to date.

Current Funding: donations, county combined courts fees

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Future Funding:

Grant writing: To include FEMA, SAFER, Fire Prevention and Safety, DOLA, Insurance Company Foundations and El Palmar

FEMA ARG Grant: Applied for \$52,000 for 800 series radios to keep up with county specs.

Rural Assistance Grant: Applied for \$40,000 and received \$11,000 for wildland equipment

Fundraising: Open House in Spring (\$3000)

Hunter Dinners and Dance October 17 and November 13. (\$2000)

Needs List

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	<u>Cost</u>
Tarps, Lighting Unit, Charging Units, Extension Cords	\$200.00
Heat Temp Monitor Gun 1	\$90.00
Socket/Mechanical Tool Set	\$200.00
1/2" Superstatic Rescue Rope 200'	\$200.00
Glass Master 2 @ \$160.00	\$320.00
Denver Tool 2 @ \$ 191.00	\$382.00
Emergency Spill Kit	\$280.00
Pro Pack Foam System	\$1,000.00
Class B Foam Bucket (5 Gal)	\$70.00
Smoke Ejector Electric Fan	\$830.00
Positive Pressure Fan Gas	\$1,600.00
5 inch LDH Large Diameter Hose	\$1,000.00
10 SCBA Packs with 20 bottles (used)	
total	\$6,172.00

Truck Needs

Brush Truck Type 6	\$5,000.00
Tender 2000 + gallons	\$12,000.00

Grant?

Thermal Image Camera	\$10,000.00
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Chief's Thoughts:

Additional needs include, but are not limited to:

- Training from outside sources would be beneficial for the volunteers
- Help with auxiliary personnel to assist with grant writing, radio installation
- Advocates for the service plan/county issues

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RECOMMENDATIONS: (by Chief Ron Thompson, Pagosa Fire Protection District)

- Develop complete list of funding sources/resources
- Develop a plan for establishing a fire/rescue district
- Develop a service provider plan for the proposed district
- Develop a Training Needs Assessment and a Training Program (with calendar) to meet the identified needs
- Using this assessment, develop a plan outlining the following:
 - 1) The need (What is needed: i.e. training, equipment, apparatus, building, additional volunteers, etc.)
 - 2) How to fill the need (Where to get what is needed: i.e. Who will do the training; Where will we get the equipment, building, apparatus; How will recruitment of volunteers be conducted; Are there incentives to be offered to be a volunteer, etc.)
 - 3) What is the cost of filling the need (Determine how much money will be required to meet the identified needs?)
 - 4) How to acquire the funds to meet the fiscal requirement to fill the need (Grant writing, fundraising activities, foundations, community grass roots donations, etc.)
 - 5) Once 1-4 are identified and items are acquired, how will the implementation of the plan be carried out?
 - 6) Carry out the Implementation Plan as outlined.

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